



# **Coaching Children**

## **(2017 Version)**



# **WORLD RUGBY** *Training & Education*

## Coaching Children

*This content has been adapted with kind permission from Scottish Rugby's Long Term Player Development Coaching resources.*

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### World Rugby Values

Rugby's values always have been: the pleasure of participating; the courage and skill which the Game demands; the love of a team sport that enriches the lives of all involved; and the lifelong friendships forged through a shared interest in the Game.

It is because of, not despite, Rugby's intensely physical and athletic characteristics that such great camaraderie exists before and after matches. The long-standing tradition of players from competing teams enjoying each other's company away from the pitch and in a social context remains at the very core of the Game.

Rugby has fully embraced the professional era, but has retained the ethos and traditions of the recreational Game. In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, Rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behaviour and fair play.

Rugby Union has a code of conduct (the Charter - see below) on how players, officials, club administrators and spectators are expected to behave. Because of the physical confrontation which exists in the Game, this code of conduct has evolved over many years to ensure that whatever physicality takes place on the field of play remains there.

It is of paramount importance that the ethos of the game is maintained by teaching young people coming into the game the values which have made the sport unique.

Therefore, it is advisable that those involved in coaching the game should operate within a code of conduct which should be agreed and signed up to by those concerned.

### Coaches' code of conduct

Coaching must demonstrate a high degree of honesty, integrity, and competence. The need for coaches to understand and act on their responsibilities is of critical importance to Rugby, as is the need to protect the key concept of participation for fun and enjoyment, as well as achievement.

The key principles relating to the interaction between coaches and players are:

- Rights - you must respect and champion the right of every individual to participate in sport
- Relationships - coaches must develop a relationship with the players based on openness, honesty, mutual trust, and respect
- Responsibilities - personal standards - you, as a coach, must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times

- Responsibilities - professional standards - in order to maximise benefits and minimise the risks to players, coaches must attain a high level of competence through qualifications and a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe, current, and correct practice
- Winning isn't everything - teach your players to enjoy taking part and performing to the best of their ability. Encourage and enable each player to reach his or her fullest potential
- Never abuse, shout at, criticise or ridicule children for making mistakes or losing a game. Do not cause a player to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining them
- Motivate your players through praise, positive feedback, and constructive criticism
- Be organised - establish a structure for the season, prepare a coaching plan for each session, have the appropriate kit. Above all, communicate to players, parents, and fellow coaches to set expectations
- Make sure players develop an understanding of the Laws of the Game, that they respect opponents, team mates, coaches, and officials
- Never question an official's judgement or honesty
- Ensure players' and parents' behaviour is appropriate and in keeping with the spirit of the game
- Never enter the playing arena (the pitch) during a match unless specifically invited to do so by the match official.

## Coaching Children - the basics.

### Introduction

Introducing young children to rugby and developing their skills can be a very satisfying experience for any coach, teacher, and parent. Creating the right learning environment is crucial to ensure that every child is given the best opportunity to reach their fullest potential in a safe and secure environment. Young players are the future guardians of the game and will be the next generation of players, fans, officials, and volunteers who keep the traditions of the game alive.

As a result, it is vital that you not only try to develop your players IN rugby but also THROUGH rugby. This means adopting a holistic approach to your coaching, which will not only help develop better rugby players but also better people.

Good coaches should be able to develop their players' technical, tactical, mental, movement, physical, and lifestyle capabilities. This resource provides guidance to help you to do so.

### Creating a positive learning environment

Creating a positive learning environment for the young player is crucial - to develop players who can make correct decisions during a match, the coaching environment should be conditioned to allow players to practice recognising situations, work out solutions and then react accordingly. It is here that coaches can make the most significant impact by encouraging players to try things and learn from their mistakes.

Here are some simple tips to help create a positive learning environment when coaching:

- Always have a purpose / objective to your session
- Question your players to check for understanding to ensure they are aware of:
  - What they are doing (the technical detail)
  - How it relates to the principles of play (the tactical detail)
  - What the effect of their actions will be on play
- Allow your players to make mistakes and work out solutions to the problems with your support
- Observe and analyse critically
- Provide high quality positive and constructive individualised feedback against specific key factors
- Correct faults as a result and highlight good practice

- Work on your questioning skills to encourage learning. Rather than tell your players what to do (coach-centered coaching style), use effective questioning skills to encourage your players to reflect on their performance (player-centered coaching style)
- Reward effort (the process of trying hard) as well as achievement (achieving the outcome) as effort is a means to learning and improvement.

Good coaches will;

- Get the best out of ALL players (not just the skilled ones)
- Continually improve ALL players (not just the skilled ones)
- Develop techniques into skills (by placing players into game situations)
- Develop players' 'game-sense' (their ability to understand the game and the consequence of their actions)
- See what is right and praise it
- See what is wrong, recognise why it is wrong, and be able to correct it.

Each coaching session should follow the following principles and be:

- Active
  - Use small-sided games / activities that include everyone, are enjoyable, have an element of competition and develop players' skills
  - Encourage skill learning for everyone (slow starters may be successful later)
  - Keep activity levels high - less talking, more activity
- Purposeful
  - Only focus on one or two key factors at a time
  - Involve players in their own learning through asking questions
  - Allow all players to experience every playing position - the prop of today could be the scrum half of tomorrow! Rugby is a late specialisation sport - so, no need to define players into position too early - if you do so you may be limiting their development!
  - Use a range of different coaching styles during sessions
  - Review your session through self-reflection, discussion with other coaches and players

- Enjoyable
  - Plan your sessions so that they are fun, varied, and enjoyable for all
  - Consider the long-term effects of your coaching - avoid a 'win at all costs' attitude
  - Reward effort as well as achievement - ensure players understand that success comes from working hard to be better players - not just winning
  - Promote respect for opponents, match officials and spectators
- Safe
  - Ensure all activities are safe – all coaches should complete the RugbyReady and concussion management online learning modules available at [passport.worldrugby.org](https://passport.worldrugby.org) as well as be suitably qualified to coach!
  - Stop the session immediately if safety is being compromised
  - Include warm-up and cool-down every time to ensure the players develop the physical competencies required to play the game
  - Group children according to physical development, using height and weight as a yardstick
  - Avoid matching children with very different development levels, especially in early development of contact
  - Be consistent when dealing with poor behaviour.



### Safer working practices for coaches working with young people

Player Welfare is World Rugby's number one priority and with increasing numbers of children participating in the game worldwide, steps must be taken by all stakeholders to ensure that a child's participation in rugby is a safe and enjoyable experience.

World Rugby continually reviews its policies and procedures with respect to child engagement and safeguarding. It is however the responsibility of each Union and Regional Association to determine its child welfare and protection policies in accordance with applicable legislation, codes of practice and best practice guidelines relevant to the jurisdictions in which it operates.

It is also the responsibility of the Union and/or Regional Association hosting and/or organising a tournament, event, meeting or programme at which there may be contact with children to ensure that visiting representatives from other jurisdictions are aware of and adhere to the applicable legislation, codes of practice and best practice guidelines in the host jurisdiction in relation to child protection and welfare, including, as appropriate, obtaining relevant clearances.

World Rugby is mindful that many stakeholders have specific policies in place relevant to their jurisdiction. To further support those wishing to develop their own policies, a range of external resources are available for consultation in multiple languages including:

- International Safeguards for Children in Sport – available via [www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/child-protection-and-safeguarding](http://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/child-protection-and-safeguarding)
- International Olympic Committee Sexual Harassment & Abuse in Sport - available in multiple languages at <http://sha.olympic.org/> and [www.olympic.org/sha](http://www.olympic.org/sha)

As trusted adults, coaches have the duty to ensure the safety and well-being of children in their care, protecting them from physical, emotional, and sexual harm. Children have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Coaches should aim to develop respectful and caring relationships, demonstrating integrity, maturity, and good judgement. It also reduces the risk of being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

### Confidentiality

Coaches should listen to, and support children, but never promise to keep information a secret.

### Power and position of trust

Coaches should not use their position to:

- Gain access to information for their own or others' advantage
- Intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children.

### Acting with integrity

All coaches working with children must maintain public respect and confidence in their ability to safeguard children's welfare and best interests.

They must have high standards of personal conduct, and must be aware that behaviour in their personal lives (including behaviour and actions of family members) may impact or raise questions about their suitability to work with children (e.g. misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence, etc.).

### Dress and appearance

Coaches should wear clothing which is appropriate to their role and for the tasks and work they undertake. It should not be likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

Coaches should avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, and avoid changing in the same place as the children.

### Privacy and one-to-one situation

No child should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them.

Avoid any visually or physically intrusive behaviour.

Coaches and teachers should avoid staying alone with a child; reasonable and sensible precautions should be taken if a one-to-one situation occurs.

### Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Coaches should ensure that gifts given or received are in line with school/club policy (small thank-you gifts from children or parents are acceptable as long as it is not regular or of any significant value).

Coaches should take care when selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism, unfairness or 'grooming'.

### Communication with children (including use of technology)

Keep all communication with children within professional boundaries; in particular, avoid giving personal social networking details to children (blogs, personal websites, social media, etc.).

Take care that the language remains professional and does not rise comment or speculation.

The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is not acceptable in any situation.

### Physical contact

Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent; be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.

During activities that require physical contact (e.g. demonstrating scrum binding, etc.), inform and explain what you are going to do before initiating the contact.

Physical intervention should never be a form of punishment.

If a coach believes that their actions could be misinterpreted, notify to and seek advice from the relevant authorities.

Similarly, when a child seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact, handle sensitively considering the child's needs, and notify to and seek advice from the relevant authorities.

Any sexual activity between an adult and a minor child (including physical contact and non-contact, e.g. *watching sexual activity*) is unlawful and a criminal offence in most countries. Such conducts would contravene World Rugby values.

### Use of control and physical intervention

Use physical interventions with children with extreme behaviours only if it is necessary to prevent serious personal injury to the child or others, or serious damage to property.

Physical intervention should be proportional to the behaviour of the individual, and the nature of harm they may cause – minimum necessary force to maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.

### Children in distress

Coaches should use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child in distress in an appropriate way, whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries. Whenever possible, ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken and inform the parents.

Preferably, a trained first-aider should look after an injured child or a child in distress, explaining what is being done and ALWAYS acting in the child's best interests. Any administration of first aid should be recorded and reported.

### Transporting children

If coaches are asked to transport children, they must ensure that they are clear about the procedures in place regarding insurance, safety, etc.

### Photography and videos

Coaches are advised never take photos of children unless parents have given permission, and to avoid using mobiles or personal cameras.

Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet is illegal.

**Coaches should report to the relevant authorities any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern. All allegations should be taken seriously and properly investigated by the proper authorities.**

### RugbyReady

Everybody involved in organising and playing Rugby has a duty of care in relation to the players. The Rugby Ready programme is intended to raise awareness of good practice and help stakeholders manage the inherent risks of a contact sport by putting appropriate safeguards in place.

### WHY is Rugby Ready necessary?

Rugby Union is a game played by two teams of 7, 10 or 15 players that physically contest for the ball and, as such, the game carries a risk of injury. Research has identified the magnitude, nature and sources of these risks. It is the responsibility of all people involved in the game of Rugby to understand and manage these risks within acceptable levels.

### WHAT is its purpose?

Rugby Ready aims to assist in the communication and understanding of the risks associated with Rugby and to raise awareness of good practice.

### WHO is it aimed at?

Rugby Ready is designed as a resource for all potential participants in the Game of Rugby, including players, coaches, match officials, parents, teachers, first-aiders and volunteers supporting players and coaches on match day and during training.

### HOW to use Rugby Ready

Rugby Ready is available via three platforms:

- Handbook
- Online learning programme
- Face-to-face course

While any one of the handbook, face-to-face course or website are effective in isolation it is more effective to use a combination of the three platforms.

It is recommended that ALL participants involved in the game undertake the online learning programme at [rugbyready.worldrugby.org](http://rugbyready.worldrugby.org)

The website allows you to read material, watch video content and complete an on-line self check test which, when completed successfully, generates an awareness certificate.

Attendance at a face-to-face course is strongly advised for those people involved in an on-field capacity in the Game – players, coaches, match officials, first-aiders, etc. The face-to-face programme will often build on the understanding you have previously gained from the online course by giving you practical, hands-on experience of the elements of the Game covered in Rugby Ready. The face-to-face course can be delivered in many formats and contexts.

Your national Union will have its own policies and procedures in place. To contact your own Union, you can find their details at: <http://www.worldrugby.org/member-unions>

Rugby Ready is applicable for all forms of Rugby.

### Coaching through games

Modified games are extremely useful to help players to develop both their skills and game understanding. In order to improve all players, coaches should ensure that they adopt a game-based approach to their coaching activities and actually coach **through** the game (focus on specifics, observe and analyse critically, correct errors, praise good practice and encourage learning) rather than manage the activity (e.g. commentating on play). This means providing specific feedback on both good practice and areas to develop, in relation to the aim set out at the start.

It is important that the focus or aim (e.g. tackle technique) is maintained throughout the session as the tendency can be for the coach to fix other faults. This can result in the key messages to the players being diluted through a focus on too much detail at once. Breaking a skill into manageable parts (key factors) can help players absorb points more easily. A number of key factors can be focused on over a session or number of sessions, but a coach should only look to focus on a maximum of two or three key factors at any one time. Once players are performing consistently well under pressure, the coach can then look to progress and challenge players.

Coaches should consider the following when coaching through games:

- What is the main objective / purpose for the practice?
- What skills and tactics do I want to develop within the game?
- What modifications / progressions can I make to emphasise these skills and tactics?
- What will be the main problem for the players to solve?
- What are some key questions I can ask to encourage learning?
- What progressions and regressions will I need to ensure every player develops?
- How will I adapt the scoring system to reward successful achievement of the objective?
- What are the boundaries and safety laws for the activity?

The Whole-Part-Whole method of structuring a session can be a very useful way in using both games and skill practices together. With this method, the coach can start with a game (whole) and if there is a particular area that requires more practice, the coach can then use a skill practice (part) to focus more on the technique. The coach can then put this back into a game or modified activity (whole) to challenge the players further through a more game-like environment.

To fully develop all players, every session should be progressive with the option to regress if necessary. If the players are not able to perform the activity at the desired level, the coach should not be afraid to go back a step and refocus on factors previously introduced. Some of the players will be more capable than others so there will be a need to differentiate between these players and set goals appropriate to individual ability.

It is very easy for players to execute skills and make decisions in unopposed conditions as there is little or no pressure on them to perform. This success however, brings about a false impression of their ability to deliver the same level of performance under match conditions. Most often, conditioning the game increases the pressure on players to perform. This will ultimately affect their ability to apply their skill during a match situation.

To challenge players with realistic training activities, coaches should be creative in the tasks they set for their players to encourage them to solve problems and make decisions. Consider the following tips when designing the activities and always relate what you are asking the players to do in relation to the outcome of the session:

- Condition the opposition in attack or defence to put players in decision making situations – by altering number in attack/defence, placing conditions on what they can or cannot do and giving some players specific roles
- Utilise scoring zones and systems – the position and numbers of areas that can be scored in as well as what is required to score – relate to objective
- Alter the dimensions of playing area to maximise opportunity to practice (e.g. narrow for developing contact skills)
- Allowing /disallowing some skills in certain zones (e.g. only 3 passes in the middle zone/ no kicking in own half etc.)



### Development versus winning

Children, youths, and adults play rugby to play games. Games, or competition, can have different emphasis. For an International team playing in the Rugby World Cup, the most important element in every match is winning, but what about at the other extreme? What should an eight-year-old player focus on? At this age, children have limited attention span and have limited ability to process complex situations. This is the optimum time to develop skills.

This indicates that for this age, the focus of competition and therefore coaching and parental support should be on developing the player rather than focusing on competitive outcomes (winning the game).

Many people confuse the message of not emphasising the result with not developing a 'winning mentality'.

The key message is that if we develop better players who are committed, who play and train with intensity, who can set their own goals and evaluate their own performance, then the winning mentality will be nurtured.

An environment that praises effort (developing commitment and problem solving) over ability (when one way of doing something is reinforced) and which encourages 'critical' (evidence-based) evaluation of performance, with players assuming responsibility for their actions, will develop players who want to win. Children are competitive by nature. Coaches and parents should harness this desire to improve performance by encouraging, supporting, and praising individual improvement. By doing this we will support players' development for the long term.

### Defining a successful coach

As a children's rugby coach - how do you define success?

Ask yourself the following questions and reflect on your answers.

- Why do the players come to me and this club / school / team for their coaching?
- What are my motivations for coaching these players?
- How do I define success as a coach - what does it mean to me, what does it mean to these children?
- Am I an autocratic (tell-focused) or a player-centred (questioning) coach?
- How important is the result of a match in terms of being a successful coach?
- How important is it that every player in my squad reaches their potential?
- Where do I see my players next year, in five years' time and in ten years' time?
- How do I structure my coaching sessions at present - what is the focus, individual development or team development - does one far outweigh the other?
- Do I educate my players in the values of the game and uphold the spirit and traditions that make Rugby Union unique?
- On reflection, are there any changes I could make to my coaching to aid my players' development?

On answering these questions, you should be able to formulate your coaching philosophy - clarify your role and how you intend to deliver your coaching to your players.

### Coaching girls – considerations

The game of rugby is the same for girls and boys, however, it is important to understand that boys and girls are different. Understanding the differences will help you to maintain a positive learning climate.

From research and experiences shared across our Unions, the majority of girls play out of love of the game, to have fun and make friends. As they get older fitness also becomes a key motivator and some will aspire to play at an elite level.

As with boys, girls will develop at different rates and times. Training programmes should take this into account and be tailored to the development stage of the player. For example, a ten-year-old girl may have been playing since she was six years of age and therefore has four years' experience playing the game while a twenty-five-year-old may just have taken up the sport and be in her first year of rugby.

Some key areas which are particularly useful to consider when coaching girls are outlined below:

- As girls can tend to be more people-orientated, how a coach engages and communicates with them is very important as this sets a foundation for their learning and encourages participation
- Girls can respond more positively when their coach knows them as individuals and understands their personalities, motivations, and goals
- Girls tend to ask more questions than boys as they usually need to understand the detail of an instruction before willingly completing it as the process is as important as the outcome
- Be mindful of physical interaction. Physical touch needs to be appropriate. If it is required to demonstrate a particular skill, permission should be obtained from the player provided that it is within cultural norms. Coaches may need to use a full range of questioning and demonstration strategies (for example, use of experienced players to demonstrate, use of video)
- Having females involved in managing or coaching is good practice
- Physical differences between male and female children aged ten to twelve years of age are usually minimal.

### Role of the parents

The environment that the child is brought up in has a massive influence on who they become. Parents are the single biggest influence in this, and therefore coaches should value them and the positive role that they can play in developing the young player. Below are a few suggestions that parents can adopt to assist the coaches in developing their children in rugby. Coaches should discuss these suggestions with the parents when possible.

#### Before your child's match / training session:

- Help your child to get their kit ready - it is their responsibility, not yours, but they need to learn how to do this
- Provide an environment where you praise effort and reinforce commitment - a young player choosing to do something will, if praised, seek to do something well if they enjoy it. This is the basis for developing commitment in players
- Help your child to fuel correctly - a balanced diet is as important to their health as it is to a successful training session
- Ask your child if they have packed their water bottle - the best way to get players drinking enough is to have a drink available to them at all times. Educate your child to take responsibility for this important piece of kit!
- Help your child to get enough rest
- Help your child go to play and practice in a positive frame of mind.

### During your child's match / training session:

- Work with the coach to praise effort - this will encourage every player to try their best at executing skills, discipline, and sportsmanship. This will lead to players who are willing to try things, take responsibility for making decisions and will ultimately make the players real winners!
- Remember that the game is about more than the result - it is part of the learning process of the player and it is about the players having fun
- The coach is responsible for how the team and the players develop. They will make decisions that are part of the coaching plan - please support the coach in the decisions made, even if you don't understand them at the time
- Make sure your body language is positive at all times
- Represent your child in a positive manner. The players and coaches will deal with their decisions and those of others
- Your child will thank you for praising effort and not criticising mistakes - children must not be frightened to try things and learn from their actions
- Don't shout at the player with the ball - he / she is busy!
- Make sure your child is as proud of your touchline behaviour as you are of their playing.

### After your child's match / training:

- Provide praise for the effort your child has given and the processes they went through to get there. Praising effort encourages the child to work harder, focusing on ability encourages the child to carry on doing what they currently do!
- Provide them with unconditional support and encouragement
- Identify with the child the things that they can learn from this match / practice and use this to help them improve
- Engage with the coach to identify things that you can encourage your child to practice away from the rugby club.

## Long Term Player Development (LTPD)

### World Rugby LTPD model

LTPD is a long-term approach to maximising individual potential and involvement in rugby. LTPD models highlight the importance of having coaches working with children and youths, who understand the technical, tactical, physical, mental and lifestyle needs of children and young people as they progress along their rugby journey. LTPD provides a platform for coaches to encourage and support participants at every level of their involvement in the game, to help them fulfill their potential and to remain involved in sport.

### Ages and Stages – summary

Please note that the example below uses chronological age to define the different stages of World Rugby's LTPD model. Best practice for the earlier stages is to use biological age, as some young players mature earlier than others and some later (Lloyd & Oliver, 2012) (Balyi & Hamilton, 2004). This resource focuses on the FUN stage.

#### Fun

Age guide: 6-12  
Player : PLAYS  
Coach : GUIDES  
Content: Learning to move, basic rugby skills

#### Development

Age guide: 12-16  
Player : EXPLORES  
Coach : TEACHES  
Content: Learning the Game

#### Participation

Age guide: 15-18  
Player : FOCUSES  
Coach : CHALLENGES  
Content: Playing the Game, developing the player

#### Preparation

Age guide: 17-21  
Player : SPECIALISES  
Coach : FACILITATES  
Content: Reaching full potential

#### Performance

Age guide: 20 & over  
Player : INNOVATES  
Coach : EMPOWERS  
Content: Consistency of performance

#### Re-investment

Age: any  
Content: Support and enjoyment of the Game

### Physical competence

Every player must be suitably prepared physically to play the game; this is known as Physical Competence. Rugby is an invasion (enter opposition team's territory) and evasion (don't get caught doing so) game which involves physical contact. Through development of their players' physical competence, coaches will prepare their players to play the game in the present and provide a strong foundation for their future physical development.

### The FUN stage (early years 6-9)

During the early years of the fun stage the major objective is to develop the player's physical literacy through participation in rugby and other sports. Physical literacy should be developed through:

- Games-based and FUN (Foundation, Understanding, Nurturing) activities, with 100% involvement at all times
- Festivals and small-sided tag and touch games that allow the opportunity to express enjoyment and develop skills.

The rationale behind this is that without speed, agility, balance, and co-ordination, as well as the ability to run, jump, throw, kick, catch and control the body (sensory awareness), children will not only be incomplete as rugby players, but will not have the confidence nor competence to take part in many sporting activities.

During these early years, the role of the coach is to provide well-organised, well-communicated, well-planned and well-structured practices that involve 100% activity and enjoyment. All practices should promote FUNdamental skills that will underpin future player development.

### How to coach

As mentioned earlier all sessions should follow the Active, Purposeful, Enjoyable, Safe principles and coaching through games should be used as much as possible.

Total length of the coaching session should be approximately 60 minutes:

- Warm-up (developing physical competence) approximately 15 minutes
- Main body of session (game-based) approximately 35-40 minutes
- Cool-down (developing physical competence) approximately 5-10 minutes.

Every session should have an aim or purpose as part of a longer-term plan for developing the players rather than just correcting what did not go well last match.

### What to coach

During this stage, coaches should develop their players in the following areas:

#### Physical competence

Physical competence should be developed through following the warm-up and cool-down guidance provided and in the delivery of game-sense coaching. The main areas to be worked on are:

- Agility, Balance, and Speed – through sprinting, acceleration, deceleration, change of direction, jumping, falling, getting back to feet
- Co-ordination - spatial awareness and body (sensory) awareness developed through gymnastic activities and game-sense coaching
- Strength - developed through effective warm-ups incorporating animal walks and body-weight exercises, game-based activity and appropriate cool-downs
- Endurance - developed through game-sense coaching
- Flexibility and recovery - through effective warm-ups and appropriate cool-downs.

#### How to build an appropriate warm-up

The warm-up section of the session should last for approximately 15 minutes and should progressively prepare the players for their session. Remember this is also an opportunity to coach specific skills appropriate to the objective of your session. Each warm-up should contain the following elements:

- Generalised movements - enabling increased blood flow round body - 3 minutes
- Gradual build up range of movements - dynamic flexibility based around the specific movement of the session. Use animal walks and gymnastic activities to improve players' physical competence - 6 minutes
- Multi-direction speed technique / evasion - aimed at getting the players up to maximum speed for the session - the use of specific exercises will aid speed development, decision making and reaction, acceleration, deceleration and change of direction - 3 minutes
- Preparation for contact and strength development - aimed at building intensity while focusing on strength development. The use of body-weight exercises and wrestling activities will enable increased levels of intensity to be achieved - 3 minutes
- Please see activity menu on pages 34-35 for appropriate content.



### The importance of a cool-down

It is important for players to cool down appropriately after a session. Again, this needs to be structured accordingly to enable the body and mind to return to resting activity levels. This can be an opportunity to continue coaching specific skills at a lower intensity. Each cool-down should contain the following elements:

- Generalised movements - ensure activity / games are not above jogging pace-3-5 minutes
- Static stretching - this will improve players' levels of flexibility and lessen future injury potential - 5 minutes
- Please see activity menu on pages 50-52 for appropriate content.

### Skills competence

The coaching of skills should be developed through game-sense or whole-part-whole coaching and effective warm-up and cool-downs. Coaches should aim to develop the players in the following areas

- Handling
  - Passing in all directions including the lateral pass
  - Catching - early hand catch, high ball, above head (jump and catch), low catch
- Running
  - Evasive skills - how to dodge and evade defenders
- Defending
  - Tackling - introduction to contact should only occur once players have grasped the concept of invasion and evasion and should be done so in a staged and safe manner – (please visit <http://rugbyready.worldrugby.org/> for more information).
- Teamwork
  - How to attack and defend as a team, go forward, communication
- Continuity
  - Keeping play moving

### Mental factors

Coaches should strive to build a foundation built on confidence in each of their players.

Coaches can model confidence in their players by providing opportunities for players to be successful and by setting basic goals for players to better their performance in all areas, physical, skills, mental and lifestyle.

Involve every player as much as possible in the session - try to ensure as much activity as possible for all players during the session by adopting a game-based approach. (Drill-based coaching where players are standing waiting for their turn or are not engaged should be avoided).

Manipulate the conditions of the games to encourage every player to develop. For those more skilled you may need to set different goals during the sessions - likewise you may need to set different goals for those who need additional support.

Try to encourage self-motivation (intrinsic) by making your sessions as much fun as possible and by challenging players to practice and play whilst at home and away from your sessions and to come up with new solutions for the problems you set them in training.

By coaching through games, you can introduce imagery skills - by highlighting things that worked you can ask your players to reflect on what worked best for them and to reinforce positive thoughts for next time.

For example, if a player scores a try by executing a 2-on-1 situation - ask them what they did that worked well and therefore what they will try to do next time to ensure success? You can also ask other players to imagine what they would do in similar situations.

### Lifestyle factors

This stage is an ideal time to get your players into sporting habits that will stay with them for the rest of their sporting careers:

- Safety: World Rugby recommends that all players use a gumshield
- Values: At this stage, it is vital to introduce the spirit and values of the game such as partnership and team working, respect for team-mates, opposition, and officials - not to mention other volunteers
- Hydration: Always ensure there are water bottles available for players - encourage your players to be responsible for bringing their own
- Nutrition and rest: Work with players and parents to reinforce the benefits of healthy nutrition and sleep for young players' development.

### The FUN stage – (later years 9-12)

During the later years of this stage the focus should be on learning the basic skills of the game.

These ages are known as the skill hungry years as, motivationally speaking, children are geared to learn skills at this time, so this is an ideal opportunity to focus on building the skills of the game on to the movement skills of the children that have been developed in the earlier stage. Using games-based approaches to skill learning, the emphasis should be on developing basic running, handling and contact skills that will form the foundation of the players' future participation in the game.

Competition opportunities should reflect developmental principles (e.g. equal playing time for all) through small-sided games which allow enough involvement in the action to develop the necessary endurance fitness without additional training. Key physical qualities to develop in every training session are speed and agility. The growth of the nervous system continues until approximately 12 years of age and the development of fast-twitch muscle fibres (the fibres that generate power) is still able to be influenced.

Coaches should focus on developing confidence, the vital ingredient to future participation and performance, through fostering and reinforcing success in achieving basic goals or targets.

Focusing on praising and reinforcing effort is very important. Without understanding why it is important to try hard, players will not develop characteristics such as commitment and training intensity that will enable them to succeed in later years. The basis of commitment to future training is formed at this stage and coaches should encourage 'homework' and independent practice, as well as participation in a wide range of sports, including team games and athletics, gymnastics, and swimming. This could include informal play and non-structured practices and games (for example, games of touch rugby between friends).

The role of the coach at this stage is to motivate, stimulate confidence, and to develop skills and game-sense through planning and delivering well-structured programmes with progression within and between sessions. During this stage, the coach should:

- Provide an enjoyable environment that fosters a love of the game and promotes an environment that encourages children to continually challenge themselves
- Challenge players by setting basic goals; valuing effort and persistence; and reinforcing improvement by providing objective and constructive feedback
- Differentiate between individuals within a practice - make things more challenging for those who can do a task, less challenging for those who can't yet do it, but keep the task the same. This helps the player develop both self-esteem and the ability to realistically evaluate their performance.

- Provide equal playing and training opportunities for all players, regardless of how good you think they might be at this stage
- Foster an understanding of, and respect for, rugby's laws, spirit, and values.

### How to coach

All sessions should follow the Active, Purposeful, Enjoyable, Safe principles, and coaching through games should be used as much as possible.

Total length of session approximately 60 minutes:

- Warm-up (developing physical competence) approximately 15 minutes
- Main body of session (coaching through games) approximately 35-40 minutes
- Cool-down (developing physical competence) approximately 5-10 minutes.

Every session should have an aim or purpose as part of a longer-term plan for developing the players rather than just correcting what did not go well last match.

### What to coach

During this stage, coaches should develop their players in the following areas:

#### Physical competence

Physical competence should be developed through following the warm-up and cool-down guidance provided and in the delivery of game-sense coaching. Main areas to be worked on are:

- Agility, Balance, and Speed - through sprinting, acceleration, deceleration, change of direction, jumping, falling, getting back to feet. Developed through running and agility activities, jumping, throwing, team games, wrestling activities, ground to feet activities, rotational, gymnastic and reaction activities
- Co-ordination - Spatial awareness and body (sensory) awareness developed through gymnastic activities and game-sense coaching. Players should be able to combine a number of gymnastic and dynamic movements into a fluid motion within a confined space i.e. jump - forward roll - back to feet - accelerate away
- Strength and Power - developed through game-related skills, light medicine ball activities, jumping and hopping, body-weight activities, gymnastic and postural integrity. Introduction to Olympic lifting technique (broom handle resistance) should also occur during this stage
- Endurance - developed through game-based activity
- Flexibility and recovery - through effective warm-ups, animal walks and appropriate cool-downs. Players should also gain an understanding of benefits of range of movement in developing skill and injury prevention.

### How to build an appropriate warm-up

The warm-up section of your session should last for approximately 15 minutes and should progressively prepare the players for the session. The Later Years warm-up is more advanced than the Early Years warm-up and there is more emphasis on strength and speed development.

Remember this is also an opportunity to coach specific skills appropriate to the objective of your session.

Each warm-up should contain the following elements:

- Generalised movements - light general movement enabling increased blood flow round body - 2 minutes
- Light specific movement - more of a focus on the content of your session - 2 minutes
- Gradual build up range of movements - dynamic flexibility based around the specific movement of the session. Use of animal walks and gymnastic activities to improve players' physical competence - 5 minutes
- Movements to build intensity using specific exercises to aid speed development, strength development and contact skills - 2 minutes
- Specific strength, speed, and contact-based exercises at full intensity. Use body weight exercises, gymnastic and wrestling activities to enable increased levels of intensity to be achieved - 4 minutes
- Please see activity menu on page 36-37 for appropriate content.

### The importance of a cool-down

It is important for players to cool down appropriately after a session. Again, this needs to be structured accordingly to enable the body and mind to return to resting activity levels. This can be an opportunity to continue coaching specific skills at a lower intensity. Each cool-down should contain the following elements:

- Generalised movements - ensure activity / games are not above jogging pace - 3-5 minutes
- Static stretching - this will improve players' levels of flexibility and lessen future injury potential - 5 minutes
- Please see activity menu on page 50-52 for appropriate content.

### Skills competence

The coaching of skills should be developed through game-sense or whole-part-whole coaching and effective warm-up and cool-downs. Main areas to be focused on are:

- Handling
  - Passing - lateral, switch, loop, pop, clearing, chest
  - Catching - hand-catch, high ball, above head (jump and catch), low
  - Throwing - football shy
- Being able to pass to support in space
- Running
  - Evasive skills - dodge / evade, react to others, side-step, swerve, recognise and attack space
- Contact
  - Strong body shape maintained pre, during and post-contact
  - Leg drive / ability to stay on feet when tackled
  - Confident in contact situations
  - Ball presentation
  - Decision making pre, during and post-contact
  - Winning the ball on the ground / getting back to feet
- Defending
  - Tackling - individual technique - front, side and rear tackle and correct selection in different game situations
  - Going forward in defence
  - Working as a team in defence

- Teamwork
  - Working within a team to attack space and defend, go forward in attack and defence, communication with team in attack and defence
- Continuity
  - Keeping the ball alive (the hierarchy of contact **SOS** - **S**tep to evade defender/take a side on tackle, **O**ffload pre /during / post tackle, **S**et-up ruck / maul as last resort)
- Kicking and catching
  - Kicking and fielding skills - place kick, drop kick, punt kick, kicking on the run, fielding a high ball
- Set Piece - understanding the role of the set piece as a restart play with a contest for possession and an opportunity to create space for attack
- Scrum
  - strong / safe body position maintained (every player)
  - safe engagement procedure - crouch, bind, set (every player)
- Lineout
  - ability to outmanoeuvre and out-jump opposition in the lineout (every player)
  - ability to throw accurately to a moving jumper (every player)
  - note - supporting the jumper should not be introduced until youth rugby

### Mental factors

Coaches should strive to create a foundation built on confidence in each of their players. Coaches can model confidence in their players by providing opportunities for players to be successful in increasingly challenging practices with the coach providing constructive feedback which will develop self-confidence.

Involve every player as much as possible in the session - try to ensure as much activity as possible for all players during your coaching by adopting a game-based approach. (Drill based coaching, where players are standing waiting for their turn or are not engaged, should be avoided). Manipulate the conditions of the games to encourage every player to develop. For those more skilled, you may need to set different goals during the sessions - likewise you may need to set different goals for those who need additional support.

Praise the effort involved in achieving the outcome (perseverance, resilience, focus, drive etc.). This will encourage hard work and will provide the foundation for committed effort to overcome challenges.

Structure the sessions to encourage decision-making by your players by providing constructive feedback into what the consequences of their decisions were in relation to the principles of play and the aims and objectives of the coaching session. Try to encourage intrinsic (self) motivation as opposed to extrinsic (coach-led) motivation by making your sessions as much fun as possible and by challenging players to practice and play whilst at home and away from your sessions.

Demonstrations and feedback during these sessions should be focused on the relevant information your players need to be able to achieve success - this will help develop their attention-control skills. By coaching through games, you are able to introduce imagery skills - by highlighting things that worked you can ask your players to reflect on what worked best for them and to reinforce positive thoughts for next time. For example, if a player scores a try by executing a 2-on-1 situation - ask them what they did that worked well and therefore what they will try to do next time to ensure success? You can also ask other players to imagine what they would do in similar situations.

Promote a positive attitude to training and its relation to performance. If the players train poorly then they will more than likely play poorly. Set the standards as a group for both training and playing.

### Lifestyle factors

The aim at this stage is to further promote sporting habits that will stay with the players for the rest of their sporting careers. Work with players and parents to reinforce the following:

- Safety: World Rugby recommends that all players use a gumshield
- Values: At this stage, it is vital to introduce and further promote the spirit and values of rugby union and team sports such as partnership and team working, respect for team-mates, opposition, and officials - not to mention other volunteers
- Foster an understanding of the laws of the game
- Hydration: Always ensure there are water bottles available for players - encourage them to be responsible for bringing their own
- Nutrition: The benefits of healthy nutrition and the impact this can have on performance
- Rest: The importance of sleep and the impact that has on recovery.



### Putting it into practice

This section provides activities that can be used in your coaching sessions. Each activity has a descriptor and diagram to help you to plan, deliver, and review your session. Remember to plan for the long-term development of ALL your players.

### How to run a warm-up for younger children (Early Years - up to 8/9)

EARLY YEARS WARM-UP			
3 MINUTES	<b>GENERALISED MOVEMENTS</b>		
	<b>LIGHT GENERAL MOVEMENT (aimed at getting the blood moving around the body)</b> Start with light activity, general movements, jogging, passing, ball handling etc, build this to a moderate pace. This can include low-intensity tig games and low-intensity small-sided games. This can also include handling and passing drills.		
	<b>Pick one activity</b>		
	<b>General warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tig</li> <li>Build up tig</li> <li>Chain tig</li> <li>Octopus tig</li> <li>Freeze tig</li> </ul>	<b>Contact warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chain tig</li> <li>Octopus tig</li> <li>Leap Frog tig</li> <li>Tunnel tig</li> </ul>	<b>Handling and skills warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 pass game</li> <li>Ball familiarity and handling</li> <li>Circle drills</li> <li>Ball familiarity drills</li> <li>Tennis ball one hand catch and pass</li> </ul>
3 MINUTES	<b>GRADUALLY BUILD UP RANGE OF MOVEMENT</b>		
	Dynamic flexibility based around the specific movement of the session. Using animal walks and gymnastic activities to improve physical literacy		
	<b>Pick two activities from section one and two activities from section two</b>		
	<b>Section one: Animal walks (flexibility and strength)</b>		
3 MINUTES	<b>General warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bear crawl</li> <li>Cricket walk</li> <li>Duck walk</li> <li>Backwards roll</li> <li>Monkey walk</li> </ul>	<b>Contact warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab walk</li> <li>Kangaroo hop</li> <li>Backwards roll</li> <li>Crocodile walk</li> <li>Bear crawl</li> <li>Duck walk</li> </ul>	<b>Handling and skills warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bear crawl</li> <li>Cricket walk</li> <li>Duck walk</li> <li>Monkey walk</li> </ul>
	<b>Section two: Gymnastic activities for flexibility and strength</b>		
	<b>General warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forward hop and hold</li> <li>Lateral hop and hold</li> <li>Single leg balances (with ball pass)</li> <li>Prone stabilisation</li> <li>Standing long jumps</li> <li>Lateral hops</li> <li>Walking lunge</li> <li>Walking lunge (with ball pass)</li> <li>Shapes and balances</li> </ul>	<b>Contact warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prone stabilisation</li> <li>(on hands with ball pass)</li> <li>Overhead squat (broom handle)</li> <li>Forward roll</li> <li>Backward roll</li> <li>Wheelbarrow / walking on hands</li> <li>Lateral hop and hold</li> </ul>	<b>Handling and skills warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single leg balances (with ball pass)</li> <li>Forward hop and hold</li> <li>Lateral hop and hold</li> <li>Walking lunge (with ball pass)</li> <li>Shapes and balances</li> <li>Prone Stabilisation (on hands with ball pass)</li> </ul>

3 MINUTES	<b>MOVEMENT SPECIFIC TO THE SESSION</b>
	Pick one activity from section one and one activity from section two
	<b>Section one: Multi-directional speed technique / evasion</b>
	Aimed at getting the players up to maximum pace for sessions. Using specific exercises to aid speed development focusing on decision making and reaction, acceleration, deceleration and change of direction
3 MINUTES	Build up pace through reactive and tig games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rats and rabbits</li> <li>• Sharks and fishes</li> <li>• Relays, running races</li> <li>• Rob the nest</li> <li>• Relay, running races</li> <li>• 1 v 1</li> <li>• 2 v 1</li> </ul>
	<b>Section two: Preparation for contact and strength development</b>
	Aimed at building intensity for any session while focusing on strength development. Using body weight exercises and wrestling activities to reach training intensity.
	Build up pace and contact through wrestling and reactive tig games (development of strength using body weight exercises) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press up battles</li> <li>• Gauntlet</li> <li>• King of the ring</li> <li>• Partner carries</li> <li>• Cuban wrestling (hold on the floor)</li> </ul>





### How to run a warm-up for older children (Later Years - up to 11/12)

LATER YEARS WARM-UP			
2 MINUTES	<b>GENERALISED MOVEMENTS</b>		
	<b>LIGHT GENERAL MOVEMENT (aimed at getting the blood moving around the body)</b> Start with light activity, general movements, jogging, passing, ball handling etc, build this to a moderate pace. This can include low-intensity tig games and low-intensity small-sided games. This can also include handling and passing drills.		
	Pick one activity from below		
	<b>Speed based warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tig</li> <li>Build up tig</li> <li>Chain tig</li> <li>Octopus tig</li> <li>Freeze tig</li> <li>Tunnel tig</li> </ul>	<b>Strength based warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chain tig</li> <li>Octopus tig</li> <li>Leap Frog tig</li> <li>Tunnel tig</li> </ul>	<b>Contact based warm-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chain tig</li> <li>Octopus tig</li> <li>Tunnel tig</li> </ul>
2 MINUTES	<b>LIGHT SPECIFIC MOVEMENT (aimed at getting the blood moving around the body)</b>		
	Continue with the light movement to raise body temperature but do this through more specific drills for the session. i.e. speed, strength or contact based drills done at a low intensity.		
	Pick one activity from below		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 pass game</li> <li>Corner ball</li> <li>Evasion/ball familiarity and handling</li> <li>Circle drill</li> <li>Circle drill</li> <li>Evasion/ball familiarity</li> </ul>		
5 MINUTES	<b>GRADUALLY BUILD UP RANGE OF MOVEMENT</b>		
	Dynamic flexibility based around the specific movement of the session. Focusing on dynamic movements to improve physical literacy. Players should become increasingly familiar with these movements to enable them to develop their own warm-ups as they progress through the LTPD stages. This will then enable them to be increasingly responsible for their own warm-up provision.		
	Pick two activities from section one and two activities from section two		
	<b>Section one: Dynamic Flexibility</b>		
	<b>Speed based warm-up</b> <b>Postural dynamics for speed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking lunge</li> <li>High knee walk</li> <li>Hurdle walk</li> <li>Reverse hurdle walk</li> </ul> <b>Active dynamic stretches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skipping (rhythm)</li> <li>Skipping high knee</li> <li>Forward hop and hold</li> <li>Icky shuffle</li> <li>Heel kicks</li> <li>Carioca</li> </ul>	<b>Strength based warm-up</b> <b>Postural dynamics for strength</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prone balance with throw catch</li> <li>Forward hop and hold</li> <li>Lateral hop and hold</li> <li>Overhead squat</li> </ul> <b>Build up the range of motion through active dynamic stretches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High knee walk</li> <li>Hurdle walk</li> <li>Reverse hurdle</li> <li>Walking lunge</li> </ul>	<b>Contact based warm-up</b> <b>Postural dynamics for contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prone balance with throw catch</li> <li>Bear crawl</li> </ul> <b>Build up the range of motion through active dynamic stretches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High knee walk</li> <li>Hurdle walk</li> <li>Reverse hurdle</li> </ul>
5 MINUTES	<b>Section two: Specific animal walks</b>		
	<b>Speed based warm-up</b> <b>Animal walks based around flexibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bear crawl</li> <li>Duck walk</li> <li>Monkey walk</li> <li>Cricket walk</li> </ul>	<b>Strength based warm-up</b> <b>Animal walks for strength</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab walk</li> <li>Crocodile walk</li> <li>Kangaroo hop</li> <li>Bear crawl</li> </ul>	<b>Contact based warm-up</b> <b>Animal walks for contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab walk</li> <li>Crocodile walk</li> <li>Bear crawl</li> <li>Duck walk</li> </ul>





BUILD UP INTENSITY SPECIFIC TO THE SESSION	
Pick one activity from section one and one activity from section two	
Section one: Movements to build up intensity	
Aimed at getting the players up to maximum pace for sessions. Using specific exercises to aid speed development, strength and contact skills	
2 MINUTES	<div>Build up intensity through evasion and chaotic speed</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob the nest</li> <li>• Shadowing</li> <li>• Agility course (relay)</li> <li>• Cluster drill</li> </ul>
	<div>Build up intensity through wrestling games and body-weight exercises</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press up battle</li> <li>• Gauntlet</li> <li>• Base</li> <li>• Spinner</li> <li>• Cuban wrestling</li> <li>• Kneeling struggle</li> <li>• Wheelbarrow races</li> </ul>
Section two: Specific strength, speed and contact based exercises at full intensity	
Aimed at building intensity for any session while focusing on strength development. Using body weight exercises and wrestling activities to reach training intensity.	
4 MINUTES	<div>Straight line speed</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerations (from different start positions)</li> <li>• Relay races</li> <li>• Standing long jumps</li> <li>• Cluster drill</li> <li>• Resisted accelerations</li> </ul>
	<div>Strength development using light medicine balls and body-weight exercises</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicine ball slams</li> <li>• Medicine ball throws for distance</li> <li>• Medicine ball throws for height</li> <li>• Falling circle</li> <li>• Medicine ball chest pass</li> <li>• Medicine ball shot putt</li> <li>• Round heads</li> <li>• Partner carries</li> <li>• Partner press-ups</li> <li>• Zero</li> </ul>
	<div>Contact preparation and strength development drills</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 v 1 scrummaging</li> <li>• Partner resisted sprints</li> <li>• Falling circle</li> <li>• King of the ring</li> <li>• Gauntlet</li> <li>• Floor drags</li> <li>• Partner pulls</li> <li>• Crawling</li> </ul>



### Exercise Descriptors

ANIMAL WALKS		
<b>BEAR CRAWL</b>	On all fours, arms extended, player crawls forwards on feet instead of knees with back in straight position, hips above shoulders.	
<b>DUCK WALK</b>	Player puts hands behind head, squats down, and starts walking like a duck forwards and backwards.	
<b>MONKEY WALK</b>	Player walks around on two feet and only one hand. Alternates hands only when the walking hand gets fatigued.	
<b>CRICKET WALK</b>	Player squats down with arms between legs grabbing ankles. Player starts walking. Walks forward, backwards and side-to-side.	
<b>CRAB WALK</b>	Player reverses down on all fours (so it looks like they are almost like a chair), stomach facing upwards, then moves left leg and left arm, and then right leg and right arm. Walks forward, backwards and sideways.	
<b>CROCODILE WALK</b>	Player lies on floor to start then raises up on arms and feet. Chest as close to floor as possible. Elbows high. Moves forward moving left arm and left leg simultaneously, then follows with the	

	right arm and right leg, just like a crocodile walks.	
<b>KANGAROO HOP</b>	Player assumes a half squat position and jumps as high and as far as possible. On landing, lands in the half squat position and repeats.	

GYMNASTIC MOVEMENTS		
<b>FORWARD ROLL</b>	Player squats with knees together and places both hands flat on the floor in front, tucks head down whilst pushing legs. Keeps some weight supported with arms and rolls forward. Player should attempt to stand up without pushing on the floor with their hands.	
<b>BACKWARDS ROLL</b>	Player squats down, as their bottom moves towards floor, arches back and rolls backwards, chin and knees tucked into their chest. As they roll over, hands should make contact with floor pointing towards direction they have just rolled from. Player should finish standing up.	
<b>FORWARD HOP AND HOLD</b>	Player starts standing on a single leg, with other leg raised up to 90 degrees, then pushes off standing leg forwards, attempting to hop as far as possible - player should land on the same leg and stick in the position like a statue on landing for 3 seconds. Repeat with other leg.	
<b>LATERAL HOP AND HOLD</b>	Same as forward hop and hold - but player attempts to move laterally (sideways) from starting position. Player moves one way then the other, holding each hop for 3 seconds.	

### SINGLE LEG BALANCES

*Alternative: With ball pass*

Same starting position as forward hop and hold. Player stands upright with one knee up toward chest, with both hands free. Player attempts to balance for 10 seconds then changes legs. Progression - add ball, by catching and passing back with two / one hand in any direction.



### STANDING LONG JUMPS

Player starts standing with feet shoulder width apart and attempts to jump as far as possible and stick the position on landing like a statue for 3 seconds.



### LATERAL HOPS

Player starts standing with feet shoulder width apart and attempts to jump forward and sideways at a 45-degree angle onto one leg, sticking in the position on landing like a statue for 3 seconds. After which push off landing leg onto other leg and repeat.



### SHAPES AND BALANCES

#### SYMMETRICAL BALANCES

Players perform 3 symmetrical balances while standing (balances where both sides of the body are in the same position). Perform 3 symmetrical balances while on the floor.

#### ASYMMETRICAL BALANCES

Players perform 3 asymmetrical balances (balances where one side of the body is in a different position to the other - for example standing on one leg). Perform 3 asymmetrical balances while on the floor.

#### MOVING BALANCES

Players run around in a small area and on the coach's command perform either symmetrical or asymmetrical balances.



### STRENGTH AND STABILISATION EXERCISES

#### SQUATS

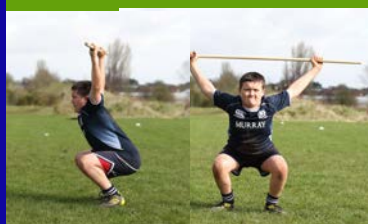
##### DOUBLE LEG SQUATS

Player stands upright and holds arms ahead for balance. Slowly sits back into a squat position (head up, chest up, back straight, and thighs parallel to the floor). Heels must stay in contact with the floor at all times and the trunk stays upright with neck aligned to the feet.



##### OVERHEAD SQUAT

Player stands upright, using broomstick held across waist with hands a little bit more than shoulder width apart. Once ready, move bar overhead with straight arms in line with ears. Keeping chest and head up, and maintaining a strong posture, squats as low as possible, then returns to starting position and repeat.



#### WALKING LUNGE

*Alternative: with ball pass*

From a standing start, player lifts one knee up toward chest, leans forwards and strides placing foot in a controlled manner in front (not heavy landing). Player pushes off leg forwards and repeats for other leg as if marching whilst keeping chest up and back tight in a rigid position therefore minimising lateral movement and remaining stable throughout. Progression 1) Add ball - catch and pass back during movement. 2) Backward walking lunge.



#### LATERAL STABILISATION

##### LATERAL BRIDGE ON FOREARM

Player lies down sideways and supports them self with one arm. The other arm rests on the hip. Player should keep entire body straight. The legs must be extended and in one line with the spine and the head. Player must not let hips hang down. The forearm of the supporting arm should remain flat on the ground and the hand closed.

The angle between trunk and supporting upper arm should be 90 degrees. This position is held until the player can no longer hold perfect form.



##### LATERAL BRIDGE ON HAND

The same action as above but the player supports their weight on their hand not forearm. i.e. their arm is fully extended at a right angle to their body and they are supporting their weight on their hand. This position is held until the player can no longer hold perfect form.





### PRONE STABILISATION

*Alternative: on hands with ball throw and catch*

Player assumes a press-up position. Pulls belly-button in as tight as possible, whilst squeezing glutes (bum-cheeks) together to maintain a rigid plank-like position for set period of time. Progression - catch and pass a ball back in one hand whilst retaining rigid position on the other extended arm.



### PRESS UPS

The player sets their shoulder blades back and down and supports their weight on their hands and feet. Hands are aligned under the shoulders, fingers facing forward. Glutes are contracted and abdomen is drawn in. Player lowers the chest to the floor and returns to starting position. The trunk remains fixed and straight at all times.



### MEDICINE BALL ROTATIONS

#### SEATED

Player sits with their feet in front of them, knees at a 90 degrees angle and back tight. Arms straight out in front (in line with chest) and a medicine ball in their hands.

While keeping their legs and hips fixed, player rotates the upper body through 180 degrees while keeping arms straight and back tight. Increase the difficulty by receiving the medicine ball from a pass, rotating upper body through 90 degrees and passing it on.

#### STANDING

As above but in a standing position.

### STRENGTH AND WRESTLING MOVEMENT DRILLS

#### ZERO

*Equipment: light medicine ball*

Player stands with feet shoulder width apart and holds the medicine ball level with ground on left hip. Keeping arms straight player lifts ball over the top of head and down to right hip and repeats.



#### ROUND-HEADS

*Equipment: light medicine ball*

Player stands with feet shoulder width apart, holding a medicine ball vertically in both hands. Player passes the medicine ball around head in clockwise / anti-clockwise direction, with centre of the medicine ball level with their eye-line.



#### CRAWLING

*Alternative: Crocodile crawl*

In bear crawl position, player crawls 10-15m forwards, backwards, sideways in addition to crossing over hand. If performing Crocodile crawl - player must keep body as low as possible to ground.



#### WHEEL-BARROWS

With a partner, player assumes a wheelbarrow position the hand walks 10-20m.

##### WHEELBARROW JUMPS

Same as above, except the 'wheelbarrow' has to hand jump (both hands push off ground) as far as possible over 10-20m.

##### SIDEWARD WHEELBARROW

"Wheelbarrow" hand walks or jumps sideways over set distance.



#### PARTNER CARRIES

##### FIREMAN

Partner lies over carrier's shoulder while carrier walks 20m.

##### BABY

With arms extended, carrier picks up partner under armpits and back as well as back of legs, carrying partner in front of them for 20m whilst walking.

##### PIGGY-BACK

Partner climbs on carrier's back, arms over shoulders and around collar, while carrier lifts partner legs and walks for 20m.



#### FLOOR DRAGS

Lying on front, player pulls themselves using arms only (no legs) for 10m.



# WORLD RUGBY *Training & Education*

## Coaching Children

<b>PARTNER PULLS</b>	With a partner lying on back, working individual holds partner's wrists or ankles and drags partner 20m.	
<b>PARTNER PRESS-UPS</b>	<p><b>SHOULDER PRESS-UP</b> One player standing upright, while partner leans forward to player (facing each other). Standing player holds other person on shoulders while they maintain a rigid 45-degree angle (body taut). Standing player then presses partner like a press-up for 20-30 seconds.</p> <p><b>NECK PRESS-UP</b> Same as above, except standing player places hands on partner's head. Player being pressed braces neck while working player presses for 10 seconds.</p>	 
<b>CUBAN WRESTLING</b>	Player must attempt to wrestle opponent to ground or push out of matted area. Must not last more than 15 seconds.	
<b>BASE</b>	The defensive wrestler begins flat on his stomach with the offensive wrestler on top. On the coach's command the defensive wrestler must take the initiative and work to get back to his "base" or on his hands and knees while the offensive wrestler tries to keep him flat. The time interval should be short (5 to 15 seconds).	
<b>SPINNER</b>	The defensive wrestler remains stationary on his hands and knees while the offensive wrestler assumes a starting position with his chest in contact with the defensive wrestler's back. On the coach's command the offensive wrestler initiates a spinning movement around the defensive wrestler contacting the mat with only his toes and contacting his opponent with only his chest. Each time the offensive wrestler reaches his opponents head, he should change directions. The spinning should continue for intervals of 15 seconds to 1 minute.	
<b>KNEELING STRUGGLE</b>	The wrestlers assume a kneeling position facing each other in some type of tie-up position (hand to hand or shirt grab). On the coach's command, both wrestlers try to pull or push or twist each other to the mat while remaining on their knees and in tie position (i.e.	

don't release grip). Intervals should be 30 seconds to 1 minute.

### SPEED BASED MOVEMENTS

#### HEEL KICKS

While walking or jogging, when the player's foot breaks contact with the ground it is immediately dorsi-flexed and lifted to the hip (heel to butt). Only the outside ball of the foot makes contact with the ground at any time. Make sure the player's body is held in correct posture (chest up, shoulders back) and heel comes to butt every stride.



#### WALKING HEEL KICKS

Heel kick performed as a walk. Make sure player's body is held in correct posture (chest up shoulders back) and heel comes to butt every stride.



#### HIGH KNEE DRILL

Jogging with high knees the player's weight should be on the balls of the supporting foot. The working leg is raised to 90 degrees with the toe pointing upwards. Make sure body is held in correct posture (chest up shoulders back), the foot is driven into the ground by the hip and the hip reaches full extension.



#### HIGH KNEE WALK

High knee drill performed as a walk.

#### HIGH KNEE SKIP

High knee drill performed as a skip.

#### HURDLE WALK

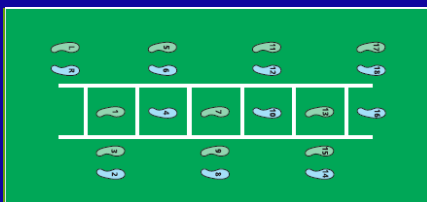
Player walks in a straight line and lifts alternate legs as if going over high hurdles. Make sure player's body is held in correct posture (chest up shoulders back), maintaining full extension at the hip of the supporting leg.

#### REVERSE HURDLE WALK

Player performs a hurdle walk while walking backwards.

### ICKY SHUFFLE

Player stays on the balls of their feet moving forward with short quick steps, performing the following pattern:  
Two steps left, one step forward, two steps right, one step forward and repeat for a set distance. Make sure player's body is held in correct posture (chest up shoulders back), maintaining full extension at the hip of the supporting leg.



### CARIOCA

Moving laterally, the rear foot of the player crosses the front of their body and then moves around the back. Simultaneously the lead foot does the opposite. Make sure the player's body is held in correct posture (chest up shoulders back). Make sure the heel touches the butt every stride.



### Main Coaching Activities

We have developed a 5-stage progression to introduce children to the game in a safe and progressive manner. Each stage has a number of appropriate activities – select ones appropriate to the level of player experience. Each stage has a downloadable PDF containing guidance on how to run the activity. Note that Unions may have their own Age Grade Law Variations which you **must** adhere to. In case of doubt please contact your Union for clarification.

#### 1. Introducing the game through Touch/Tag

- Rob the nest
- 5 Pass Game
- Sharks and Fishes
- End Ball (and variations)
- Corner Ball
- Relay Races – ball familiarisation
- Rats and Rabbits
- Sharks and Fishes (and variations)
- Breakout touch
- Multi-direction end ball
- Tag thief
- Overload touch and variations
- L-shaped passing
- Simple passing
- 4 v 2 continuous touch
- Any direction touch (4 goals)
- Passing gauntlet
- Offload touch
- Drop down touch
- Middle man passing relay
- Number touch
- Group touch
- Wide touch
- Diamond Offload

#### 2. Moving from Tag to Tackle (introducing contact)

- Guidance for tackle technique
- Different types of tackle
- Drop down touch
- Grid Tackles – tackle mania
- Breakout touch – progress to tackle
- Pop off the ground touch



- Sharks & Fishes on knees (with tackles)
- 5 pass game (with tackles)
- Ball presentation touch
- Channel challenge
- Ruck touch

### 3. Developing Contact

- Ruck touch (and variations)
- Ruck around the clock
- Small sided game 4 v 4, 5 v 5 etc.
- Paramatta touch
- Pop off the ground touch (with tackle)
- Overload touch (contact progression)
- Sharks & Fishes (contact progression)
- Breakout touch (contact progression)
- Pyramid Attack
- Drop off touch (contact variation)
- Contact game – nearest 3 in

### 4. Introducing Set Piece

- Lineout end ball
- Lineout move and catch
- Lineout end ball progression
- 1 v 1 Scrum practice/game
- 2 v 2 Scrum practice/game
- 3 v 3 Scrum practice/game
- 5 v 5 Scrum practice /game
- Small sided game – lineout at every breakdown
- Lineout circle

### 5. Developing Technical & Tactical understanding

- Wide touch
- 4 v 2 Continuous touch
- Group touch
- 2 ball end ball progression
- Switch and Loop pass
- Offload touch (tackle progression)
- Diamond Offload
- Rugby Tennis
- Paired Kicking

- Rugby Rounders
- Split-up touch
- Single line touch
- Ruck and Roll
- Pyramid Attack
- Middle man passing relay with defender
- Double line touch
- Colour touch
- Breakout touch
- 2 v 2 Breakout



### How to run a cool-down for all children

## FUNDAMENTAL AND LEARNING TO PLAY COOL-DOWNS

### GENERALISED MOVEMENTS

The cool-down should begin with light general movement. Choose from one of the games below. When coaching the cool-down reduce the size of the area so that the intensity is much lower (no player should be above a jogging level).

Any low-intensity drill or game can be used at this stage.

- Tig
- Build up tig
- Chain tig
- Octopus tig
- Freeze tig
- Tunnel tig

### FLEXIBILITY

Choose four stretches from the list below. All stretches should be held for a minimum of 30 seconds and performed at least twice on each side of the body.

- Raised leg hamstring stretch
- Glute stretch 1
- Hip flexors
- Groin stretch
- Glute stretch 2
- Quadriceps
- Crucifix
- Back extension

### Exercise Descriptors

FLEXIBILITY			
<b>RAISED LEG HAMSTRING STRETCH</b>	Whilst standing, player raises one leg onto a level and stable surface. Player keeps their raised leg and their back straight and their head up.		
<b>GLUTE STRETCH 1</b>	In full squat, player puts their hands forwards onto the floor with their elbows on their inside thigh close to knees. As they lean in they should push their elbows apart forcing their knees apart until they will not go any further. Players should try to straighten their back in this position.		
<b>HIP FLEXORS</b>	Putting one foot forwards, players keep the front knee at 90 degrees and put the same shoulder to the knee. Players should keep this front leg position using the rear foot to creep the rear leg backwards. At the limit, players should push the groin area forwards as far as possible. Hold for 30 seconds.		
<b>GROIN STRETCH</b>	In sitting, players should cross one foot over the other knee, use their arms to pull the knee towards the opposite shoulder. Players should feel the stretch in the buttock area. Hold for 30 seconds.		
<b>GLUTE STRETCH 2</b>	Players lie on back and put one ankle on the opposite knee, reach around either side of the knee and pull towards their chest. Players should try to get their lower legs perpendicular. Hold for 30 seconds.		
<b>QUADRICEPS</b>	Players lie face down, clasping an ankle and pull it up to their buttock. If they cannot reach the ankle they should start on their side and then roll onto their front.		

### CRUCIFIX

Players lie on their back, keeping their shoulders on the floor. Then they should take one leg across the body keeping the knee bent to 90 degrees, lift the hips slightly in the opposite direction and then relax them. Players should use their opposite hand to pull the knee down towards the floor.



### BACK EXTENTION

Player lies face down, placing their hands at shoulder level and lifting their shoulders by straightening elbows. Players should allow their hips to drop down by relaxing and breathing out. Hold for 10 seconds and then repeat.



### References

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