

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD
LEVEL 1 COACHING
INTRODUCING RUGBY



Course manual and workbook

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Level 1 Coaching Introducing Rugby

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Pre-course modular work (please come with copies of relevant certificates):

- Complete the online course at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Complete the Laws exam at www.irblaws.com
- Download and read the “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby” (www.irbrugbyready.com/downloads)

Modular work recommended after the course:

- Complete the www.irbsandc.com online course
- Complete the “Concussion” education modules on www.irbplayerwelfare.com
- Be aware of the information and resources for coaches and players on www.irbkeeprugbyclean.com

Overview

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Foreword

Welcome to the IRB Level 1 Coaching course. This course is designed to enable coaches to acquire basic skills so that players new to the game learn to play in safe, enjoyable competition.

The presence of sport in a person's life carries enormous benefits for social, physical and personal development while broadening cultural awareness. Rugby is a uniquely inclusive sport, and you as the coach hold a position of genuine influence over the player's rate of personal development and their sense of community and self-worth.

The IRB Level 1 Coaching course aims to develop coaches who know how to coach as well as what to coach. The course is delivered using the following structure:

- Firstly, it uses the principles of attack and defence to give an overview of the game;
- Secondly, it uses key factor analysis to allow you to explain, demonstrate, practise, perform and analyse the skills of the game;
- Thirdly, the game knowledge modules are underpinned by generic modules covering planning, risk management, the role of the coach, communication, child & adolescent growth, Rugby strength and conditioning and the Laws of the Game.

Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to practise your coaching skills. Grasp this opportunity for feedback from your IRB Educator and your peers.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the course and benefit from participation.

Kind regards,



Mark Harrington
Training Manager
International Rugby Board

Acknowledgments

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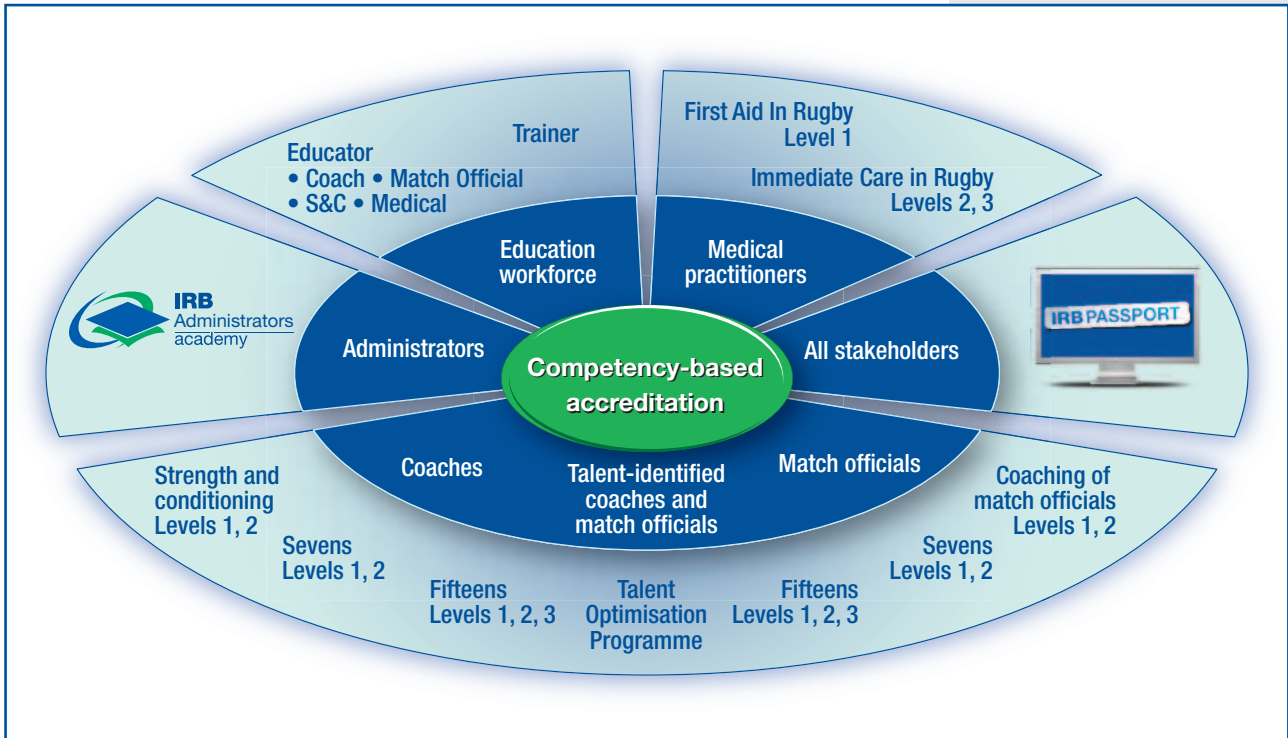
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About this resource

This resource is both a course manual and workbook and a copy should be given to each participant on the course.

Educator notes are available separately from the IRB.

IRB Training and Education courses



IRB Training and Education courses have evolved since the mid 1990s, and have been updated regularly since then using the expertise in member Unions and the skills of a select number of IRB Trainers who are also 'content experts'.

Since 2006, the IRB provision has extended to serve more stakeholders, as demonstrated in the portfolio above. All courses are now competency-based, designed to provide learning and training appropriate to the contexts in which coaches and officials are active.

In addition, IRB courses can now only be delivered by IRB licensed Educators who have demonstrated their technical and facilitation skills to prescribed standards. All record keeping and certification is undertaken from the IRB's headquarters in Dublin, Ireland.

Introduction to Level 1 Coaching

Rugby offers great scope for both individual and team performance. The primary aim of the game is to provide the opportunity to gain enjoyment and satisfaction through the effective performance of a wide range of skills: individual skills like running, passing, catching, kicking, tackling, and collective skills like mauling and rucking and scrummaging, in order to play successfully and to win the contest. While these skills are predominantly technical, players also require sound individual and collective decision-making about what to do and when, and an appropriate level of fitness to perform well in the game.

This “Introducing Rugby” resource helps explain ways to develop a basic understanding of the Game, and how both players and coaches can apply the principles of the Game in practice and in play.

Each module in the course begins with some explanation and demonstration, and illustrates practices using different coaching methodologies. As much as possible the emphasis is put on the practice of coaching and teaching players who are new to the Game, which means that all practice sessions should be adapted to suit the ability and culture of the players at the introductory level.

This approach promotes a game in which all players are encouraged to participate fully, using their skills and knowledge to score as many points as possible within the Laws of the Game.

Course timetable

Unit 1 – Game knowledge		
Module 1	Understanding the game, its principles and coaching methodologies	2hrs 15mins
Module 2	Applying the principles and skills to team performance	1hrs 15mins
Unit 2 – Planning		
Module 3	Practice planning and practice demonstration	3hrs 15mins
Module 4	Laws of the Game, modified games, risk management and role of the coach	45mins
Conclusion		30mins

Total duration: 8hrs (1 day course)

General course information

Course resources required (printed or available electronically)

- *A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby*
- *Coaching Key Factors*
- *Level 1 Coaching course manual*

Assessment

In order to be awarded the IRB Certificate of Attendance, the participant must attend all modules of the course.

Delivery methods

This course will be delivered by:

- *Presentations*
- *Video analysis*
- *Problem solving tests*
- *Scenarios*
- *Practical sessions using explanation, demonstration and practice.*

Course learning outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Plan a practice session that meets the needs of the players.
2. Deliver the planned session.
3. In planning and delivering show competency in the areas of:
 - planning.
 - group management.
 - communication.
 - game knowledge and skills.

At the conclusion of the course, you should be able to:

(a) Plan and deliver a relevant session

- (i) State what is intended to be achieved in the session, i.e., there are learning outcomes.
- (ii) Plan the use of a skill progression using modified games.
- (iii) Identify the key coaching points.
- (iv) Plan relevant to group needs.
- (v) Plan, provide and utilise equipment.

(b) Deliver a relevant session

(i) Group management

1. Ensure a safe and enjoyable environment.
2. Maximise participation.
3. React to group needs.
4. Conduct relevant activities that achieve the learning outcome.
5. Manage the time appropriately.
6. Ensure the pace of the practice.
7. Ensure the flow of the practice.

(ii) Communication

1. Provide clear explanations and directions.
2. Check for understanding through listening.
3. Demonstrate vocal variety - pitch, pace, tone, volume.
4. Provide feedback - relevant, timely, specific.
5. Demonstrate questioning technique using both closed and open questions.
6. Demonstrate positive body language.
7. Conclude session by re-visiting learning outcomes and key coaching points.

(c) Game knowledge

(i) The principles of Rugby

1. Identify the principles and the skills that are needed to play the game.
2. Apply the principles of the game to team play.

(ii) Skill analysis

1. Observe play to identify the standard of skill performance.
2. Analyse the performance of the skills using Key Coaching Points.
3. Implement appropriate methods to improve skills.

Five steps to Player Welfare



Be a lifesaver; know your A-B-C

- **A:** Airway, **B:** Breathing, **C:** Circulation
- Saving a life always starts with A
- If you don't have an A you won't have a B or C
- Airway: open it, clear it, maintain it



If they are on the deck, think about the neck

- Don't shake them, don't roll them, don't sit them up
- Think about the spine, keep it in line and take your time
- Stop the game and ask about pain
- An unconscious player has a neck injury until proven otherwise



Train to prevent injuries

- Don't suddenly change your training
- Protect players returning from injury - they are at increased risk of injury
- Undertake high risk training (contact, sprints) at low risk times (when not fatigued)
- Injury prevention: it's in the balance (exercises)



Tackle concussion

- Don't lose your head, read the signs instead
- Concussion makes no sense - a concussed player may be confused - they are at increased risk of harm and should be removed from the game
- Recognise and remove
- If in doubt, sit it out
- Don't risk your brain to win a game



Kick infection into touch

- Don't share your blood on clothes and towels; blood spreads infection; wash it or dispose of it
- A wound neglected is a wound infected
- The solution to pollution is dilution - wash the wound with large amounts of water
- Clean it, then cover it

Unit one - Game knowledge: principles of play, coaching methods and skill development

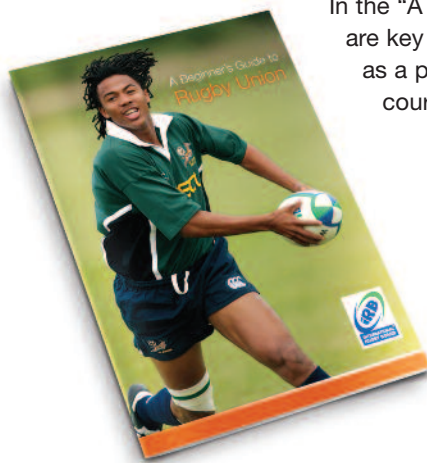
Module one - Understanding the Game and the principles of play

Learning outcome

At the end of this module, you will be able to present a basic understanding of the Game and the principles of play, based on the observation of the video “Understanding Rugby” and the “Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”. You will also be able to develop a simple analysis of aspects of play and, from this analysis, choose an appropriate coaching method to help the players play more effectively.

Task 1 - The “Understanding Rugby” film and “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”

You’ll now watch the ‘Understanding Rugby’ film which will provide you with an introduction to the game of Rugby.



In the “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby” resource, there are key points linked to the film, which you can use as a point of reference throughout this Level 1 course.

A brief introduction to Rugby

Variations of the Game may be played on any safe rectangular space so long as there are touchlines, goal-lines and an in-goal area for scoring tries. The dimensions should suit the number and ages of the players. Fewer players and young players require less space than the full field used for 15-a-side Rugby and adult 7-a-side Rugby.

The dimensions and weight of the ball may vary according to the age and physical abilities of the players. Younger players use a smaller, lighter ball than the regulation ball. As a guide, the ball should be of a size that the players can catch using both their hands. They should not have to catch it in their arms, as this would make it difficult to perform the skills of the Game.

The Game and the players

Refer to “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”.

Over time, players will find that they become suited to a particular position in the team. This will be as a result of their physical build and attributes, their skills and preferences. Positional specialisation should be approached with caution. As the player grows up, they may become unsuitable for the position in which have specialised in at an early age, and may be lost to the Game.

The team by playing position

Refer to “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”.

Throughout this resource, positions will be referred to by the number of the player in that position. This will avoid confusion when more than one name is given for a particular position.

The structure of the Game

Application of the Laws in general play

Refer to “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”.

Set plays

Refer to “A Beginner’s Guide to Rugby”.

Set plays are used to start and restart the Game when stoppages occur.

Player functions in a game

Refer to “Coaching Key Factors” with regards to “Handling”, “Running in support of the ball carrier”, “Side-on tackle” and “Front-on tackle”.



Task 2 - Identify examples of the principles of Rugby

After discussing your findings from the support resources referred to, and at the conclusion of the film, identify and explain examples of each principle by completing the following table. Use the examples that are given to trigger more examples of each principle.

Principles	Examples
Contesting possession in order to attack, e.g. winning the ball once it has been kicked off.	
Attacking by moving the ball forward, e.g. kicking and recovering the ball.	
Retaining possession by using phase play to create space, e.g. rucking.	
Defending to regain possession, e.g. defence line moving forward together.	
A multi-faceted game, e.g. different body types.	
Rewards and penalties, e.g. reward - throwing in at a lineout when the team forces the opposition to kick the ball out. Penalty - not throwing the ball into the scrum when a player knocks the ball on.	

Task 3 - Coaching methods to introduce and practice the Game

The primary role of the coach of players new to the game is to help them to understand the basic logic of the game and to develop the skills required to perform well. So, before introducing the game to new players, all coaches need to determine their opinions about the following:

- Their understanding of how the game works (how to get possession of the ball and keep it for long enough to score, and, for the opposition, how to get back the ball when they are in defense)
- The key functions of each of the players in general play and in set play
- How and when to intervene to explain or demonstrate a key skill

There are many ways to play and different methods of coaching to help players develop their skills. Some put more emphasis on practices designed to build individual skills in isolation, while others focus more on game-like, situational practices aimed at developing better decision-making in the context of the game: games for understanding, game sense, whole-part-whole, “zooming in and zooming out”, are just a few.

There are two broad approaches to introducing the game to new players: the first, following the instructions of the coach, is based on practicing and perfecting individual and collective technical skills like passing and catching the ball, kicking accurately, tackling, etc. This approach is **explicit and non-adaptive**.

The second, and more player-centred approach prioritises having players practice in game-like situations, in which the players are expected to react to the unexpected, and to link good understanding and decision-making with appropriate technical execution. It is an **implicit and adaptive** approach, depending on the needs of the players at any given moment in their learning how to play effectively.

If and when the coach observes that there are deficiencies in the skills of the players, this signals that there is a need for more explicit and non-adaptive technical practices.

Linking practice and play

What we do know is that once new players begin to play, they will find themselves in a variety of situations, with or without the ball, close to the opposing players or not, and they will have to make quick decisions about what to do next, and then execute that skill. So whatever method is adopted by the coach, it will have to take this reality into account.

So, for example, when they practice and play, players need to be put in situations where they have to decide and execute any or all of the following:

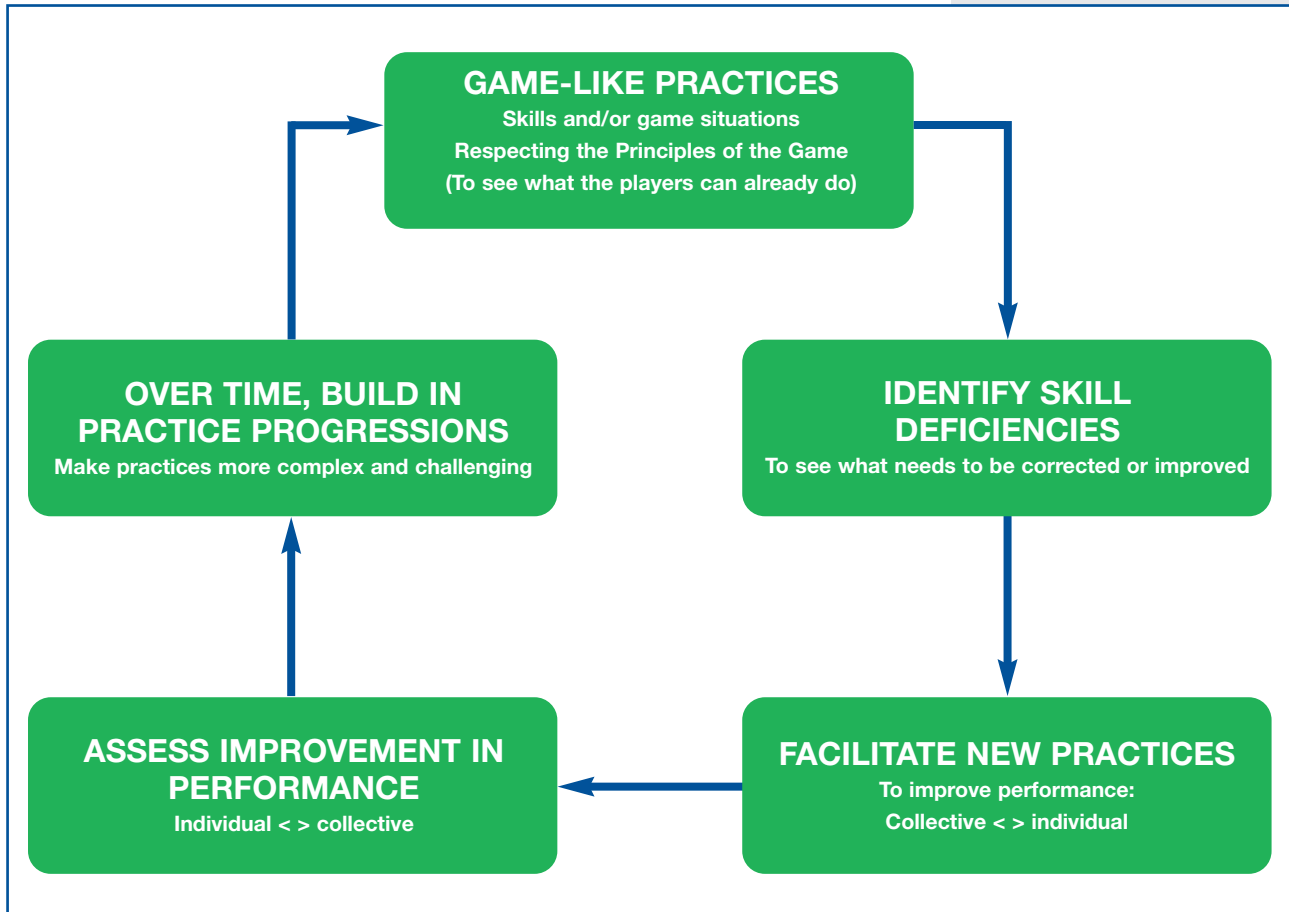
- to take the ball into contact or run for space?
- to run for space or to pass the ball to another player in a better space?
- to go forward with close supporting players or to move the ball away to players in space?

- to drive forward into contact or go for the ball in defense?
- to tackle the ball carrier or to cover the support player or the next receiver?

The principles of play, described in the early part of this module suggest the following:

- Once your team win possession they can attack the opposition from anywhere on the field of play
- Moving the ball forward with as many players in an organized formation as possible will enable the team to keep possession and eventually enable them (in possession of the ball) to cross the opposition goal-line and score;
- Being aware of what is happening around them in the game at any given moment will help players exploit any weak point in the opponents' play; this is as true for the attacking team, as it is for the defending team;
- Consistent pressure will eventually disrupt whatever the opposition tries to do;
- Being able to sense where the weak points are in the opposition will show the team how and where to go forward; this is as true for the defending team as it is for the attacking team.

In Module 2, there are examples of both kinds of practices. These practices all need to respect the learning cycle presented in the practice model below:



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The IRB recommends that the best way to learn how to play the Game safely and effectively is to play modified forms of the game that respect the principles of play and the most important Laws. This would ideally include conditioned contact (after an appropriate warm-up), provided the coaching and playing environment is considered safe enough to do this.
- It is best to begin with small-sided team games (with up to 6-8 players in each team) in a smaller playing area or grid. These games work well with beginners, as each player gets to be more active by being closer to the ball and being more actively involved.
- The modified game should include as much passing and catching as possible – and little or no kicking – as this will give all the players the opportunity to run and pass the ball and, eventually, to be tackled, and to tackle opponents when they have the ball, with relatively little momentum.
- The size of the playing area should be adjusted according to the numbers of players on each team.

Task 3.1

Begin by describing a practice to develop a simple technical ability like “catching the ball and going forward”. Using the recommendations listed above, describe how you could use a game-like practice based on a more implicit and adaptive approach designed to enable the players to improve the same skill through a modified game.

Using an implicit and adaptive approach, the coach acts as a facilitator for the players’ development of the ability to react to the unexpected, to link basic understanding of how the game works with decision-making and sound execution of individual and team skills.

With this approach in mind, let’s consider what a typical practice session would look like in the hands of a coach:

Start:

Explanation of the theme(s) of the practice session, based on the last session or the performance in the previous match.

Warm-up:

Ideally, the warm-up is directly related to the principal theme(s) of the practice session.

Main parts of the session:

A number of game-like situations relating to the key theme(s) of the session:

- team against team, or large group against large group, in the context of general movement in the game;
- the presence of the opposition creates the situations that demand some tactical response;
- players must be put in situations where there are at least a couple of options available;

- similar situations with smaller numbers, emphasizing greater detail (6-8 players per group);
- 1 v 1 in order to get into the detail of the practice: 1 v 1, 1 v 1 + 1, 2 v 1, 2 v 1 + 1;
- return to the full team in a game-like situation in order to assess whether skills have improved
- return to the cool-down and review of how the practice has gone.

Task 3.2

Discuss when a more explicit and non-adaptive approach may be more appropriate to meet the players' needs and respect the need to create a safe practice environment.

Unit one - Game knowledge: principles of play, coaching methods and skill development

Module two - Applying the principles of play to the development of skills

Learning outcome

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to analyse the play of a team using the principles of play and the skills required to respect each principle, with a view to then planning and delivering a practice session to meet the needs of the players.

Please have the “Coaching Key Factors” resource ready to hand.

Task 4 - Use the principles of play to analyse the team’s performance

For this task, you should arrange yourselves in pairs, with one of the pair assessing if the team performs the principles of Rugby successfully or unsuccessfully (Task 4.1) and the other linking the principles to the skills performed in order to achieve them (Task 4.2).

Task 4.1

Use the following table to identify whether one of the teams performs the principles successfully (✓) or unsuccessfully (X).

The principles of the Game of Rugby							
Contesting possession in order to attack		Attack by moving the ball forward		Retain possession by using phase play to create space		Defend to regain possession	
✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X

Task 4.2

Apply the principles and skills of the game to the performance of a team. Use the following table to establish the link between the principles and the skills of the game.

Skills	From principles to skills (place a tick in the correct column)			
	Contesting possession	Attacking	Retaining possession	Defending
Passing				
Running with the ball				
Picking up the ball				
Punt kicking				
Drop kicking				
Place kicking				
Falling in the tackle				
Tackling				
Supporting				
Rucks				
Mauls				
Attack pattern				
Defence pattern				
Scrum				
Lineouts				
Kick-offs				
Back-line attack				
Phase play attack				
Back-line defence				
Phase play defence				

Task 5 - Practising to play and improving skill deficiencies

Having watched the performance of the team and the individual players during the game or coaching session, consider the following:

- Which key factors need to be improved for the players to improve their ability to perform?
- Devise one or two game-related practices that will help the players improve their skill, and discuss with your co-coaches if and when you can “check-off” the relevant key factors. There are some examples of modified games below to assist you in this task.

In the following examples, the assumption is that the players have completed a short warm-up, and have basic running, passing and handling skills (go forward, ball in two hands, hands up reaching for the pass, etc.).

Some key concepts to remember in the design and implementation of game-like practices:

- to encourage players to move the ball laterally, make the practice area wider
- to practice having the ball-carrier go into contact, make the practice area narrower
- to make it easier for the attackers to get past the defenders, reduce the number of defenders
- to make it more difficult for the attackers to move the ball forward, increase the number of defenders
- progress from conditioned defense (simply occupying the space in front of the attackers and not attempting to get the ball back, to full contact within the Laws and an effort to get the ball back after the tackle)
- practice different handling skills by varying the way the ball is delivered to the attackers, e.g. an easy pass, a shoulder-high pass, stationary ball on the ground, rolling ball on the ground, etc.
- if the defenders manage to get the ball back, allow them to counter-attack
- vary the side of the practice area from which the ball is put into play, so that players get used to moving in one direction or the other

Set up an appropriate practice area:

- For games involving 10-20 players, an area of 25m x 25m

Tell the players the following:

- In attack, the practices are about passing, running and supporting each other
- In defence, the practices are about stopping the attackers moving the ball forward and forcing them to decide where and when and how to keep moving the ball forward
- When they are the ball carrier, they should be looking at where the defenders are and where their support players are
- When they are not the ball carrier, they should be looking at where the defenders are and deciding whether to move in to support the ball carrier, or moving into a space where they can receive a pass from the ball carrier

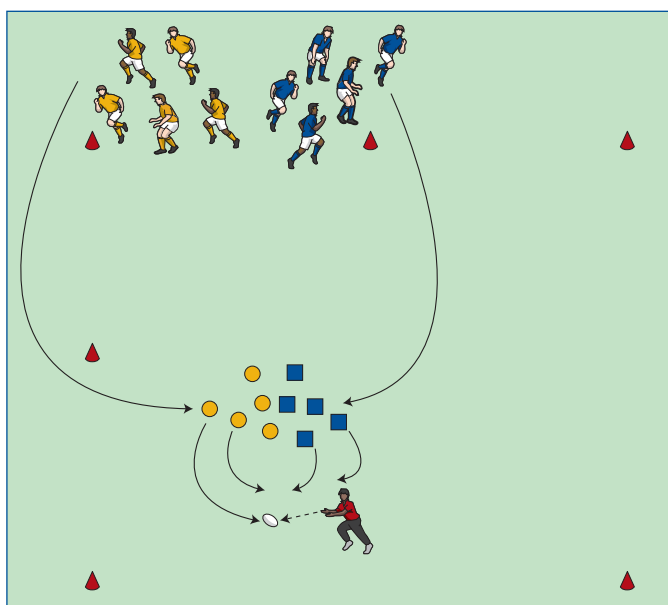
Practice #2 – Moving the ball forward and supporting the ball carrier

- Up to 8 against 8, but begin with smaller groups if necessary
- Attackers begin in one corner of the practice area
- Coach delivers the ball to the first attacker as the defenders run around the cone halfway down the practice area and then confront the attackers
- In the beginning, allow only conditioned defence and the attackers to keep possession of the ball
- Progress to full contact with the option of the defenders actively working to get the ball back



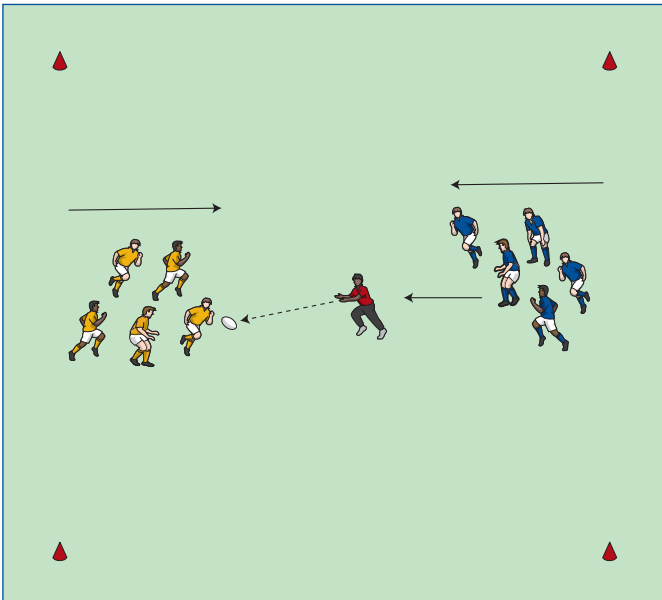
Practice #3 – Moving the ball forward and supporting the ball carrier

- As above, but the coach puts a second ball into play, if and when the movement of the ball slows down or stops after the initial attack by the ball carrier



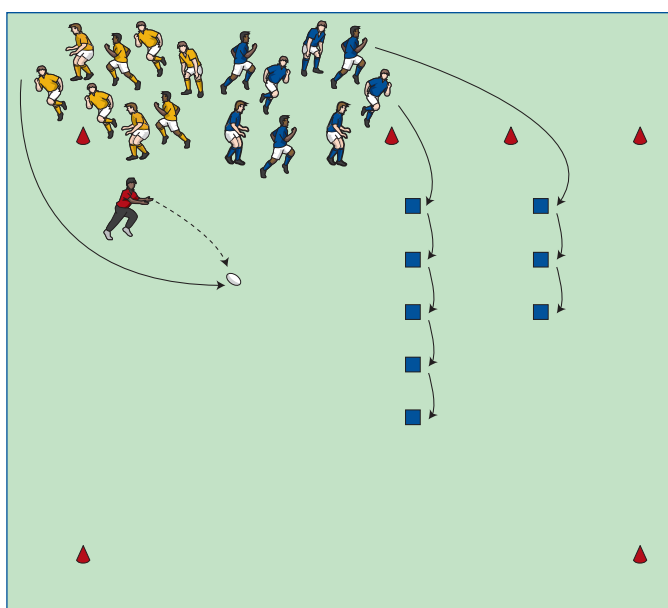
Practice #4 – Seeing where the defenders are and moving the ball forward

- Two groups of players follow the coach around the practice area at 3-4 metres distance
- Coach turns to one group of players who are to receive the ball and they become the attackers
- Attackers must react to where the defenders are and attempt to move the ball forward
- Defenders try to stop them moving forward



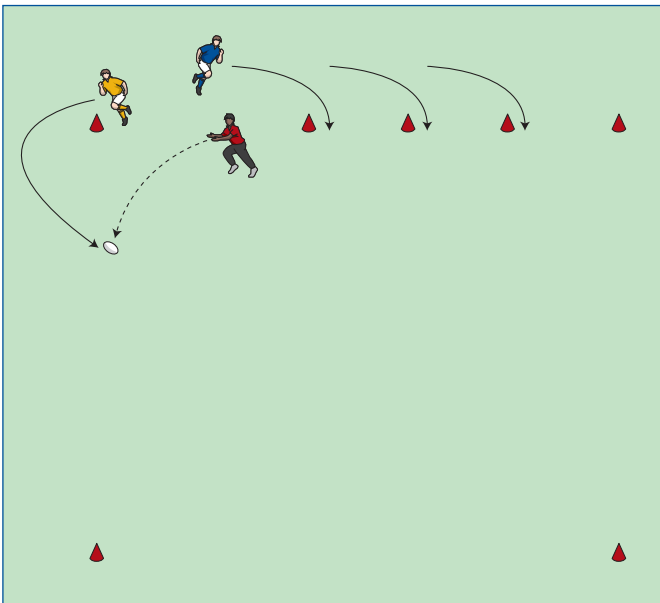
Practice #5 – Attacking the defenders when they are spread across the practice area

- Up to 8 against 8
- Attackers receive the ball from the coach and move the ball forward
- Defenders move around one of the two cones along the side of the practice area; in a group of 8 defenders, 5 run around the first cone and confront the attackers, 3 move around the second cone



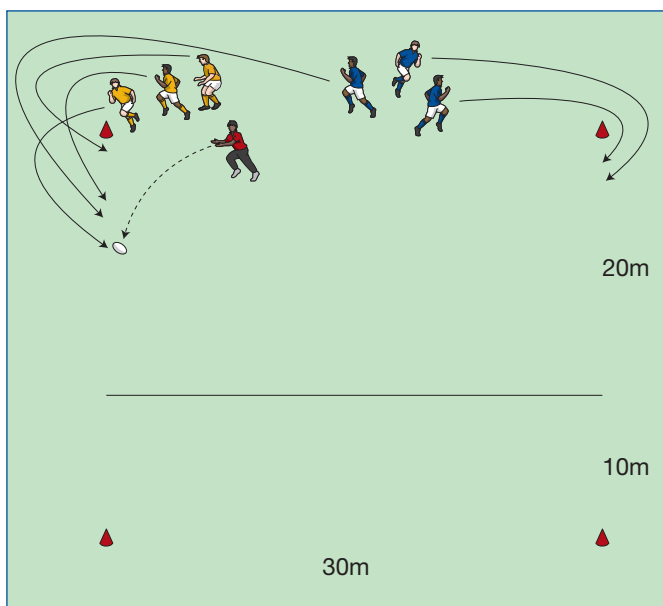
Practice #6 – Running to beat the single defender

- Attacker runs around the first cone and receives the ball
- Defender chooses to run around the first, second or third cone
- If and when the attacker gets past the defender, the defender can pursue the ball carrier to the end of the practice area



Practice #7 – Playing in a wide space and a narrow space

- Attackers move the ball down the wider practice area with one defender in pursuit
- Two defenders run around the cone at the end of the practice area and attempt to stop the ball moving forward
- If and when the attackers are able to reach the end of the practice area with the ball, they turn back up the practice area using only the narrow practice area
- Defenders cross over into the narrow practice area in order to stop the forward movement by the attackers



Practice #8 – Supporting the ball carrier

- 4 v 4
- 1 attacker receives the ball at the end of the practice area and tries to get past a single defender
- 3 other defenders run around the cone at the end of the practice area and 3 attackers run in support of the ball carrier
- If the first defender manages to stop the first ball carrier, the other attackers have to decide whether to go into contact to support the first ball carrier, and the other defenders have to decide how best to support the first defender
- If the first ball carrier gets past the first defender, then the options change for both attackers and defenders



Unit two - Planning

Module three – Planning and demonstrating a practice

Learning outcome

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to plan and deliver a practice session for the team you analysed in Module 2, so that the needs of the players are met, thereby enhancing their performance in their next game/coaching session. This will also be linked with the appropriate methodology used to deliver the session as practiced in Task 3.

Tasks 6 and 7

Drawing on your observations and notes from Tasks 4 and 5, as well as what you learned from Task 3, plan and demonstrate a relevant session from warm-up to cool-down in the time and situation given by your Educator. In your planning, please also refer to the tips detailed below and, if appropriate, to the optional task outlined.

Planning a practice session

In every case, the coach needs to be able to define clearly the following:

- The aims of the practice. Why are the players practising?
- The specific objectives of the practice. What must the player be able to do better at the end of the practice session?
- The characteristics of the practice (numbers, space, time, functions, etc).

You must also consider the following:

- Your intervention. What do you actually do during the practice and what do you say to your players?
- The degree of opposition (unopposed, semi-opposed, opposed, full contact, etc.)
- The appropriate progressions for the players being coached, from less complex to more complex.

The design of practices is based on the effective use of several important variables:

- The practice area (more or less space, narrow field or wide field, a familiar or an unfamiliar situation on the field).
- Practices always include decision making.
- The numerical ratio of attackers (with the ball) to defenders (without the ball) and the degree of intervention by the opposition (from passive opposition up to full game-like opposition).
- Practices should all lead to some kind of scoring opportunity.
- Defenders should always have the opportunity to counter attack and score.

In terms of the best possible learning environment for players you should consider the following 'PRICELESS' model:

PRACTICE - Players learn better when they have time to practise their playing.

RELEVANCE - Players learn better if it is made relevant to their own playing situation.

INVOLVE - Players learn better if they are involved on their own learning and can learn from each other as well as the coach.

CLIMATE - Players learn better in a supportive and non-threatening climate where mistakes are seen as an essential part of learning.

EXPERIENCE - Players learn better if you build on their existing skills, knowledge and experience.

LEARNER-CENTRED - Players learn better at their own pace and in their own way.

ENJOYABLE - Players learn better when they are having fun.

SELF-REFLECTION - Players learn better when they are helped to examine and reflect on their current behavior.

SUCCESS - Players learn better when they gain some success and their self-esteem is raised.

Helping players attack and defend

Here are some simple guidelines for helping players learn how to attack and defend effectively.

Attack

Encourage the ball carrier to **go forward**, towards the opposition try-line, by:

- running around and past the defenders
- driving into the defenders, and trying to drive the defenders back while still maintaining possession.

The principle is relatively straightforward.

- By going forward the defence is drawn to the ball carrier. If the ball carrier evades defenders others will have to leave their position across the field to come in and defend.
- By leaving these positions, if the ball carrier is stopped, that player will pass to players in this space as they are in a better position to continue the attack going forward to the goal-line.
- These players support by being in the space. The support players need to run close enough to be able to receive a pass from the ball carrier, but far enough from the defender to be able to continue the attacking movement.
- In the case of driving to take the ball down the field, the support players can add weight and impetus to the drive forward by binding on to the ball carrier and pushing.
- Support play creates the possibility of continuity in attack, as the support players can open up other options for attack.

Defence

- In defence, the more the defenders advance together to stop the opposition, the more likely it is that they will stop the attack before it becomes too dangerous.
- It is essential to try to limit the space and time available for the attack to become organised.
- The initial aim of defence is to stop the opposition. The second is to get the ball back and counter attack as the opposition are quite likely to be disorganised immediately after they lose possession.

General

- By engaging young, beginner players in this kind of conditioned game, and by developing individual skills through practice, you will develop players with a good sense of the realities of the game.
- This method creates a demand from the player for the skill that will allow them to play better in an area in which they are having difficulty.
- The coaching skill is to help the players to meet the demand created by their decision-making difficulties.
- These activities should progress towards game-like situations, reinforcing the relevance of the skill to the mode of play. In activities, the progression should be from unopposed technique to opposed skill to game-like situations.
- Even at the technique level reducing recovery time and performing the technique at greater speed applies pressure.
- The basic principle in any progression is to reduce time and space so that intensity is increased.

Keys to a successful session

- *Emphasise enjoyment.*
Remember that you want the players to come back to your next practice session, and bring a friend with them to try the game which was so much fun last time!
- *Be active in your coaching.*
Move with the play, and always take advantage of coaching intervention opportunities.
- *If things are not working for the players, do not provide the solution. Challenge the players to find their own solutions to the problem, and help them to find it. This is real coaching, and real learning.*
- *Reinforce success.* *Try to ensure that every player scores at least one try. Make sure that you congratulate every player for something they did well.*
- *Safety is the first consideration.*

Practice session variables

- Player maturity.
- The standard at which the players perform individual skills. If a player cannot run and pass then attack is difficult, if a player cannot tackle defence is difficult and if a player does not perform safe techniques in contact then winning the ball in the first place is difficult.
- The tactical understanding and decision-making ability of the players.
- The ability of the players to cope with limited time and space and the presence of many players.

Remember, all Rugby is based on the ability to do the most basic skills well.

Skill progression

Start with the most fundamental skills of running, passing, tackling and falling in the tackle and progress to:

- *the other individual skills*
- *scrums and line-outs (the unit skills that are the basis of the static contests for possession)*
- *kick starts and re-starts*
- *defence and attack as unit skills*
- *rucks and mauls.*

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Age	Physical development	Motor skills development	Social and emotional maturity
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in recovery time after vigorous activity. • Greater co-ordination. • Stretch muscles before activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition still essential. • Beginning to develop spatial awareness and the use of time, space and direction. • Able to learn and apply safe techniques in contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attention span and focusing on the task. • Needs to accept and understand variations in abilities. • Growing confidence if successful and accepted by the group.

What does this mean for your coaching?

1.

2.

3.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Age	Physical development	Motor skills development	Social and emotional maturity
11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid growth leads to tiredness, poor co-ordination. • Needs structured guidance. • Needs activity to retain flexibility and fitness. • Good hand to eye co-ordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply speed, accuracy distance and space to the performance of skills. • Proficient at previously learned skills. • Keen to learn new skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very willing to accept advice. • Increased leadership roles and decision-making. • Feels rejection strongly. • Needs guidance in setting goals.

What does this mean for your coaching?

1.

2.

3.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Age	Physical development	Motor skills development	Social and emotional maturity
14-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid but uneven growth.• Very sensitive to physical appearance.• Flexibility and cardio-respiratory fitness needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuation of skills practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prefers short-term goals.• Growing need for peer acceptance.• Difficulty in controlling emotions.• Needs positive encouragement to participate.

What does this mean for your coaching?1.
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Unit two - Planning

Module four – Management

Learning outcome

At the conclusion of this module, you will be aware of your role as a coach in terms of Law knowledge and management, especially with regards to minimising risk.

Task 8

Having completed the IRB online Laws exam and looked at examples of variations of the Game below, discuss with your Educator(s) and other coaches how appropriate this is for you as a coach.

Task 9

Having completed the IRB Rugby Ready online test, discuss with your Educator(s) and other coaches what areas of risk management were appropriate to you as a coach.

Task 10

With regards to the key points detailed below and having seen the “Rugby Values” video, discuss with your Educator(s) and other coaches how appropriate this is for your role as a coach in your club environment.

Modified Rugby

Some Unions modify the content and Laws of full-contact, 15-a-side Rugby (as played by adult players) for younger age groups. This is often to encourage recruitment and retention of pre-teenage players through the playing of a Game that allows all players to gain enjoyment and satisfaction without the immediate need to master the full Laws of the Game.

The advantages of modified Rugby

- The game emulates the essential elements of Rugby so that the transition from non-contact to contact Rugby is made easily and confidently.
- The game emphasises ball skills. The non-contact nature of the game encourages skill development.
- Children of different weights, heights and levels of co-ordination are able to play together. The game can be played by groups of mixed or single gender.
- Confidence in skills assists in retaining young players in the Game and the game is easily taught as its complexities are simplified.

- By emphasising skill and non-contact early maturing players cannot use their physique. This 'saves them from themselves' as they will have the skill necessary to play successfully even when slower maturers catch up with them.
- The game can be played with a minimum of resources and can be adapted to the number of players available and to the player's level of skill and maturity.
- The game emphasises player participation and teamwork and the aspects of the Game that players enjoy. Rewards are immediate and obvious. The Laws ensure that all members of a team must become involved.

Note: The Laws of the game are flexible within the bounds of safety. The opportunity should be taken to modify them to maximise player participation.

- For example, an early maturing, co-ordinated fast and evasive player may be able to dominate a game. Upon receiving the ball, this player may be able to run around the opposition and score. Team-mates become spectators as they watch that player go. This is not doing anything for any player. The appropriate change may be a requirement for three players to run and pass the ball before a team-mate can score a try.
- There are many forms of the modified game that have developed in Unions across the world. Each has developed to take into account local culture, process, philosophy, structure and administration.

Examples of modified games

The following are examples of modified games operated by some national Unions, The list is by no means exhaustive, and is included purely to give you an idea of some modified forms of the Game being used around the world:

- Tag, Touch, and Beach Rugby
- Sevens and Tens
- Walla Rugby
- Rippa Rugby
- Leprachaun Rugby

These modified games are for use as part of a Union's pathway or as a safe, non-contact version of the Game for use in schools. Examples of Union pathways are:

- Small Blacks to All Blacks (New Zealand Rugby Union)
- Mini to Millennium (Wales Rugby Union)
- Playground to Podium (USA Rugby)
- Try Rugby (Australian Rugby Union)

Communication and group management

As coach, you should use this checklist to set the scene for coaching a team:

- Aims for the season agreed between you and the team.
- Planning and preparation for the season.
- Liaison with parents and parental involvement.
- Responsibilities.
- Confidentiality.
- Communication.
- Punctuality and attendance.
- Discipline.
- Team and captain selection and the use of replacements.
- Your philosophy of coaching and refereeing.

Desirable characteristics of the coach

As coach, you must be able to:

- develop players with tactical, technical and physical skills
- coach players to produce multi-phase Rugby, involving any and all members of the team
- design and execute practice sessions which are active and require a high degree of participation by all players, including game-like practices with the ball, involving various degrees of opposition
- develop the team concept
- use the services of other coaching resources when appropriate (trainer, medical personnel, sports psychologist, administrator, fund raiser, etc.)
- engage in a process of ethical decision-making, concerning the place of Rugby in society, as well as specific issues particular to Rugby.

Players' checklist

Use this player's checklist to create a profile of your playing talent as an aid to planning.

- *Physical attributes.*
- *Desire and commitment.*
- *Level of interest in sport in general and specifically Rugby.*
- *Ease with which the players can be coached.*
- *Familiarity with other contact sports.*
- *Individuality.*
- *Receptivity to instruction.*
- *Receptivity to problem-solving and the discovery approach to learning.*
- *Exposure to Rugby and the 'Rugby culture'.*
- *Access to Rugby role models.*
- *The position of Rugby in society.*
- *The image of Rugby in society.*

Coach checklists

Preparation

- Develop a well organised and compatible management team. Make sure they know and can perform their jobs.
- Seek information and relevant resources.
- Develop a programme relative to the maturity of the participants.
- Concentrate on technique and move slowly and thoroughly to the development of skill. A skill is a technique which is performed successfully in a game.
- Include all players in everything, not just the most skillful.
- Set a small number of guidelines so that organisation goes smoothly.
- Maintain regular communication with the participants, parents, the management team and the club's administration.

Liaison with parents

Once the team has assembled, have a parents' meeting to explain administrative matters, your approach to coaching, policies you intend to implement and maintain and to answer any questions the parents may have. At the meeting, introduce the management team and have them explain their jobs as well as give a brief description of their background. It may be appropriate to ask each parent or family to introduce themselves to the other parents.

Areas of policy must include:

- fair play
- safety and first aid
- aims for the season
- punctuality and attendance
- naming of the squad and the appointment of a captain and vice-captain
- selection of the starting team and the use of replacement players
- selection of the team and attendance at practice
- positive support on the touch-line
- confidentiality regarding personal matters on players explained to the coach in confidence.

Areas of administration must include:

- dates, times, duration and venues of practices and games
- travel to away games
- gear tidiness and laundering / cleaning of the gear
- the roles of the management team
- team functions, fund raising, trips, and sponsorship
- weekly team lists and regular newsletters
- planning a practice.