



Evidence-based Practice



Practice-based Evidence

TEST IT, TRACK IT, TRUST IT TOOLKIT

Adapted from Dan Tobin

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What this is really about

Your programme should be built on evidence from your own training environment, not just borrowed from research or common practice. This toolkit uses Tobin's plyometric data from professional rugby to show how safe-to-fail experiments and consistent tracking produce programming you can stand behind.

THE PRACTICE-BASED EVIDENCE CYCLE

Evidence-based practice asks: what does the research say? Practice-based evidence asks: what is actually happening with my players? Both matter, but when they conflict, your own data wins.

“ Practice-based evidence trumps evidence-based practice.

- Dan Tobin

1. Start with evidence-based practice

Use published research and common practice as your baseline. In Tobin's case, the starting point was complex training: 45% of coaches across professional sport used it, rising to 60% in rugby union. Research positioned it as a time-efficient method for developing strength and power simultaneously.

45% Use complex format
(60% in rugby union)

33% complete plyos before
strength training

* Weldon et al (2021) – 318 coaches from 8 professional sports

2. Run a safe-to-fail experiment

Test the method with a small group. Tobin used 10 professional rugby players. Measure the output you care about before and after the training stimulus. Keep the group small so the cost of failure is low and the quality of observation is high.

3. Track what actually happens

Collect data consistently across sessions, sets, and players. Tobin tracked CMJ and RSI responses at baseline and at multiple time points post-stimulus. The data told a clear story that observation alone would have missed.

4. Scale or discard

If the data supports the method, apply it to bigger groups over longer timeframes. If it does not, try an alternative and run the cycle again. Tobin ran the cycle across three plyometric formats before landing on the two that consistently produced positive responses.

Over time, this cycle produces a programme that is robust because it has been built from internal evidence, not borrowed from external consensus.

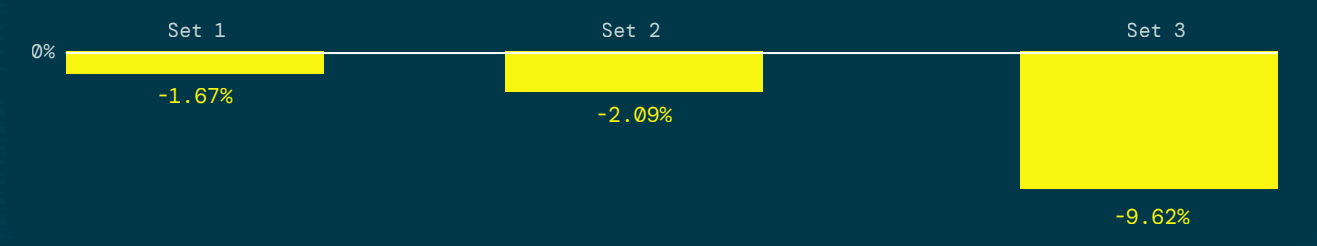
THE PLYOMETRIC CASE STUDY

THE QUESTION: What is the best way to develop plyometric performance in our training environment?

Experiment 1: Complex training

10 pro rugby players. 3 baseline drop jumps, then heavy strength stimulus (3×3 close to 3RM squat/deadlift pattern), then 3 drop jumps at 3–5 minutes post.

RSI Response to Heavy Preloading Stimulus



Experiment 2: Jumps in series

CMJ baseline, then 40 jumps in series (2×10 rudiment jumps, 3×5 hurdle jumps, 5 drop jumps), then CMJ at 1, 3, and 5 minutes post.



Head-to-head comparison

	COMPLEX	JUMPS IN SERIES
CMJ	-5.80%	+4.10%
RSI	-4%	+6%

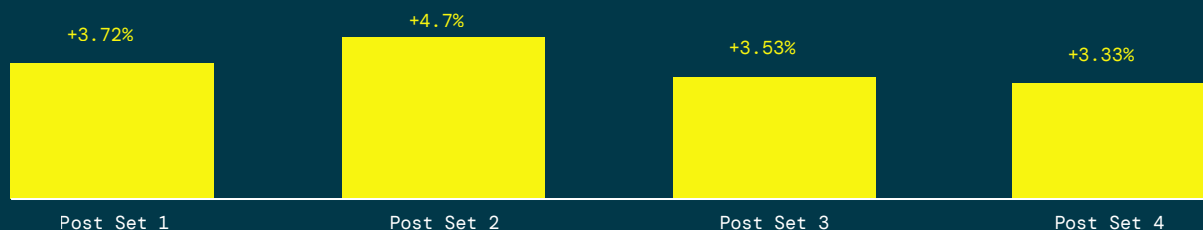
Experiment 3: French contrast

33 pro rugby players. Four rounds of the sequence below. CMJ improved post every set, with the response maintained across all four rounds.

French Contrast Format — 4 Rounds

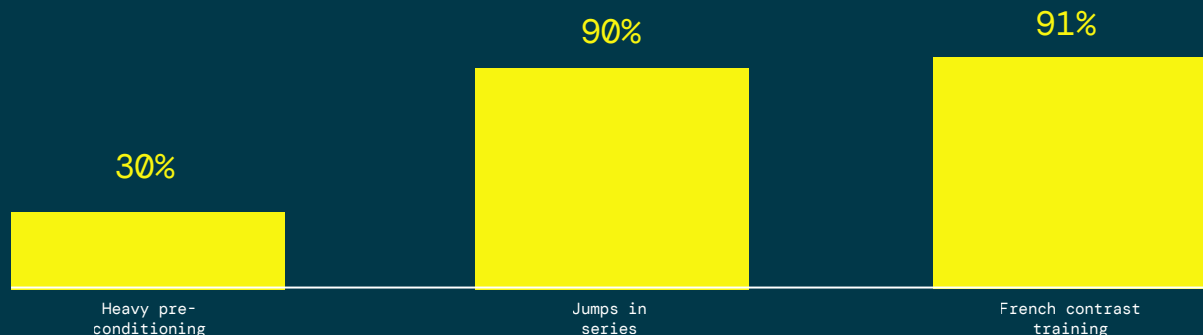


CMJ Response to French Contrast — 33 Pro Rugby Players



THE VERDICT

% Positive Responders



The accepted common practice produced the worst response in this training environment. The two alternatives, identified and validated through safe-to-fail experiments, became the programme standard.

“ Is your S##T working??
- Dan Tobin

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