

Wales v France

25 September 1996

SWOT Analysis of France

1. Introduction

Good evening! With Kevin's agreement I wanted to keep this evening's points very brief.

There are tapes for your use.

Most of material for this session is taken from the French Test Series against Argentina in June earlier this year. France won the First Test 34-27 and the Second Test 34-15. Both games were refereed by Welsh referees.

France name their team tomorrow (Tuesday) for this game and are selecting from a squad of 23. I have based the briefing tapes around the Second Test team.

2. Kick Off and Restart Game

Alain Penaud took responsibility for kicking off and restarting in Argentina. He is left footed and, with one late exception in the Second Test, kicked short to France's right. They contest the ball in the air and send a player beyond to pick up any tap.

They also have Thomas Castaignede in the squad who is right footed. We should be alert to this double option rather like the ACT game (Knox and Howard).

They used their reception arc in Argentina but the Argentinian 10 kicked long. They have a confident reception game with Roumat. They have to find someone to do his job. N'Tamack looks to be actively involved off any deep ball.

3. Lineout Game

7 Man

France used a varied 7 man lineout game in Argentina. They also tried one four man lineout. With Roumat in the team we had a very strong indication of where the ball was going! Tape shows options but we will have to deal with:

- * Merle forward at 2
- * Pelous at 4
- * Benazzi moving round but conscious of his positioning at 5,6,7

Within the lineout the French are good at catching and driving the ball in a dynamic maul and then having a player spin off.

They have a number of set plays off lineout which are on the tape. Penaud seems to like taking a flat ball and running plays 'on the edge'. This leaves him very vulnerable at times. Dourthe took a very flat ball off the scrum half into contact.

Four Man

The four-man used Merle at 2 for a ball forward. We should be alert to Benazzi at 4 or out of lineout as ball carrier off outside half. Agen used him in this role against Cardiff and Leicester.

Defending Lineouts

I thought Argentina allowed France to dictate the lineout game. They were disrupted constantly by Merle at 2. Argentina had some success when they varied the lineout with a throw to a lift at 5/7 or to a ball at 1/7. Much of the ball Argentina used was scrappy and allowed a big press from the French midfield backs in defence.

4. Scrummage

The pack were very active in Argentina on their own and opponents' ball. They have a range of channel moves to use but we cannot give a detailed brief because of the move of Pelous to the second row and the inclusion of Benazzi as a number 8. In Argentina Pelous packed conventionally at all scrums.

The French worked hard on opponents' ball and tried to drive and wheel.

The tape shows channel moves and backs' use of ball.

5. Tap Penalties

Both French scrum halves were keen to take quick tap penalties. If you see Saint-Andre running towards the mark he is either trying to calm people down and take a tactical kick or kick at goal or he is going to be the first ball carrier! France used one set piece tap with Merle receiving the pass.

Argentina were successful at mobilising the game through Pichot. Whenever they turned France it was likely that France would reoffend!

6. Counterattack

France were willing to counterattack from ineffective or inaccurate kicks in broken play. They also showed that they were prepared to attack from the dead ball area. Take no dummies in the French deadball area!!

7. Key Players

It is difficult to identify key French players from a team that has not been picked but:

- * back three looking for work (5 tries in two tests)
- * Dourthe as a straight running centre
- * Castaignede as a dancer and runner
- * Penaud's long left foot
- * Carbonneau's hustle
- * uncompromising front row
- * Merle's physical presence, Pelous work rate
- * Benazzi and Benetton as carriers and hitters
- * Castel as a ball winner

In recent games they have played right (Dourthe) and left (Castaignede, Glas) centres. Right (Benazzi, Castel) and left (Benetton).

As a team they enjoy staying on their feet whenever possible to launch driving attacks with players supporting dynamically.

In Argentina they were very volatile with Richard Dourthe in particular behaving badly.

They are flying into Cardiff on Wednesday and returning home on the same day. The last time we played them on a Wednesday evening we should have won. The last time we played them we did win.

I think the way we will carrying on beating France is to play with precision, discipline and belief. We must step up and accept the physical challenge posed by their game. We should develop our active approach to winning rugby and play the game on our terms.

French Test Teams v Argentina June 1996

	First Test	Second Test
15	Sadourny	Sadourny
14	N'Tamack	N'Tamack
13	Dourthe	Dourthe
12	Castaignede	Castaignede
11	Saint-Andre	Saint-Andre
10	Penaud	Penaud
9	Accoceberry	Carbonneau
1	Califano	Califano
2	De Rougement	De Rougement
3	Tournaire	Jordana
4	Merle	Merle
5	Roumat	Roumat
6	Benazzi	Benazzi
7	Benetton	Benetton
8	Pelous	Pelous
R	<i>Livremont (Benazzi)</i>	<i>Glas for Penaud</i>
R		<i>Tournaire for Califano</i>

Argentina v FRANCE First Test 1996

56.20	ALO	F22L	Penaud to kick long l/r. <i>Does the length of his kick give quick throw chance? Do we want to take it?</i>
58.10	ALO	F22R	7 man. Low quick ball to 1/7 moved r/l Strong gate defence F7/6/8 <i>Can we check this press with a runner back to dummy?</i>
60.10	FKOR	HWM	Penaud left footed on 15m 22/10. 8 challenges. A maul and A10 kicks long diagonal r/r to F22. Note Sadourny already here (strong wind?) <i>Check F15's depth and options open to us. See hole oc/wing?</i> Sadourny able to collect and chip back r/l to A10m
61.46	ALO	A10R	Quick throw disrupts F again. Note how they want to play the game on their terms. <i>Can we vary the TEMPO of the game?</i> A drive to midfield and force penalty.
63.53	FKOR	HWM	Penaud left footed. Short for Roumat/Benazzi to attack. Note 8 beyond ball and collects A's knock down. F effective at creating dynamic maul. <i>We must aim to put French ball carrier to ground immediately and dictate height of the game.</i> Draw penalty in A22. Quick tap draws extra 10m
66.45	ALO	F22R	7 man forced untidy ball. F press A10 <i>Can we overcome F defence by running plays passed deep behind runners with miss?</i>
71.45	ALO	F5R	7 man. F disrupt A again. Close gap and win ball. <i>Can we play the lineout on our terms?</i> A win next lineout and try to drive. Note France actively hit side of maul and eventually ball lost. Sadourny picks up ball and kicks long r/r down tramlines.
75.50	F tap	A5M	Acocobery passes quick l/r ball wide to N'Tamack with instinctive right step. French dive in at contact and penalised. <i>Can we be disciplined and have good body positions at ruck despite big French hits?</i>

Argentina v FRANCE Second Test 1996 (Clayton Thomas)

01.05	F scrum	A10R 15	Ball to channel 2. F8 conventional. Set play dummy rangi on Castegneide (outside centre on right) N'Tamack available inside off BSW but Penaud passes flat weak to Dourthe. Error and A force ball through. <i>Can we apply pressure to Penaud as ball carrier?</i> Note Dourthe's cheapshot on floor!! (see end on shot at 1.50. See also gouge on A10 at 17.25)
06.50	ADO	A22M	Dourthe & F2 stand up and are way over line at kick. <i>Can Neil make sure with referee that they are behind line at kick?</i> Roumat wins clean two handed catch on well-timed lift. Can we deny him this platform? F have dynamic drive on this phase. Maul as basis F9 chips kick for N'Tamack to chase in A22.
08.05	F tap	A22R15	F9 takes quick tap to attack right channel. 9 to 11!! to contact. French forwards carry ball in low strong position. <i>If we are defending against France 1v 1 we must go low and drive into and through?</i>
10.20	F tap	A10R15	F9 takes quick tap to F7? into contact ball back from ruck for F10 1 u/u. Note that N'Tamack instinctively comes in to look for work and is first up at ball. A counter. <i>Can we make sure we get players back on line of kick?</i>
11.50	FLO	A10R	7 man. France's first lineout of game. Roumat's head down. Benazzi is moving forward before throw. Ball forward to Roumat at 4/7. Overthrown and misses on lift. Benazzi scoops back. F secure and drive maul. <i>Remember our control of the height of the game?</i> Maul up to A22 for F9 chip to box for F14. Goes beyond ball and catcher to tackle. Supported by F6.
15.05	AKOR	HW	A10 kicks long to F22 direct to Penaud. <i>Is one of our strengths the ability or will to modify our restart game? Can we own an approach to starting the game?</i> Penaud to Sadourny for angled left foot kick to left. A15 counters with chip back.
22.45	A scrum	F5L	Good picture of front row. Strong F scrum push and wheel. Disrupts & rescrum. Same disruption and F backs up very quick on poor pass. F hack clear for kick and chase to A10m. <i>The A attack was frantic and lost control at key moment. Composure vital in strike zone. Dourthe's temperament.</i>
31.55	F tap	F10R	F9 quick tap pass r/l to 10 to miss 1(13) to 12. Quick hands low pass to N'Tamack as BSW outside 12 note Benazzi also a running option. <i>We must be aware of running carrying threat posed by N'Tamack and Benazzi.</i> Knock on in this case.

32.25	A scrum	HWR	Good picture of French backline defence. Dummy A11 run fixes Castagneide at IC for A penetration between 12/13 covered by Penaud. Broken play and some big hits by F but A move before and in contact. Attack. Note Saint-Andre across and width option available to A but crash close. F penalised. <i>Can we sustain pressure to draw penalty?</i>
36.50	FLO	F10R	7 man after penalty. Excellent picture of Roumat's head movement (at 36.55) down then look. First example of lob ball. Check gap? Untidy ball off weak left inside arm. Set play? Miss 1 and N'Tamack outside 12 at OC to Sadourny. Game mobilised to A22. <i>Chance to move ball away from focus and attack N'Tamack's wing? If we spin off maul be aware of strong position for Benetton hit!</i>
37.40	A scrum	A22L15	Strong French scrum disrupts ball. <i>The French defensive alignment gives us space for a well-judged kicking game?</i>
39.10	F scrum	A5/22R	F9 open stance for r/l pass allows A9 to disrupt and poor pass to F10 to clean. A9 long kick to F22 Sadourny collects and kicks good r/l diagonal. <i>Sadourny's length gives quick throw option be aware!</i>
44.45	A pen	F10M	France counter from missed kick at goal. N'Tamack catches waits and then sets off right foot. <i>Can we work with Gareth to minimise N'Tamack's threat?</i>
51.45	ALO	HWL	7 man. A win forward at 2/7. <i>Can we isolate Merle through lineout variation and accurate timed jump?</i>
66.40	FLO	A10L	7 man variation Roumat to 2 Merle to 3. Lift on F8 at 5. Two handed take and feed back to 9 then flat pass l/r to Dourthe at OH. Set play. Check this. Scan. Set up ground ball to open up narrow channel for F15/11. Continuity for 10 to 6 <i>We must continue to step up into challenge with ball carriers.</i>
84.05	ALO	F5R	6 man variation for front peel A6 at scrum half. <i>Note French defence swarms. Good picture to show of close in defence. Can we fix and change focus? See also defence at tap penalty that follows. Can we use their commitment to our advantage?</i>