

Little Player will beat Big Player

Jun Sano

[Introduction]

The Japanese Rugby with which I am concerned has not yet caught up with the big Rugby nations of the world. Neither in a test match nor the big stage of the World Cup, even though people may speak highly of our speedy and thrilling Rugby style, Japan has never won against the big Rugby nations.

The size difference is one of the factors that always troubled Japan, when playing the big nations.

The size of Japanese players is small compared with others. Although this physique difference cannot be filled fundamentally, it is believed that it is sufficiently possible to close the gap between Japan and the big Rugby nations.

Every team with size difference will have to countermeasure when playing a match against big players. It is not a Japanese specific matter.

Then, what is required for a little player to beat a big player?

I want to consider focusing on how to fight individually, rather than the whole team here.

[Key Words]

As everyone knows, that in sports as Judo and Wrestling, to abolish the predominance of a size gap the competition is classified by weight.

In Boxing, for example, the impact of a punch is quite different between a heavyweight boxer and a lightweight boxer.

There is also a distinction by the age limit in Rugby, like the U21 World Cup, however, a distinction by weight does not exist.



In the Japanese traditional sport, SUMO, in which wrestler faces each other 1 on 1 in a circle with a diameter of about 10m, and settles victory or defeat by whether a opposition is beaten or pushed out of a circle, the class system by weight does not exist at all. SUMO wrestlers are quite huge and their average weight is about 140kg. For lightweight wrestlers about 100kg, his focus will be how a weight difference is always conquered. By which case, they have to compete

against a huge wrestler over 200kg. And sometimes, a little wrestler will beat a huge wrestler!

Thus, a little man can beat a big man, and there is no reason why they can't gain a victory every time.

To achieve this, there are 3 important key points.

CONTACT SPEED, TAKING SPACE, and LOW POSITION

[CONTACT SPEED]

The degree of impact at the time of contact can be expressed by the following simple formula.

$$\text{THE DEGREE OF IMPACT} = \text{MASS (WEIGHT)} \times \text{CONTACT SPEED}$$

Although it is natural when two persons hit at the same speed from front on, the player with the heaviest weight will give the other a stronger impact.

Therefore, even if a little player bumps into a big player on the same conditions, there is almost no chance for him to beat the big player.

However, from the theory on this calculation if the little player has good speed at the point of contact, it could be suggested that the degree of impact is equivalent to a big player.

Therefore, it becomes the 1st condition for a little player to exceed a large player's contact speed at the time of impact.

[TAKING SPACE]

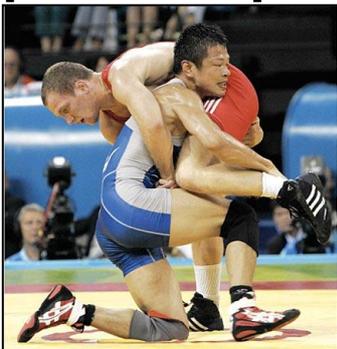
When a big player runs at top speed during game, it is difficult for a little player to stop him at the moment of a contact.

Therefore, it is important not to allow a large player to generate speed.

The best and easiest way is to take away a big man's space. For example, in defense, a little player needs to come up forward to take the space of the big player in an effort to dominate the contact.

Moreover in attack, quick ball recycling is required at the break down, to create opportunities, before the bigger team can realign and come forward.

[LOW POSITION]



You can see the low tackle in wrestling.

When a little player beats a large player in the tackle, the low body height of his posture also serves as an important element.

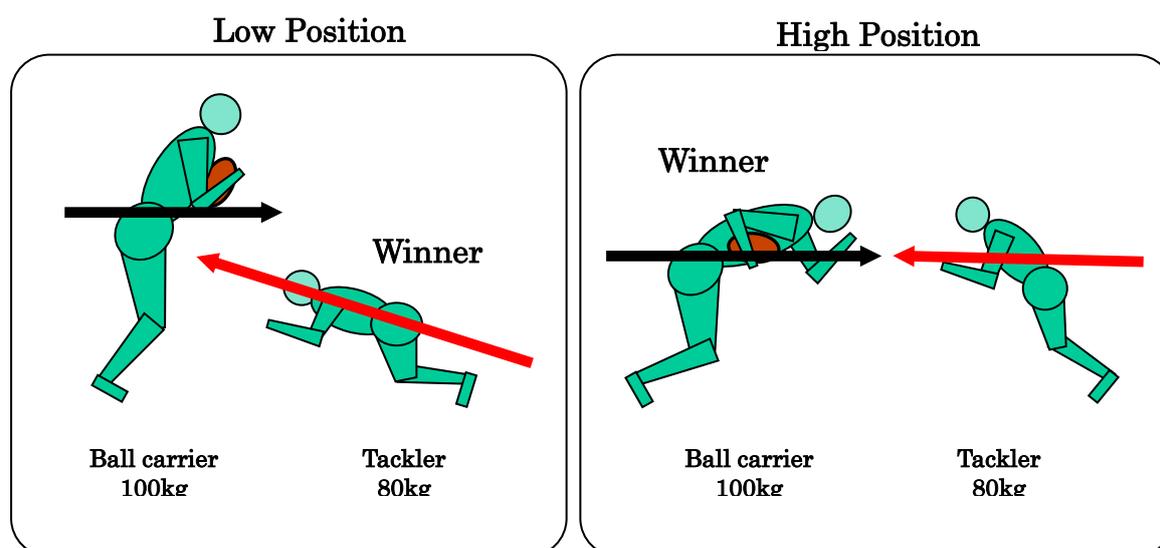
The larger player will have a higher center of gravity.

When a little player tackles in a position lower than a tall player's center of gravity, it will allow him to "cut down" the opposition easily using the momentum of the larger player moving forward.

However, this does not simply mean that the posture should be just low. If the head of the tackler has fallen, he will also fall downward.

Therefore, a posture which is thrust up upwards from a low position as shown in the following figure, i.e., bend knees, flat back, head up, and the line of the shoulder and the hips driving upward through at 30~45° angle.

If you get into a low position, you can use the strength of contact by the power of the four thigh muscles, which is the biggest part of the body. But if a posture is high, you use the power of only the upper body. For a small player, this is clearly disadvantageous. And at the moment of impact, both legs should be in contact with the ground to transfer strong power.



Although considered the three major elements for the little player above beating a big player, there is also another element that will make it more advantageous.

[OFFSET]

When a little player runs into a big defender as a ball carrier, in order to raise the degree of impact, even if he has a low posture and has good speed into contact during a game, it is possible that the ball could be held up by the power and strength of the bigger player's upper body.

Therefore, a head-on contact should be avoided, and good footwork should be employed to avoid the opposition's power. This "offsetting" also serves as important skill for the little player.

Since the skill of "offsetting" in which using "three steps" has been already initiated in Australia, detailed explanation is omitted.

Moreover, "offsetting" can reduce muscle damage.

When only the head-on contact is repeated, all the impacts with the opposition will tire out

the players for the second half of a game.

Therefore, footwork should always be used, the offset at the time of contact should always be kept in mind, and it should become possible to reduce the damage the body and muscles receive.

[QUICKNESS]

A little player has a shorter length of a leg compared with a big player.

This may also serve advantageous from a stride frequency point of view.



The height of Hiroyasu Shimizu, the Japanese skater who holds the world record of 500m of speed skating with 34:32 second, is only 161cm.

The stride frequency of his skating is clearly faster than others. That's why he remains the top of the world.

In his case, he carries out a start dash from the stationary position using shorter and faster strides

than the skater with longer legs, therefore reaching top speed is faster than the others.

In Rugby, a little player with short legs attains an advantage by his first two or three steps at the beginning of his stride, rather than the big player. England FB, Jason Robinson is the perfect example. When he beats the opposition using his step and swerve, his small steps and quick footwork is outstanding. No one can match his acceleration.

Moreover, in the case of "offsets", it can be said that quicker footwork will enable more effective "offsetting" of the defender.

[SWARMING]

There is also a view that it more advantageous with higher numbers than competing one on one.

In defense, a swarming defense is effective for little players. And if a double tackle can be made at the same time, it is also possible to prevent a big player's advantage.

For example, if you make a low tackle with a big player, it is easier to "off balance" the ball carrier, but he may be able to make an offload. In order to prevent this, a double tackle should be used. I.e., when the 1st tackler makes low tackle to stop the bigger man, the 2nd tackler should commit to the upper body to hold the ball.

[Conclusion]

A size difference in rugby is not only specific to Japanese rugby players. There is possibly this situation everywhere.

Although there are a tactics of avoiding contact like 7-a-side rugby, the contact is inevitable in the game of 15-a-side rugby.

However, it is dependent on the skills and efforts of the players, and I believe that it is sufficiently possible to reverse the handicap of size by making good use of the techniques I mentioned earlier.

It will make Rugby be more thrilling and exciting sport.