



2011 edition

For players, coaches, match officials, administrators and Unions



2011 edition



www.irbrugbyready.com



Do it right... be Rugby Ready



Foreword by Bernard Lapasset,
IRB Chairman

Welcome

The IRB Rugby Ready programme was launched in October 2007 to educate, aid and support players, coaches, match officials and Unions on the importance of sufficient preparation for training and playing in order for Rugby to be played and enjoyed while reducing the risk of serious injury.

We all have a collective responsibility to manage the welfare of the ever-increasing number of men, women and children who play the Game at all levels around the world and to ensure that the Game maintains its core principle of fair play, which is central to its global appeal.

Since its inauguration, Rugby Ready has established a strong profile as a leading global education resource for the Game's stakeholders in the important areas of match preparation, technique, injury prevention, management and discipline. Rugby Ready supplements programmes successfully delivered by some IRB Member Unions such as SmartRugby, RugbySmart and BokSmart established in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa respectively.

The Rugby Ready handbook is available not only in the three official languages of the IRB – English, French and Spanish – but also several others including Chinese, Japanese and Russian. Consult the web site for an up-to-date list of language provision.

The website at www.irbrugbyready.com has seen over 560,000 visits since its inception, and boasts an online community with over 75,000 members, while over 10,000 Rugby stakeholders have enjoyed a face-to-face course with an IRB Licensed Educator.

IRB Rugby Ready is widely available to the global Rugby family so that players, coaches, match officials and administrators all over the world can enjoy Rugby to the fullest.





Do it right... be Rugby Ready

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How to use this Rugby Ready resource

This Rugby Ready handbook is part of the IRB Rugby Ready family of resources.

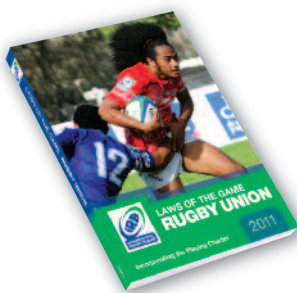
Rugby Ready is available on three platforms:

1. Handbook
2. Online learning programme
3. Face-to-face course.

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



The website at www.irbrugbyready.com allows you to read material, watch video content and complete an online self-check test which, when completed successfully, generates an awareness certificate. Wherever you see this icon you can follow the link to the Rugby Ready web site for further information.



In order to gain best use from the IRB Rugby Ready resources, you should use them in conjunction with the IRB Laws of the Game book and/or web site at www.irblaws.com, where you can read the Laws, watch video examples and animations to build your understanding of how the Laws are applied on the field of play, and complete an online self-check test which, when completed successfully, also generates an awareness certificate.



Introduction to *Rugby Ready*

Everybody involved in organising and playing Rugby has a duty of care in relation to the players. The IRB 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.

The Game of Rugby Union



Rugby Union is a Game played by two teams which physically contest for the ball, within the Laws of the Game and in the Spirit of Fair Play, in order to score points. If you are completely new to Rugby, we recommend that you read the IRB Beginner's Guide to Rugby Union, which you can download from:

www.irbrugbyready.com/en/downloads

Rugby is a sport for all which is proud of its values and remains true to them. The Game's core values are:

- **INTEGRITY** - Integrity is central to the fabric of the Game and is generated through honesty and fair play
- **PASSION** - Rugby people have a passionate enthusiasm for the Game. Rugby generates excitement, emotional attachment and a sense of belonging to the global Rugby family
- **SOLIDARITY** – Rugby provides a unifying spirit that leads to lifelong friendships, camaraderie, teamwork and loyalty which transcends cultural, geographic, political and religious differences
- **DISCIPLINE** - Discipline is an integral part of the Game, both on and off the field, and is reflected through adherence to the Laws, the Regulations and Rugby's core values
- **RESPECT** – Respect for team mates, opponents, match officials and those involved in the Game is paramount

View the IRB Core Values video at:

www.irbrugbyready.com/en/corevaluesvideo



Disclaimer This IRB Rugby Ready product has been developed in the context of the laws applying to accident and injury prevention and medical practice in Ireland and the information and guidelines incorporated on these matters are made available strictly on the basis that the IRB (including its operating entity IRFB Services (Ireland) Limited and other associated entities) does not accept any liability to any person or entity for loss, cost or damage howsoever arising out of any reliance on and/or use of the information and/or guidelines contained in this IRB Rugby Ready product.

Long term player development (LTPD)

LTPD is a long-term approach to maximising individual potential and involvement in Rugby. LTPD models highlight the importance of having quality coaches working with, and understanding 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 to fulfil their potential and remain involved in sport.

Suggested LTPD stages

Stage: FUN Age guide: 6-12 Player PLAYS Coach GUIDES Content: Learning to move, basic Rugby skills	
Stage: DEVELOPMENT Age guide: 12-16 Player EXPLORES Coach TEACHES Content: Learning the Game	
Stage: PARTICIPATION Age guide: 15-18 Player FOCUSES Coach CHALLENGES Content: Playing the Game, developing the player	
Stage: PREPARATION Age guide: 17-21 Player SPECIALISES Coach FACILITATES Content: Reaching full potential	
Stage: PERFORMANCE Age guide: 20 and over Player INNOVATES Coach EMPOWERS Content: Consistency of performance	
Stage: RE-INVESTMENT Age: any Content: Support and enjoyment of the Game	

LTPD models should be developed with specific context in mind. Contact your national Union for more information.

The purpose of Rugby Ready

WHO is it aimed at?

The Rugby Ready resources are designed for all participants in the Game of Rugby: players, coaches, match officials, parents, spectators, volunteers and administrators.

WHY is it necessary?

As Rugby is a contact sport, the welfare of all participants is paramount and is the responsibility of all involved. Good resources and face-to-face delivery assist the participant in the knowledge and application of good practice in all areas of participation in Rugby. Rugby Ready can either complement existing resources or courses, and be integrated within those programmes, or can be used as a stand-alone course or resource.

HOW does it work?

Rugby Ready aims to raise awareness by providing models of good practice, game context, key points for players, coaching tips, referee tips and a self-check test. The face-to-face courses are delivered by IRB Licensed Educators.

WHEN and WHERE can I do it?

Rugby Ready can be undertaken at any time via the web. If you pass the self-check test, the site will generate a certificate for you. The IRB and national Unions encourage participants to regularly update their knowledge. Rugby Ready as a face-to-face course can be delivered in almost any context. Your national Union will have its own policies and procedures in place. If you want to contact your own Union, you can find their details at:

<http://www.irb.com/unions>



Pre-participation

Before playing Rugby, there is a series of checks which should be undertaken by the team coach to ensure that a player is Rugby Ready.

A Rugby Ready player will:

- have the physical attributes and have attained the necessary level of fitness for their level of play
- have sufficient technical skill and ability for the grade at which they are playing
- have been fully rehabilitated from any previous injuries and will not be predisposed to serious injury
- be familiar with the Laws of the Game and what constitutes foul play
- have been assessed for their readiness to play through player profiling

Player profiling is an established method of assessing players' readiness to play Rugby. A good profile will help coaches ascertain if a player is Rugby Ready. Profiling should take place before pre-season training starts and when new players join the squad. It should then be repeated at intervals throughout the season. The profile should ask for information on the following areas:

- personal contact and next of kin details
- medical history (including details of any medication taken)
- cardiac questionnaire
- lifestyle and fitness information
- history of injury
- previous exposure to Rugby

Special attention should be given to:

- age grade (U19 and below) players, e.g., physique, skill, fitness, etc
- all new players
- players with pre-existing injuries
- any player with a history of concussion
- front row players with a history of, or any previous, neck injury
- older players who may have degenerative conditions

As well as coach-led profiling, a physical assessment by a doctor, physiotherapist, strength and conditioning coach or sports trainer could be undertaken. This assessment could test for:

- functional ability
- strength
- speed
- balance
- flexibility
- aerobic endurance
- anaerobic endurance
- physical abnormalities, e.g., biomechanical

Strength and conditioning coaches should only conduct assessments that they are competent in administering, in line with their Union's protocols.

An example of a player profile form is available for download at:

www.irbrugbyready.com/en/downloads



IRB rugbyready Player profile form

Personal details

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email: _____ Mobile: _____
 Date of birth: _____

Emergency contact

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Relationship to player: _____
 Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Medical history

Do you have any medical conditions, disabilities or allergies?
 If the answer is yes please list each condition, disability or allergy and any medication you take for it.

Conditions of disability (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, arthritis, haemophilia, and others, etc)	Medication (e.g. tablets, inhalers, creams, etc - give drug name)	Frequency (e.g. twice daily, only when symptoms, etc)

Allergy (e.g. bee stings, etc)

Allergy (e.g. bee stings, etc)	Medication (e.g. tablets, inhalers, creams, etc - give drug name)	Date / frequency

History of injury (list any injuries, when they happened and who treated you)

Injury (e.g. concussion)	When (e.g. Sept 2007)	Treatment received	Who treated you (e.g. doctor)	Current status of injury (fully recovered or not)

IRB Rugby Ready / Pre-participation / Player profile



Equipment, environment and emergency plan

Before playing Rugby, there are various checks which should be undertaken to ensure that all equipment and the environment are Rugby Ready. It is also important to develop an emergency plan.

Players' personal equipment

Players can help themselves by ensuring they use appropriate equipment.



Mouth guards

It is strongly recommended that all players should wear a mouth guard during practice sessions and matches. A good mouth guard protects

the teeth and surrounding soft tissue and can prevent a broken jaw. Since mouth guards became compulsory in New Zealand in 1997 there has been a 47% reduction in Rugby-related dental claims. Mouth guards made from a dental mould generally provide the best protection. A mouthguard needs to be replaced every season to ensure it provides the best protection.

Footwear

Players' footwear should be in good condition and appropriate to the playing surface.

Cleats / studs should be appropriate to the conditions.



Scrum caps and head guards

Headgear can help prevent soft tissue injuries to the head and ears. Headgear must be fitted properly. There is no evidence that headgear provides protection against concussion.

Padded equipment

Research shows that padded equipment can help reduce the number of minor injuries such as bruises, cuts and abrasions. It does not protect against major injuries and

should not be worn as a means of allowing injured players to return to play before they are fully recovered. For all matches, padding must be in accordance with the Laws of the Game and IRB regulations and be approved. All IRB approved clothing will carry the logo shown below.



A **pre-match safety check** by match officials will identify potentially dangerous items such as rings or elements of dress that do not comply with IRB specifications.



The playing environment



It is important to ensure that the playing environment is Rugby Ready. This will allow players to enjoy themselves more and reduce the risk of injury. Environmental issues that need to be checked before training or playing are:

The playing arena

The facilities should be an appropriate size with spectators and vehicles positioned well away from the playing area. If there are perimeter fences or hoardings these should be at least five metres away and preferably padded.



The playing surface

The surface should be level, free of holes and adequately lit. It should not be waterlogged, hard or slippery. There should be no exposed sprinkler heads, broken glass, rubbish or stones on the surface.



The playing equipment

Equipment should be appropriate to the age and experience

of the players. Critical checks include: goal posts should be suitably padded; all scrum machines and tackle / rucking bags should be in good condition and well maintained; and corner flags should be placed properly and should flex on impact.



The weather

Extreme weather may cause overheating and dehydration or hypothermia. Ensure players wear appropriate and adequate clothing, e.g., in cold and wet conditions, ensure players wear waterproof clothing during training and before and after matches. Warm, waterproof clothing should be worn by substitutes and injured players.

Disclaimer

Rugby is a physical contact sport and there are inherent risks associated with participating in Rugby related activities. Accidents can happen and may happen to you. The IRB (including its operating entity IRFB Services (Ireland) Limited and other associated entities) does not accept any responsibility or liability in negligence or otherwise in relation to any injury, loss or damage suffered by persons seeking to replicate activities demonstrated in this IRB Rugby Ready product or participating in Rugby related activities generally.

Emergency plan

An essential step towards becoming Rugby Ready is planning for emergencies. This means having the correct medical equipment in place and ensuring that appropriately trained personnel (i.e., medical practitioner, other healthcare professional or trained first-aider) are present.

Essential medical equipment

- Stretcher - spinal board and/or scoop
- Collars - various sizes or adjustable.
- Air splints - various.
- Coach's bag - first aid kit which typically includes:
 - scissors (blunt ended)
 - surgical gloves
 - gauze swabs
 - nasal pack
 - towel
 - compression bandages (5cm, 7.5cm, 10cm)
 - sterile gauze bandage
 - adhesive skin closures, (e.g. Band Aid)
 - elastic adhesive bandages (2.5cm, 5cm)
 - petroleum jelly
 - antiseptic healing cream (e.g. Sudocrem)
 - antiseptic ointment / spray (e.g. Bethadine, Savlon)
 - tincture of benzoin
 - irrigation solution (sterile eyewash)
 - wound dressings (e.g. Melolin)
 - triangular bandages
 - skin care pad (e.g. Second Skin)
 - ice pack & ice
 - water bottle
 - adhesive dressings (e.g. Opsite)
 - adhesive tape

All these items should be located in the technical zone.



Spinal board



Defibrillator



Air splints for immobilising a fracture



Emergency bag



Adjustable neck brace

First aid room

A Rugby Ready first aid room should adjoin the pitch and should have:

- access for a stretcher
- access for an ambulance
- wall linings and worktops which can be easily cleaned, to comply with hygiene and infection control requirements
- floors which are non-slip, impervious and washable
- a sink with hot and cold running water
- adequate lighting and heating
- an examination couch with waterproof protection, clean pillows and blankets
- appropriate safe storage for medical equipment and first aid materials
- adequate arrangements for the disposal of clinical waste and sharps, e.g., needles
- automatic external defibrillator
- access to a telephone
- a record book for recording incidents where first aid has been given
- emergency telephone numbers clearly displayed

More detail on developing an emergency plan is available for download at:

www.irbrugbyready.com/en/downloads



If an emergency does occur

For information on what to do in an emergency, see the Injury Management section.

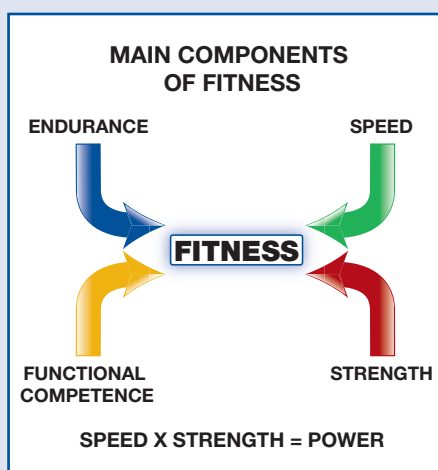


Physical conditioning

Rugby is a team sport which is played at high intensity for up to 80 minutes. Players need to be fast, strong, agile, evasive and powerful while having enough endurance to sustain their contribution for the whole game.

It is vital that individuals designing training programmes have an understanding of the key components of fitness and the physiological demands of Rugby Union. Improving an individual's fitness can make them a better player and less prone to injury.

What is fitness?



Speed is the ability to coordinate simple or complex limb movements at high velocity.

Strength is the maximum force an individual can exert

through a muscle or group of muscles, against an external resistance.

Endurance is a measure of the body's ability to maintain a rate of work.

Functional competence is the extent to which a player has good stability and mobility during movements related to the game.

Power = speed x strength

The sport in which you are involved dictates the relative merits of each fitness component. In Rugby this is also true when comparing positions on the field. All positions require a degree of each fitness component but the relative importance of each component will vary according to a player's position.

Principles of training

- **Individuality.** Players react to the same stimulus in different ways. The main reasons are: genetic; initial fitness levels; maturity.
- **Adaptation.** Every time players train, changes take place which make them more effective and efficient.
- **Overload.** In order for fitness to improve, the player must continually progress the work they perform.
- **Work / Play vs Rest / Regeneration.** Although it is important that training load is progressive, equally important are rest and regeneration.
- **Specificity.** Fitness is specific and the training a player performs must relate to the demands of the game.
- **De-training.** Any prolonged lay off from training results in a reduction of fitness levels. Therefore, a reconditioning programme should be undertaken before a player returns to full training / play.

Needs analysis

Rugby is a power and endurance sport that demands high levels of strength, power, endurance, speed and agility from its players. There are few team sports that require such a diverse and comprehensive range of physical attributes.

The physical requirements for the front five forwards are distinctly different from those for the half backs; similarly, the back row forwards' needs vary considerably from those of the wings. For example, front five players require greater power and endurance than the back row player who will make more frequent sprints throughout a game and as a result require higher levels of speed and speed endurance.

For a player to be physically prepared - to be truly Rugby Ready - basic functional competence must be in place. For example, a player must develop a good general base in terms of strength, stability, mobility and endurance as a platform on which to build enhanced speed and power qualities.

For an accurate and relevant needs analysis, a registered or accredited conditioning coach should be involved in the design and implementation of the programme.

Primary considerations are:

1. Identify the position-specific needs of the player
2. Determine the player's current physical condition by using standardised physical tests and functional assessment
3. Investigate the player's injury history
4. Training history - this needs to take into account training age (the number of years the player has been

specifically preparing for Rugby) and fitness training age (the number of years the player has been supervised by an accredited strength and conditioning coach).

Identify the player's individual needs based on these criteria. In this way specific issues relating to rehabilitation / prehabilitation and perceived weaknesses can be focused on.

Once these areas are in place then a training programme can be designed and implemented to meet these needs.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of a player's progress will require testing procedures to be in place. This will ensure that the programme is constantly changing and progressing to meet new objectives and demanding positive adaptations from the player.

Functional assessment



High level of functional competence

A functional assessment can be conducted using simple exercises such as the overhead squat with a basic balance test, as seen here. The IRB level 1 and Level 2 strength and conditioning courses cover the functional assessment in more detail.



Low level of functional competence

Conducting the functional assessment

Functional assessment should be completed by an accredited strength and conditioning coach, before any capacity test such as strength, speed and power tests. The idea is to ensure that the player has the mobility and stability to complete the movements of the game safely, and thus the movements of the other tests. The information from the test can be used to design a strength training programme to build towards the player achieving full mobility and good stability. This will prepare the body for work, increase work capacity and correct muscle imbalances.

The type of strength required for Rugby is a specific type of strength which often has to be deployed in conditions of instability. Therefore, when designing a fitness programme for Rugby, the primary focus must be on the development of stability of the key injury sites such as the shoulder, core, hip, knee and ankle, rather than placing an excessive emphasis on gym-based weight lifting. Rugby players with a low training age need to develop a functional strength base and learn to control their bodyweight in unstable positions.

Designing the programme

The planning of a fitness programme has to take into account a number of variables. These include age, training age, long-term and short-term goals, facilities and resources available. The other key consideration is the nature of the Rugby season. The timing and length of the season varies across the world. Whatever the timings of your season, you will need to plan your training around four distinct phases. This process is called periodisation.

When designing your weekly plan, an important consideration is the 48 hour rule. Recent research in Rugby* has shown that the Rugby player can still be fatigued 48 hours after an intense game. The plan should reflect this, so high-intensity training should be avoided for 48 hours after a game. An example weekly plan is shown here.

This is only one of many possible plans and is only designed to show how the 48 hour rule can be integrated to the training week.

* Source: Evaluation of muscle damage after a Rugby match with special reference to tackle plays. Takarada Y. Br J Sports Med. 37. 416-419. 2003.

Phase	Off season	Pre-Season	In-Season	Transition
Activity	General preparation	Specific preparation	Maintenance	Recovery / active rest
Southern Hemisphere	Nov-Jan	Feb-March	April-July	Aug-Oct
Northern Hemisphere	May-June	July-Aug	Sept-April	May

Months are approximate and may vary according to the Union and level of play.

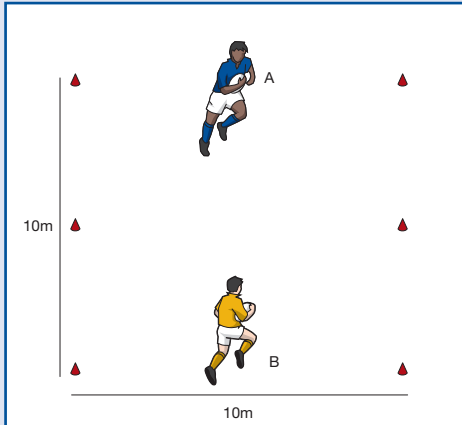
Day	Activity
0	Match
1	Recovery
2	Strength and conditioning training, or recovery option
3	High-intensity Rugby training
4	Strength and conditioning training
5	Medium to low-intensity Rugby training
6	Rest
7	Match

General training tips

- Ensure you complete a warm up (use dynamic stretches) and cool down (use static stretches) for all sessions (see the warm-up and cool down sections)
- Nutrition and hydration are equally important when conducting a physical conditioning programme
- Wherever possible, use a registered or accredited physical conditioning coach
- Try to train with someone else or even better with groups of players who have similar programmes
- Try to keep your sessions fun and varied
- Try to develop match fitness through conditioned games and Rugby-specific drills such as those shown below

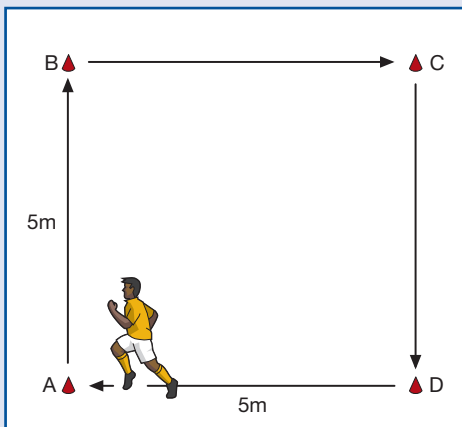
Examples of practices

Watch these practices online at www.irbrugbyready.com



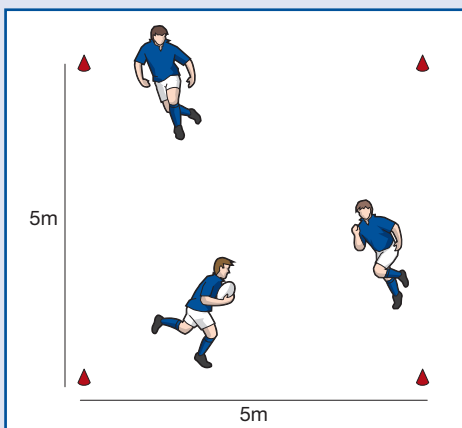
Mirror me

Player A can move laterally, forwards or backwards. Player B must mirror.



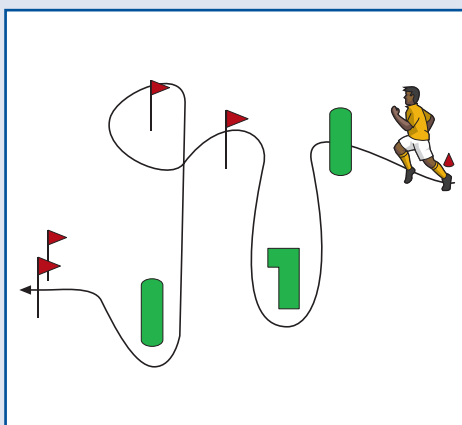
Agility grid

Move from:
A to B forwards
B to C laterally
C to D backwards
D to A laterally.



Touch the cones

In threes or fours, the players pass to each other and after every pass must touch 1, 2 or 3 cones (as decided by the coach) and then rejoin play.



Dodge

Arrange any kit in a slalom fashion. Design the course so that players will run forwards, backwards and laterally.

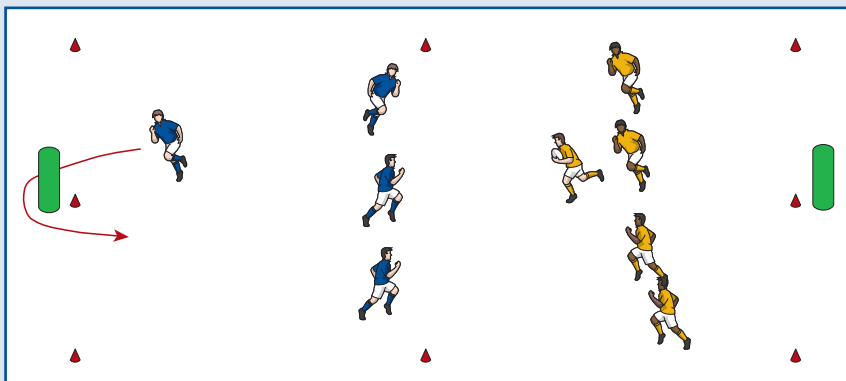


Examples of practices

Watch these practices online at www.irbrugbyready.com



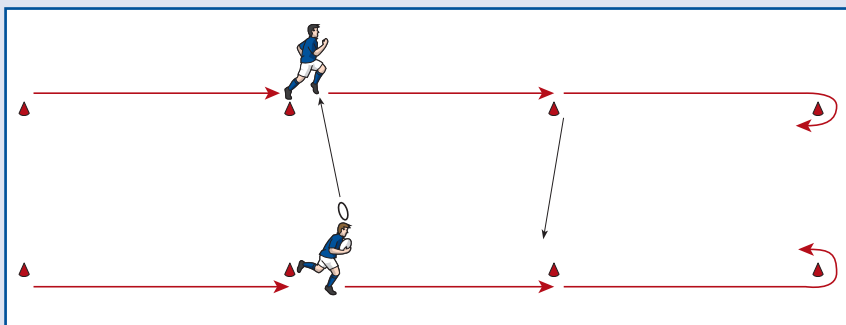
Touch and retreat



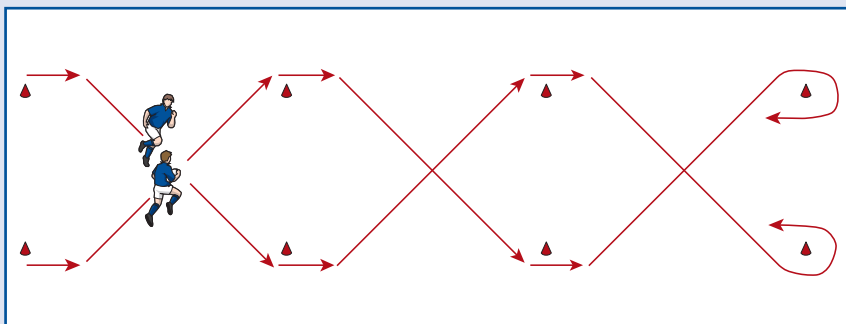
Team A attacks team B. When a player is touched, that player must play the ball between the legs and a team mate must pass it to restart the attack. The player who makes the touch must run around a cone or tackle bag before returning to the game.

Rectangle drill

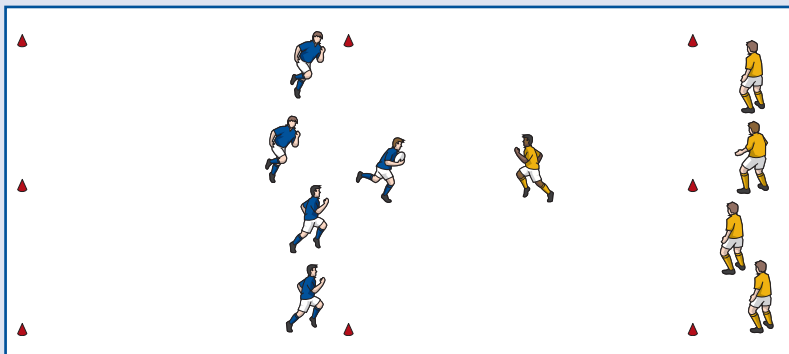
There are two versions of this drill. In drill 1 the players run to the first cone where they must then make a pass, continue to the next and make a return pass. When they reach the last cone they sprint back to the start. The drill is timed and the players are encouraged to concentrate on a good pass. Distances between the cones are 10m.



In drill 2, after initial straight line acceleration the players go diagonally from the first to second cones and as the players cross, they make a switch pass. This is completed for the next two sections. After the players reach the last cone they sprint back to the start. The drill is timed and the players are encouraged to concentrate on a good pass. Distances between the cones are again 10m.



Overload touch



Team A attacks team B. The attacking team receives a kick from team B.

Part one is 5 attackers against 1 defender, with just one touch allowed. If team A score, they run back to their side and receive another kick from team B. This then progresses to:

Part two: 5 v 2 and two touches allowed

Part three: 5 v 3 and three touches allowed

And so on until it is 5 v 4 with four touches allowed. Possession changes to the other team if the attacking team is touched more than the allowed number of times.

Physical conditioning exercises on the field

You don't need large amounts of specialist equipment to improve your physical conditioning; this section lists some exercises that can be completed on the field with limited equipment. This type of session is the starting point for most players who have limited strength training experience and poor functional competence. The session could be described as anatomical adaptation as it gradually strengthens the body and teaches proper technique. This eventually enables the player to move on to more advanced strength training in a safe manner and with appropriate progression. If a player were to undertake an advanced strength and conditioning programme without first completing a functional assessment and performing the consequent corrective exercises through anatomical adaptation, it could have negative impact on the player's performance and increase the chances of injury. It is important that exercises such as those shown below are supervised by an accredited strength and conditioning coach.

The session outlined here is just an example of what can be undertaken on the field for an adult team. The reps and time must be dictated by the players' technique and experience. It is best to complete this session in a circuit format, going from exercise 1, to 2, to 3, to 4, etc., and having a break once a circuit is complete; then, continuing with more circuits depending on the experience and technique of the player.

1. Push up

From a fully locked-out position, with arms straightened, lower the body so that the chest touches the ground. Using the chest, shoulders and triceps, return to the starting point.



Keeping a straight, flat back, maintain a controlled descent / ascent throughout the exercise. Keep the shoulders and hips in line to prevent lifting or dropping of the buttocks.

2. Aeroplane

Support body weight on one leg with a slight bend in it. Lean forward with a straight back and straighten the arms out to the sides. The rear leg points straight behind at a slight angle to the back.



3. YTWL

This is a prone shoulder circuit that is used to strengthen and stabilise the muscles of the upper back and shoulder. The letters Y, T, W and L describe the shape made by the prone positions.



Y place the arms above the head at 45 to 90 degrees above shoulder level. Point the thumbs up to activate the rotational muscles of the shoulder blade area.

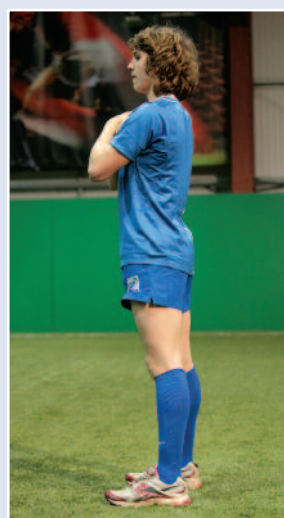
T place the arms fully straightened at a 90 degree angle from the torso. Turn the thumbs up. Keep the shoulder blades down and pulled back throughout, whilst trying to maintain a 90 degree angle.

W place the upper arm at a 45 degree angle to the torso, with the lower arm at a 90 degree position to form a W shape. Maintain alignment between wrist, elbow and shoulder.

L place the upper arms as close to the side of the body as possible, with the lower arm as near as possible to a 90 degree angle. Keep the elbows pressed into the torso. Try to maintain alignment of elbows, wrist and shoulders.

4. Bodyweight squat

This exercise develops strength, stability and flexibility in the lower body, while also improving core stability. Place the feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with the toes turning outwards so that the middle toe is in line with the knee. Before descent into the squat, take a deep breath to fully inflate the lungs so that the upper and lower back remains braced. Descend under control, squatting as low as possible with a straight back. Ensure that the chin is off the chest and the eyes are looking straight ahead to maintain a strong, flat back. Focus on sitting back by pushing the hips and buttocks behind the body and placing bodyweight through the heels. In the ascent phase, focus on keeping the chest and head held high and the hips up and forward. Push the heels into the floor and exhale as you return to an upright stance.



5. Bridge

This exercise improves core stability and strengthens the muscles of the hamstring and buttocks. Lie on your back and raise the hips to create a straight line from the knee to the shoulder. Ensure the heels are flat on the floor and that the flat of the hand is pressed firmly into the ground. Focus on pulling the navel in towards the spine and activate the buttock muscles throughout.



6. Lunge

Step forward and bend the back knee. Keep the back straight and perpendicular to the ground. Don't let the front knee go past the toes. Return to starting position and repeat the same movement starting with the opposite leg.



7. Partner pull

This exercise involves two people. The first person lies on the ground and the second person straddles the first. The person in the straddle position squats down with a straight back and bends the arms at the elbow. The person on the ground grips the partner's arms like a chin-up bar and, keeping a straight body, pulls up off the ground, pivoting at the heel.



8. Oblique / side bridge

This exercise strengthens the muscles at the side of the torso and the lower back. Position the body on the side so that it is supported by the elbows and feet. Lower the hips under control so that they touch the ground lightly and then return to the starting position by raising the hips. Ensure that the body is kept in a straight line and that there is no inward or outward rotation. Keep the shoulders, hips, knee and ankles in line.



9. Single leg stance

Stand on one leg with hands on hips. The non-stance knee must be bent to 90 degrees and raised into the high knee running position with the toes curled up towards yourself. Try to stay balanced for the same time on both legs.



10. Hamstring drop

This is best performed with partner assistance. One player adopts a kneeling position with the second player positioned directly behind. Kneel on a soft surface with the partner securing and anchoring the participant's ankles. The player then descends slowly with good posture and makes contact with the ground by absorbing the drop with open palms. Keep the shoulder blades pulled down and back to maintain a flat back. Avoid dropping the head by keeping the chin off the chest.



Disclaimer

Anyone intending to undertake a physical conditioning programme should seek medical advice from a registered medical practitioner prior to doing so. The information and guidelines regarding the skills of Rugby and associated physical conditioning should only be used following and in conjunction with advice from appropriately qualified trainers, coaches and referees.

Functional strength training for Rugby

A progression from bodyweight drills to the inclusion of functional training equipment

Rugby demands that the player is strong enough to withstand heavy collisions and to maintain balance and stability in contact. A player needs to be able to apply strength both when making a tackle and also when resisting a challenge (i.e., being tackled). The other key benefit provided by a functional strength and conditioning programme is that the player will be less prone to injury. The muscles and joints become stronger. This is especially important for the neck, shoulders, hips, knees and the core of the body.

Weight training is an excellent form of strength training which provides a comprehensive range of benefits to the Rugby player. However, not all players will have access to weight training facilities at the training ground or at a local gym or sports centre.

Weight training must be supervised by a fully qualified strength and conditioning coach or experienced fitness instructor for two important reasons: first, health and safety, and second, sessions need to be Rugby relevant and specific. This could also present a problem for some Rugby clubs if such an individual is not available.

The illustrated body weight circuit shown above is an excellent starting point, but it is important that there is a progressive challenge available. This can be provided by the use of functional training apparatus. The benefits produced are not just limited to gains in strength but also in flexibility, stability and balance.

A practical and convenient alternative to weight training is provided by the use of tyres, medicine balls, stability balls and suspended bodyweight training apparatus. All of these training tools will facilitate functional strength development as opposed to developing general strength for no real purpose. As with weight training, they produce a compound and whole body conditioning effect. But it is likely that they will provide a cheaper and more versatile option that can be used indoors or outside on the training pitch. The other advantage offered by these tools is that they can be conveniently stored and used at the Rugby club itself. They are also very adaptable and can be used to develop positional specific qualities such as sprinting, tackling or scrummaging.





Lifestyle

Your training is designed to prepare you physically, mentally and technically for the Game. If you are not healthy, you will not be able to train and perform at your best. To help prevent injury and illness, player, coaches and associated medical staff should focus on maintaining a healthy body through proper training, diet, stress management and rest.

Fitness through exercise

From developing core stability to improving cardiovascular ability, the health benefits of Rugby are many and varied, and at the most basic level, Rugby is a great way of increasing the time spent doing physical activity. Current guidelines* suggest that adults should achieve a total of at least 30 minutes a day of at least moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week. For children, the recommendation is at least 60 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity each day. At least twice a week this should include activities to improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility.

Rugby for young people - a sport for all shapes and sizes

Rugby is a game that is uniquely suited for all shapes and sizes, girls and boys, all ages and abilities. It can be enjoyed in many forms, from fifteens to sevens to non-contact tag and can even be played on the beach or on snow. There is a level of participation for every child to enjoy.

So how can Rugby create a healthy lifestyle for young people? By applying a holistic approach, Rugby and other sports can play a prominent role in promoting a healthy lifestyle, allowing players to enjoy a lifetime of sporting participation.



* Source: UK Department of Health

1. Try Rugby / Try Sport

Encouraging participation and promoting enjoyment, whatever the child's ability, is a positive way to make the first significant steps towards developing a healthy lifestyle.

2. Social skills development

Participation in team sports in particular stimulates inclusion and interaction. It builds self-confidence and self-esteem, and forges the fellowships and friendships that are unique to sport.

3. Mental skills awareness

Rugby's physical attributes of strength, power and competition are well documented. Rugby also develops (through participation and structured training) the key mental skills of self control, concentration, discipline, decision making and leadership. Such important skills transcend all aspects of daily life.

4. Diet and nutritional fitness

A balanced diet is key to sustaining the energy levels necessary to compete and train at every level of the Game. Nutritional education through Rugby participation plays an important role in boosting energy levels for everyday life, improving concentration and performance and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

5. Cardiovascular fitness

Athletes participating in prolonged activity must possess high levels of cardiovascular fitness. When playing at a competitive level it is no longer adequate to play with the motive to get fit; players must be fit to play.

6. Performance participation

For the lucky few a combination of talent, good education, a high level of training and hard work, will propel them to the highest levels of the Game. Yet for the majority, long-term participation at community level will play a significant part in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Basic hygiene

Basic hygiene is essential for maintaining a healthy active lifestyle, particularly when operating in the closed environment of a squad. A good rule of thumb is to wash your hands at least five times a day. Sterilising of personal equipment such as water bottles and gum shields is also very important. Infectious diseases are spread directly or indirectly from an infected individual. Athletes interact closely with team-mates, opponents, and team staff. In addition they frequently share training and gym equipment, facilities, training rooms and grounds, accommodation, housing, towels, etc.

Fluid intake

Water is essential to normal body function. During exercise, the major water loss from the body is through sweat. To avoid a significant decrease in performance, this water must be replaced, both during matches and training. Indeed, during Rugby, keeping hydrated is more important than supplying fuel to the muscles.

Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the fluid with which you hydrate yourself. Drink before, during and after exercise. Don't wait until you are thirsty. If you feel thirsty then you are already too dehydrated to perform at your best.



Nutrition



Good nutrition is a key factor for optimal performance. Anyone serious about performing well must pay attention to what they eat. Players generally require a high carbohydrate diet every day to prevent chronic depletion of energy stores and to ensure sufficient energy for both training and playing. A diet with high carbohydrates (cereals, bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, etc), moderate protein and low fat is the best.

Nutrition, how it works and what foods you should be eating during your training and games are very important to your sport and performance. It is important to find the right balance between fats, carbohydrates and protein to ensure your body has enough fuel to sustain not only a single game of Rugby but also the training necessary to make it to that point. The body can be put through rigorous amounts of training but only if you supply it with the food it needs to stay strong and energised.

An example of a nutritional plan can be downloaded from:
www.irbrugbyready.com/en/downloads



Alcohol

Alcohol consumption affects training and performance in several ways, such as:

- reducing muscle force production
- decreasing muscle strength and power capabilities
- altering the transport, activation, utilisation and storage of most nutrients
- causing dehydration which may persist long after alcohol consumption - dehydration impairs performance
- altering protein and carbohydrate metabolism, increasing metabolic rate and oxygen consumption
- impairing recovery from injury and micro-tissue damage associated with training
- impairing the functioning of the central nervous system, co-ordination and precision.



Dietary supplements - a case study

Adam Dean, a 17 year old Rugby player, was achieving the highest honours at his age group in Rugby, receiving international caps for England at under 18 level. Following the pressures of being told he needed to be “bigger, faster and stronger”, Adam began the use of supplements to complement his training and diet.

Although aware of having to adhere to the rules of the Prohibited List, the education Adam had received had not made him fully aware of the risk of potential contamination of supplements and he decided to make his decision based on his own research.

Adam chose a supplement that did not have any prohibited substances on the product label, a product that also made claims of being “suitable for drug tested athletes”. Assuming that the information provided by the manufacturer was accurate and substantiated, Adam began to take the supplements as part of his training regime.

Adam tested positive for 19-Norandrosterone (a prohibited anabolic agent) and the only explanation Adam could comprehend was that the positive test was attributable to the supplements that he was taking. Adam was banned for two years from Rugby.



Drugs

Doping control plays an essential part in promoting and protecting doping free Rugby. The IRB operates a zero tolerance policy to doping in Rugby. As a player you are solely responsible for any prohibited substances found to be present in your body. It is not necessary that intent or fault on your part be shown in order for an anti-doping rule violation to be established. This is known as the 'strict liability' principle.

Prohibited List

The Prohibited List is updated annually by the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) and defines what substances and methods are prohibited in and out of competition. The current Prohibited List can be downloaded from the IRB's anti-doping web site at:

www.keeperugbyclean.com



Medications and dietary supplements

Players who are taking any medication, prescribed or otherwise, or dietary supplement, should be certain it does not contain a prohibited substance. To check the ingredients of specific substances, the Global Drug Reference Online at www.globaldro.com may be of assistance, but only for products purchased in Canada, the UK or the USA. If in doubt, or for any other country, contact your National Anti-Doping Organisation.



Always advise your doctor or pharmacist before you are prescribed a medication that you may be subject to drug testing.

The biggest risk associated with the use of dietary supplements is cross contamination or lacing with substances that are prohibited. A product could contain ingredients that are also not listed on the label which are prohibited. A product should only be used where the nutritional review and supplementation process is controlled and individually monitored by appropriately qualified medical practitioners or nutritionists.

Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE)

A TUE provides a player with authorisation to use a prohibited substance or method to treat a legitimate medical condition or illness whilst continuing to play Rugby. More information on TUEs can be found at:

www.keeperugbyclean.com



Drug testing procedures

If you are ever selected for testing you should know what is involved and what rights and responsibilities you have.



You can watch a video which explains the doping control process at: www.keeperugbyclean.com

'Social' drugs – Cannabis, Cocaine, Ecstasy, Amphetamines

Cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines are often thought of in a social setting. However, they are all prohibited substances and players who return a positive sample for any of them may be subject to sanctions with a starting point of a two year ban from all sport.

The residue for all of these substances can be detected in the body for days after they were taken, and in the case of cannabis, sometimes weeks.

For more information on the effects of these substances visit:

www.keeperugbyclean.com





Warm up

Understanding the warm up is a vitally important first step for any player to become Rugby Ready. The aims of the warm up are to prepare the players to perform effectively and efficiently, and to reduce the risk of injury.

The warm up should last between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the activity to follow. It must be versatile enough to be adaptable to meet the requirements of a competitive match or a training session. The warm up should start off at low intensity, with a gradual progression through a series of movements from a general and simple level to a more specific and higher intensity level. This will enable the players to prepare muscles and joints to move at the appropriate speed and with the range of motion that is required by the following session or game.

The key benefits of the warm up are:

- to raise the temperature of the body so that muscles become more elastic and thus movements are more efficient
- to stimulate the heart and lungs so that the pulse and breathing rates are increased
- to activate the relevant muscle groups
- to improve reaction speed by stimulating the nervous system
- to improve coordination
- to enable the players to prepare mentally.



The warm up has three distinct phases:

1. General mobility

Begin the warm up with some light jogging and fun activities to get the heart pumping and the blood flowing, moving on to some basic movements to loosen up the muscles and increase joint mobility. Static stretches may be counter-productive, because they might reduce power output and relax the player as opposed to improving physical readiness and sharpening mental awareness.



Below are some examples of exercises which can be completed during the general mobility section. The reps and time spent completing the exercises will vary depending on the players' experience and the content of the session or match to follow.

Squats

Squat as low as possible while maintaining a straight back. Squat to a slow and controlled tempo. Look straight ahead. Keep your heels on the ground throughout the exercise. A variation option would be to hold a ball above the head.

Lunge twist

Step forward and bend your back knee. Keep your back straight and perpendicular to the ground. Don't let your front knee go past your toes. Twist to the left and right in a controlled manner. Step forward with the rear leg so it lands level with the front leg. Repeat same movement starting with the opposite leg.



Standing lateral lunge

Step to the left, bending your left knee and keeping your right leg straight. Return to the upright position, and perform the same movement on the opposite side. Keep your back straight throughout.



Back slaps

Start with arms fully extended behind. Swing the arms forwards, crossing them over to complete the back slap. Return to start position and repeat, alternating the top arm each time.



2. Transit mobility

The next stage of the warm up increases the level of intensity and focuses more on transit movements that require the player to travel a greater distance. Use dynamic stretches as shown here, not static stretches, at this stage.

Below are some examples of exercises which can be completed during the transit mobility section. The reps and time spent completing the exercises will vary depending on the players' experience and the content of the session or match to follow.

Walking lunge



This is an excellent exercise for the hips and buttock muscles. It also prepares the groin, quads and hamstrings. Keep the chest high and back flat, whilst keeping the head still and chin off the chest. The movement begins by standing with the feet together and by taking a stride with a high knee that is long enough to stretch the hip and hamstrings but not so deep that balance is lost. Don't let your front knee go past your toes. Bring your rear foot forward to land beside your front foot. Repeat with the opposite leg. A variation option would be to hold a ball above the head.

Walking carioca



Walk sideways by placing your right foot across the front of the body until it is past the left foot. Place the weight of your body on the right foot and pull your left foot past your right foot. Place your right foot behind your body and past your left foot. Pull your body sideways with your right foot and place your left foot past your right. Complete above for a set distance and complete facing both ways.

Walking high knee stretch

This is a good starting drill as it stretches the muscles of the hips and buttocks. Keep the chest high and spread wide, whilst focussing on pulling shoulder blades down and drawing them together. Step forward and grasp the shin of the opposite leg and pull the knee to the chest. Focus on extending the supporting leg and raise up onto the toes. This will also prepare the muscles of the foot and ankle joint.



Quad stretch / kicks

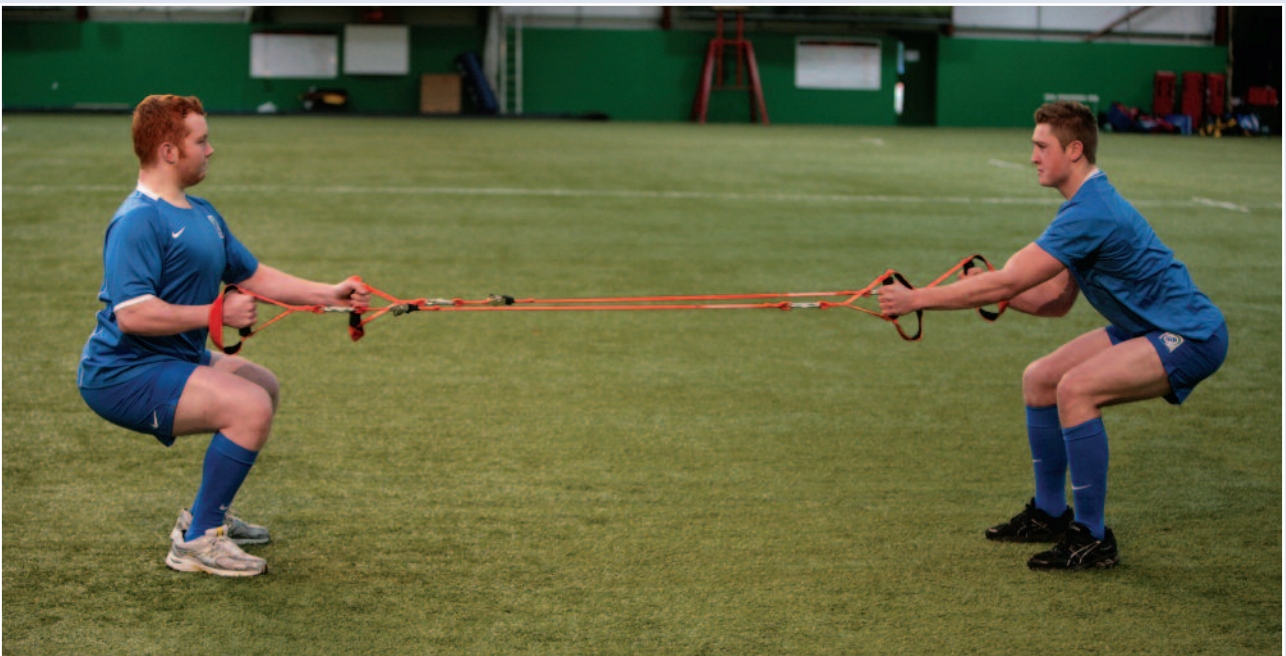
Raise one leg from the ground in a stable and controlled manner. Kick the leg straight up so you feel a stretch on the front of your thigh. Repeat the same movement with the opposite leg.



3. Skill preparation

The warm up can be used not only to prepare the player for the session but also to develop the player's skills at the same time. Coaches should integrate a technical element into the warm up which relates to the main focus of the session.

Players can work in pairs or in small groups focussing on the specific skills which will be required in the session, e.g., scrum, lineout, tackle, etc.

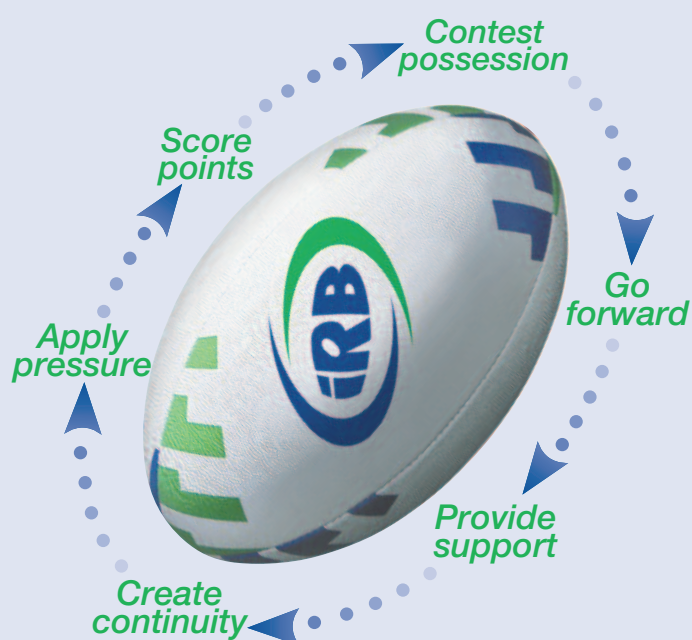




Principles of play

Rugby is an invasion and evasion game; once possession has been gained, the objective is to move the ball forward (by carrying or kicking) into opposition territory and ultimately score points. It is important for everyone to understand the fundamental principles of play and how they relate to the skills required to play the Game.

The principles of play



Foul play

Foul play is anything a person does within the playing enclosure that is against the letter and spirit of the Laws of the Game. It includes:

- Obstruction
- Unfair play
- Repeated infringements
- Dangerous play
- Misconduct

Any form of foul play must be dealt with quickly and firmly by the referee.

Remember - we all have a collective responsibility to ensure that the unique spirit and ethos of the Game are upheld.

The following sections offer some best practice guidelines for players, coaches and match officials to introduce, develop and execute the skills of Rugby in a safe manner so as to minimise the risk of injury.



COACHING TIPS

- Use conditioned games to build confidence, progress in a safe manner and develop players' decision-making skills
- Observe and analyse players to highlight good practice and identify faults
- Provide positive and constructive feedback to improve players



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at:
www.irbrugbyready.com/en/principles

- Protect the space for players to use
- Ensure the Game is played in a safe and enjoyable manner
- Use advantage wherever possible





Open field play



GAME CONTEXT

Rugby is an invasion and evasion game: once possession has been gained, the objective is to move the ball forward (by carrying or kicking) into opposition territory and ultimately score points.

The most effective way of moving the ball forward is for the ball carrier to avoid contact by running into space or passing to a team mate who is in space.

Contact is, however, inevitable at some point in open play. Using the correct techniques can help retain possession, continue the attack and minimise the chance of injury.



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

Pre-contact

- Look to evade the defender first - aim for the space around the defender, not the defender's body **1 2**

If contact is unavoidable:

- Avoid head-on tackles by attacking the space and using evasive footwork **2**
- Keep the ball in both hands **2 3**
- Prepare for contact by adopting a strong and stable body position **3**
- Force the tackler to make a side-on tackle **3**
- Try to stay on your feet **3**
- Maintain your momentum using a strong leg drive **3**
- Try to pass out of the contact **4**



During contact

If brought to ground and held by an opponent:

- You have been tackled; see also the tackle section
- Try to pass to support on landing **5**
- If unable to pass to support, present the ball
- If support players are unable to pick and go / pick and pass, a ruck will form; see the ruck section

If brought to ground but not held by an opponent:

- You have not been tackled; get back to your feet and continue with open play



If held by an opponent but not brought to ground:

- You have not been tackled; maintain a strong body position and forward momentum through leg drive **6**
- Brace for the arrival of additional tacklers and/or opposing supporting players
- Look for arriving support **7**
- Offload to a team-mate if possible **8**
- If a supporting team-mate binds on to you, a maul is formed; see also the maul section



COACHING TIPS

- Ensure players are aware of and understand the principles of play
- Ensure players understand the importance of evasion and attacking space rather than opting for contact
- Construct sessions to encourage evasion rather than contact skills
- Use key points to improve the players' invasion and evasion skills in a safe manner
- Avoid gender, size, age and experience mismatches when introducing and developing skills
- Focus on one or two key points at a time - don't try to coach too many key factors at once



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at:

www.irbrugbyready.com/en/openfieldplay

Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at:

www.irblaws.com



- Keep up with play
- Protect the space for players to use
- Keep a wide view of the field of play

Watch for:

- Players who charge or obstruct opponents who are not near the ball (attackers and defenders)

Check that:

- Tackler contact remains below the shoulder level
- Hand-offs are performed legally



The tackle



GAME CONTEXT

A tackle is used by the defending team to stop the attacking team moving forward and is an opportunity for the defending team to contest for possession of the ball. Competence in tackling and taking a tackle is critical in developing a safer and more enjoyable game. Recent studies from Australia and the UK have shown that 58% of injuries result from tackle situations, so it's essential that this aspect of the Game must be performed, coached and refereed with due care and attention, with good technique and safe, appropriate practice paramount. This will enable players to become confident and competent in the tackle.



LAW DEFINITION

A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to the ground.



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

Key points for players in every tackle situation

Tackler - contact with opponent(s)

- Track the movement of the ball carrier, and get the feet close enough to make the tackle
- Prepare for contact – adopt a body position that is strong, stable and low
- Keeping the eyes open, position the head behind or to one side of the ball carrier - never position the head in front of the ball carrier
- Release the tackled player, get back to your feet immediately and contest for possession

Ball carrier - contact with ground

- Carry the ball in both hands
- Protect the ball - hold it tight to your chest with elbows in to your sides
- Make contact with the ground with the buttocks and then shoulder
- Don't break your fall with your hand or the ball
- Turn towards your team and pass, place or present the ball
- Get back to your feet as soon as possible

For specific key points, see the individual tackle types below.

Shoulder tackle - front-on

- Maintain strong, stable and low body position ①
- Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs ②
- Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier's legs while driving with the legs ③
- Continue the leg drive to bring the ball carrier to ground ④
- Release the ball carrier ⑤
- Get back to feet quickly ⑥
- Contest for possession ⑦



Shoulder tackle - side-on

- Maintain strong, stable and low body position 1
- Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs 2
- Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier's legs, drive with the legs and bring the ball carrier to ground 3
- Roll to finish on top 4
- Release the ball carrier and get back to feet quickly 5
- Contest for possession 6



Smother tackle

- Plant lead foot close to attacker
- Target the ball which should be between waist and chest height 1
- Try to wrap both arms around the ball carrier and in doing so trap the ball carrier's arms and the ball 1
- Drive forward after contact



Arm tackle

- Plant lead foot close to attacker **1**
- Make contact with the upper arm on the ball carrier between the shoulders and the nipple line **2**
- Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier, drive with the legs and bring the ball carrier to ground **3**
- Roll to finish on top **4**



Tap tackle

- Chase the ball carrier until within diving distance
- Dive and make contact with the ball carrier's feet or ankles with an outstretched arm **1**
- Keep the head away from the ball carrier's feet **2**

Unless the ball carrier is held after being brought to ground, then in Law, a tackle has not been made and the referee will allow open play to continue.



Tackles involving more than one tackler

- First tackler should follow the key points for the front-on shoulder tackle
- Second tackler should follow the key points for the smother tackle
- Try to communicate with the other tackler and act simultaneously
- Both players should release the ball carrier as soon as possible, get back to their feet and compete for the ball



Nearly half of all tackles involve more than one tackler. The double tackle is rarely planned and is difficult to coach. It is not encouraged, particularly among young players.



Jersey tackle

- Chase the ball carrier until within grabbing distance **1**
- Grab the ball carrier's jersey and pull towards you **2**
- With head to the side, make contact with the shoulder and wrap the arms around the ball carrier
- Squeeze arms tight and slide down the ball carrier's body to finish on top **3**



Arriving players

- All arriving players must enter the tackle area through the gate
- Only players on their feet may compete for the ball
- Players arriving at an attempted but incomplete tackle:
 - maintain a strong, stable and low body position
 - use the arms to grasp ball carrier
 - avoid contact with other players' heads and necks
 - bring the ball carrier safely to the ground
- If clearing or driving out defenders:
 - maintain a strong, stable and low body position
 - chin off the chest, head up, hands up
 - sight the target
 - keep the spine in line with the direction of drive
 - start the drive from a low body position
 - make contact with defender using the shoulder and arms, not the head
 - close arms around opponent
 - drive the player away and clear the ball
 - bind with a team-mate to improve stability

How the tackle gate forms

During the tackle, both players should attempt to rotate to face their own team-mates.

Red team



Blue team



Before contact



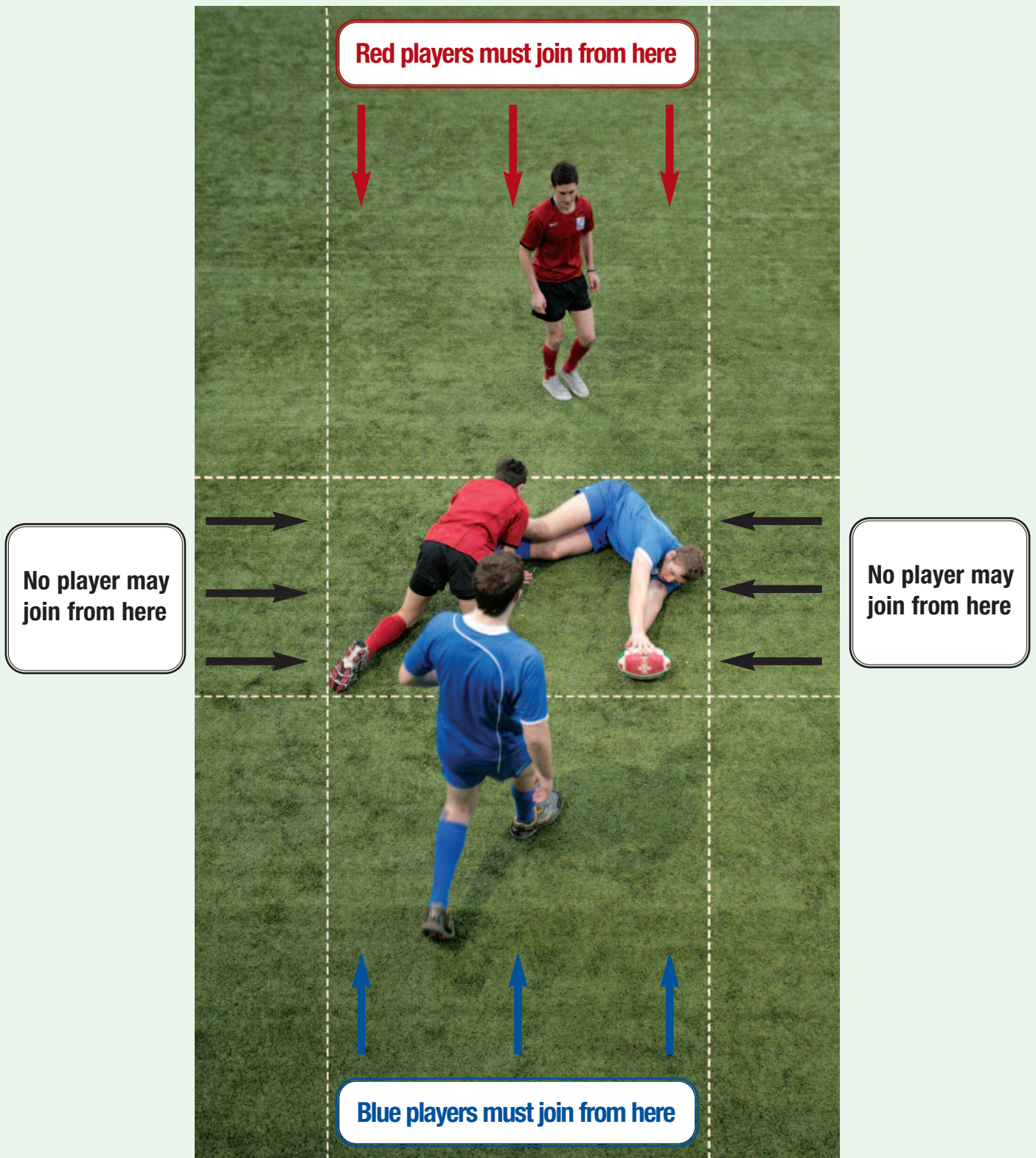
Tackle completed

Red team



Blue team

The tackle gate





COACHING TIPS

Poorly executed tackles tend to be the result of poor positioning by the tackler rather than poor tackle technique. Correct positioning can and should be practised. It involves the tackler closing down the ball carrier's space and then establishing balance and stability before stepping in close with the lead foot to allow shoulder and arm contact, which should then allow leg drive in the tackle.

- Use the key points to improve the players' tackle skills in a safe manner
- Focus on one or two key points at a time - don't try to coach too many key factors at once
- Observe and analyse players to highlight good practice and correct faults
- Provide positive and constructive feedback to improve players
- Construct coaching sessions to encourage progressive development, and build confidence
- An example of the tackle progression for the side-on tackle is as follows:
 - Ball carrier kneel - tackler kneel (only for side-on tackle to demonstrate head position)
 - Ball carrier stand - tackler kneel (encourage leg drive)
 - Ball carrier walk - tackler on one knee
 - Ball carrier stand - tackler squat
 - Ball carrier walk - tackler squat
 - Ball carrier walk - tackler walk
 - Ball carrier run - tackler run
- Avoid gender, size, age and experience mismatches when introducing and developing skills
- Ensure players practise in sufficient space to avoid accidental collisions with unseen players



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at www.irbrugbyready.com/en/tackle
Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at www.irblaws.com



Check that:

- The tackle is made below the shoulder line
- The tackler uses the arms to grab and hold the ball carrier
- If the ball carrier is lifted off the ground, they are brought back to ground safely
- The tackler releases the tackled player
- The tackled player passes, places or releases the ball immediately
- Both players get to their feet
- Arriving players enter the tackle zone through the correct gate
- Arriving players remain on their feet

Watch for:

- Players who charge or obstruct opponents who are not near the ball
- Dangerous tackles (in your judgement as the referee) and high tackles (as defined in Law). Dangerous and high tackles must not be tolerated and must be sanctioned. Any tackles which make contact with the neck or head should be dealt with strictly.



The ruck



GAME CONTEXT

A ruck typically evolves from a tackle situation and can develop into an effective method of retaining or contesting possession. A ruck can commit defenders, therefore creating an opportunity to create space. On formation of the ruck, offside lines are created.



LAW DEFINITION

A ruck is a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground. Open play has ended.



COACHING TIPS

- Use conditioned games to develop support players' decision-making skills
- Practise and re-practise all contact skills
- Use opposition progressively: e.g., touch, ruck touch, defenders with bags, full contact
- Ensure all players maintain a strong body shape throughout the contact
- Ensure all players are aware of the Laws governing the ruck, especially those relating to safety



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at: www.irbrugbyready.com/en/ruck
Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at: www.irblaws.com



Check that:

- Players joining the ruck do so from behind the feet of the hindmost player and by binding onto a teammate
- Players are on their feet when joining the ruck and remain on their feet until the ruck has ended
- Players keep their shoulders above their hips

Watch for:

- Players coming in over the top
- Rucking of the player rather than the ball

- Players who intentionally jump on top of a ruck
- Players attempting to gain possession using their hands
- Players charging into rucks without binding
- Players clearing out opponents who are not part of the ruck
- Players who are not participating in the ruck breaking their offside line
- Players lifting opponents out of the ruck



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

- After the tackle, the ball carrier should present the ball quickly, with both hands, as far away from the opposition as possible **1 2**
- Arriving players should adopt a strong, stable body position, with head and shoulders above hips at all times and make contact with shoulders, not the head **2**
- Join the ruck from behind the foot of the hindmost team-mate in the ruck; this represents the offside line **3**
- Support players must bind onto team mates and drive over and, if appropriate, past the ball **3**
- When the ball leaves the ruck, the nearest support player should play the ball **4 5**
- Players who leave the ruck must immediately retire behind their offside line





The maul



GAME CONTEXT

A maul typically evolves from a contact situation where the ball carrier is held by an opponent but is not brought to ground. It can develop into an effective method of retaining or contesting possession. A maul can be a dynamic attacking platform which commits defenders and therefore creates space to play. On formation of the maul, offside lines are created.



LAW DEFINITION

A maul begins when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents, and one or more of the ball carrier's team mates bind on the ball carrier. A maul therefore consists, when it begins, of at least three players, all on their feet; the ball carrier and one player from each team. All players involved must be caught in or bound to the maul and must be on their feet and moving towards a goal line. Open play has ended.



COACHING TIPS

- Use conditioned games to develop support players' decision-making skills
- Practise and re-practise all contact skills
- Use opposition progressively: e.g., touch, maul touch, defenders with bags, full contact
- Ensure all players maintain a strong body shape throughout the contact
- Ensure all players are aware of the Laws governing the maul, especially those relating to safety



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at: www.irbrugbyready.com/en/maul
Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at: www.irblaws.com



Check that:

- The ball carrier remains fully bound
- Players joining the maul do so from behind the feet of the hindmost player and by binding onto a teammate
- Players who are not participating in the maul remain behind their offside line

Watch for:

- Players who drag opponents out of a maul
- Players who try to collapse the maul
- Players charging into the maul
- Players lifting opponents in the maul



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

- Maintain forward momentum and make the ball available to your team mates **1**
- First arriving support player attempt to secure possession by ripping the ball free or driving beyond the ball **2**
- Subsequent support (second and third arriving players) bind onto the ball carrier and maintain forward momentum **3**
- Heads and shoulders should be no lower than hips and all players must be bound **3 4**
- All support players must conform to basic safety key factors:
 - adopt a strong and stable body position, head up and hands up
 - sight the target
 - keep the spine in line with the direction of drive
 - drive from low to high
 - make contact using the shoulder, not the head
 - bind onto team mate
- Drive forward in a balanced formation **3**
- When additional support arrives, move the ball further back from opposition **4**
- Once the ball is at the back, the ball carrier can either continue driving, leave the maul or pass to a team mate **4 5**





The scrum



GAME CONTEXT

The scrum is a restart of the game that takes place after a minor infringement such as a forward pass. It is a physical contest for possession and therefore, as with any contact, safety must be a prime consideration. Players, coaches and referees all have a responsibility to ensure the scrum is fair, competitive and safe. It is imperative that all players understand the correct techniques for their position and collaborate with their opponent to stay on their feet.

In the scrum, the non-offending team has the advantage of throwing the ball in, usually from the left hand side of the scrum. The defending side has the opportunity to regain possession by either trying to hook the ball on the throw-in, or by driving the attacking team back over the ball.

The scrum restarts the match and open play follows when the ball emerges from the scrum.



LAW DEFINITION

A scrum is formed in the field of play when eight players from each team, bound together in three rows for each team, close up with their opponents so that the heads of the front rows are interlocked. This creates a tunnel into which a scrum half throws the ball so that front row players can compete for possession by hooking the ball with either of their feet.



REFEREE TIPS

View video examples at: www.irbrugbyready.com/en/scrum
Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at: www.irblaws.com



Before the match:

- Check that all front row players are suitably trained for the level of the game
- Speak to the front row forwards and scrum halves to explain the sequence of the engagement process

At the scrum:

- Be directive throughout the process
- Ensure both packs are ready before initiating the engagement sequence
- Ensure neither scrum anticipates the engage call
- Ensure neither front row is driving down or have their shoulders below their hips
- Check correct binding
- Ensure the ball is thrown in straight down the tunnel
- If the scrum becomes unstable, blow the whistle early and loudly
- Ensure the defending side does not illegally disrupt possession
- Ensure players not in the scrum remain onside
- If you have any safety doubts, go to uncontested scrums



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

Body position

The starting point is to understand the individual body shape required of all participants. Players must adopt and maintain a strong and stable body position.

- Feet approximately shoulder width apart **1 2 3**
- Bend at the knees and hips **1 2 3**
- Keep head and shoulders above hips at all times **1 2 3**
- Ensure that feet, hips and shoulders are square **1 2 3**
- Keep a straight flat back with spine in line with the direction of drive **1 2 3**
- Keep chin off chest and look through eyebrows **1 2 3**
- Remain stable, balanced and comfortable in the crouch position **1 2 3**



COACHING TIPS

- Ensure that all players are wearing suitable footwear for the playing surface and conditions
- Verify that front row players are trained and comfortable with playing in the front row
- Avoid significant physical mismatches between competing players
- Encourage all scrum players to strengthen the neck and shoulder areas during training
- Spend time on correct body position prior to any physical contact
- Prior to engagement, ensure front row alignment between teams is correct
- Ensure backs are flat and heads are in a neutral position. If the head is down, the body will follow. If the head is too high, there is the risk of impacting the head on the opposition shoulder, thereby putting stress on the neck
- Ensure the players' feet are providing a stable base underneath them and that the front rows are not leaning forward due to pressure from behind
- Practise with the engagement sequence to get players used to it
- Focus on the players keeping their shoulder above their hips throughout the scrum
- Work through the progressions, only moving on once you are certain the players can operate at the next level safely
- After engagement, check that binding is within Law and tight
- If you are practising forward drive, ensure players keep their heads up as they move forward



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS

Pre-engagement

It is important that there is no forward pressure on the front row from other players in the scrum prior to engagement.

- Assume the correct body position for your position
- Bind firmly and continuously to your team-mates throughout ① ② ③
- Keep weight off heels and stay on the balls of the feet ③
- Ensure each prop is close enough to touch the opposing prop's outside shoulder ④
- Prepare for engagement on the referee's call by ensuring feet positioning and binding are correct ③ ④
- If not in a safe position, shout "Not ready ref"
- Front rows keep eyes focused on the target area - "Sight your slot" - which is always to the left of the player in front of you ⑤
- Do not attempt to engage before the referee's call



Scrum engagement

Getting the timing, binding and posture right throughout the scrum engagement sequence are key principles of competitive and safe scrummaging. To introduce the scrum to new players and to improve technique in a safe manner, it is best to use progressions. Scrum machines are good for improving technique in a safe environment. Start with individual body shape practices, then move to machine and live practices 1 v 1, 3 v 3, 5 v 5 and 8 v 8. All of these practices should preferably be conducted under the control of a referee.

- The front rows should set up opposite their engagement slot rather than directly in front of their opposition. Their slot is to their left of the opposition player
- Practise using the correct engagement sequence: “CROUCH - TOUCH - PAUSE - ENGAGE”
- Engage after following the sequence and only after the referee’s call of “ENGAGE”
 - Loose-head prop uses the left arm to bind onto the back or side of the opposing tight-head prop’s jersey
 - Tight-head prop binds on to the back or side of the opposing loose-head prop’s jersey using the right arm
 - No player other than a prop may bind or hold an opponent
 - All players bind firmly and in accordance with the Laws of the Game throughout and until the scrum is complete
- Props must not exert downward pressure
- The scrum is complete when the ball emerges from the scrum or the referee blows the whistle, in which case all players must immediately stop pushing



Single player



Three player scrum



Five player scrum



Eight player scrum



The lineout



GAME CONTEXT

The lineout is a means of restarting the game after the ball, or a player carrying the ball, crosses the touchline. The opponents of the team who last held or touched the ball, prior to it going out of play, throw the ball into the lineout. To win possession, any player in the lineout can jump for the ball, supported in the jump by two team-mates. The team throwing in the ball has the advantage since they can call a code that alerts their team mates to the destination of the throw. After the ball is caught, the ball can be passed to the scrum half for further distribution or a maul can develop. The option chosen may depend on field position.



LAW DEFINITION

The purpose of the lineout is to restart play quickly, safely and fairly, after the ball has gone into touch, using a throw-in between two lines of players.



COACHING TIPS

- Use progressions to ensure safety
- Start with support players lifting rucking pads and tackle bags to build technique and coordination
- Ensure support players are using the legs rather than the back to support the jumper
- Work with jumpers to ensure they maintain a strong, long body position throughout the jump
- Focus on developing the speed and coordination of each jumper/support group
- Ensure the thrower practices individual skill
- Challenge the jumper to perform different distribution options after the catch



REFEREE TIPS

Check that:

- The lineout is formed with two straight lines, each 0.5m from the mark
- The ball is thrown in straight between the two lines
- Jumpers are correctly supported in the lineout and brought safely back to the ground (i.e., players are not being abandoned in mid-air)
- Players not participating in the lineout retire behind the 10-metre offside line

Watch for:

- Players closing the space between the two lines illegally
- Players who lever on an opponent
- Players holding or shoving an opponent
- Players illegally charging an opponent



KEY POINTS FOR PLAYERS



General points

- All players should ideally be able to be jumpers and supporters
- Players can change roles (jumper/supporters) and position during the lineout
- The performance of the thrower is key to a successful lineout
- Players must communicate to ensure a safe and effective lineout

Jumper

- Starting position:
 - Chest and hands up **1**
 - Bend knees **2**
- Explode upwards from a two-footed take off **3**
- Move dynamically into a position from which you can easily be supported **4**
- Maintain a long body shape (brace by squeezing butt cheeks) to ensure that both jumper and support players can maintain control **5**
- Sight ball through hands as you extend arms to catch **5**
- Communicate with your support players to manage your safe return to the ground **6**
- Make a two-footed landing and bend at the knees **7**



Support players

- Move with the jumper into space
- Form a stable, wide base, with feet shoulder width apart **1**
- Adopt a squat position with a flat back, bend at the knees and keep the chest up **2 3 4 5**
- Grip with palms towards jumper and fingers open **6 7 8 9**



Front lifter

Back lifter



Support players (continued)

- Support the jumper with leg drive and locked arms 10 11 12 13
- Push together on the jumper to support the jumper 10 11 12 13
- Ensure the jumper is returned to the ground safely and under control 14 15 16





Cool down & recovery

During exercise, the body goes through a number of stressful processes. Muscle fibres, tendons and ligaments become damaged and waste products build up in the body. An effective cool down is necessary to enable the player to recover fully from the activity.

The cool down has three distinct phases:

1. Gentle exercise
2. Stretching
3. Re-fuel

Cool down routine

- Five minutes of gentle exercise like light aerobic exercise in the form of jogging and walking with a combination of upper body drills such as low impact arm swings, shoulder circles, rolls and back slaps will assist the player in cooling down
- This process will gradually help the heart rate to return to a normal, resting pulse rate. This will in turn prevent the pooling of blood in the limbs and reduce feelings of fatigue
- Deep breathing should be included in the cool down to help the body recover by oxygenating the system
- Follow with 5-10 minutes of static stretches. This will help the joints and muscles return to their normal length and function, thereby accelerating the recovery process. Using static stretching in the cool down will increase flexibility and may reduce the risk of injury in future exercise or game situations

Below are some examples of static stretching where the player holds each stretch for 10-30 seconds, for 2 or 3 times on each limb. Some of the important stretches are for the hamstring, calf, hip flexor, quad and shoulder.

Hamstring stretch 1

Bend your rear leg, and keep your front leg straight. Keep your back straight and lean towards the straight leg.

Quad stretch 2

In a standing position, hold one of your legs with your hand on the same side. Keep your back straight and both knees in line.

Hip flexor stretch 3

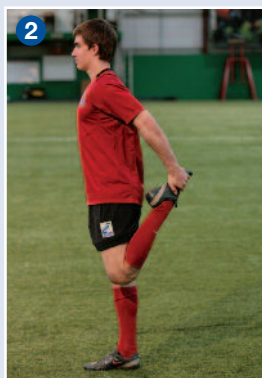
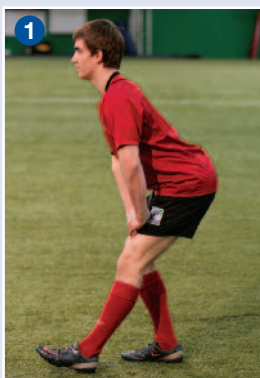
In a kneeling position, raise the arm on the same side as the kneeling leg. Slowly push your hip forward until you feel a stretch.

Lat stretch 4

In a kneeling position, reach forward with both arms. Slowly lower your shoulders to the ground until you feel a stretch.

Calf stretch 5

Go into a sprinter's start position with both knees bent. Slowly straighten the rear leg and lower the heel to the ground until you feel a stretch.





Injury management

All coaches, match officials and administrators are strongly encouraged to undertake appropriate training in basic injury management. All medical staff should undertake an appropriate course in pitchside care.

If an injury does occur in Rugby, it is important to be able to identify the injury, treat it appropriately and help the player recover and return to play the Game.

There are three distinct phases to injury management:

1. Recognition and immediate treatment
2. Rehabilitation
3. Return to play the Game

Phase 1 – Recognition and immediate treatment

For simplicity, this phase has been divided into two categories: potentially life and limb threatening injuries (these include catastrophic spinal injuries, head, chest and abdominal injuries and fractures) and non life and limb threatening injuries (these include joint sprains, muscle strains, bruises and abrasions). It is essential that the potentially life and limb threatening injuries are identified and managed appropriately.

Potentially life and limb threatening injuries

In the event of a suspected life or limb threatening injury, it is important that everyone - players, coaches, referees and administrators - knows what to do. This should be documented in an emergency plan. Referees and coaches should err on the side of caution and seek medical assistance if a potentially serious injury is suspected.

1. Call for help.
2. Call for an ambulance.
3. **Do not allow the player to move.** A player may have suffered a severe neck injury, and yet still be able to move. If the spine is unstable, and they are moved, they run the risk of permanent paralysis. **1**
4. Speak to the player (without prompting any movement). **1**
5. Check that the airway is not obstructed – this may involve removing the mouth guard. **2**
6. Check that the player is breathing.
7. Check that there is an adequate circulation.
8. Stay with the player and continue communication. **1**
9. Keep the player warm until professional help arrives.



All other injuries

Assess the player on the field of play using the **TOTAPS** system.

T alk	What happened? Where does it hurt?
O bserve	Look at the injured area. Is it different from the other side (swollen, a different colour, etc)?
T ouch	Feel for swelling, tenderness and pain.
A ctive movement	Ask the player to move the injured part without assistance.
P assive movement	If the player moves the injured part actively, then carefully move it through a full range of movement.
S kill test	If the active and passive movements did not produce pain, ask the player to stand and see if lower limb is fully weight-bearing and he/she can walk. If unable to do so, the player should be removed from the field (non weight-bearing for lower limb injuries).

Concussion

IRB Regulation 10 provides as follows:

REGULATION 10: MEDICAL

10.1 Concussion

10.1.1 Concussion must be taken extremely seriously. Players suspected of having concussion or diagnosed with concussion must be removed from the field of play and take no further part in the match or training.

10.1.2 Players suspected of having concussion or diagnosed with concussion must go through a

graduated return to play protocol described in the IRB Concussion Guidelines (available on www.irbplayerwelfare.com).

10.1.3 The IRB Concussion Guidelines denote the highest threshold for adolescents and children, which must be strictly adhered to.

10.1.4 The IRB Concussion Guidelines shall be updated from time to time in accordance with best medical practice and as approved by the Executive Committee.

Injury reporting

Injury reporting is important as it allows the tracking of why and how injuries happen - and the finding of ways to prevent similar injuries from happening again. This type of injury surveillance and research is really important for player welfare.

If an injury does occur, players should report the injury to coaches and medical staff; otherwise, the injuries risk worsening or never healing. This can have serious consequences, particularly with concussion injuries.

Each club, province and Union should have a nominated officer responsible for injury auditing. Injury auditing is essential to enhance player safety and performance. All injury surveys should use the IRB injury definition and data collection procedures for studies of injuries.

The IRB Injury Report Form can be downloaded from www.irbrugbyready.com/en/downloads



The IRB's definition of injury

"Any physical complaint, which was caused by a transfer of energy that exceeded the body's ability to maintain its structural and/or functional integrity, that was sustained by a player during a Rugby match or Rugby training, irrespective of the need for medical attention or time loss from Rugby activities. An injury that results in a player receiving medical attention is referred to as a 'medical attention' injury and injury that results in a player being unable to take a full part in future Rugby training or match play as a 'time-loss' injury."

Testing a player for the symptoms of concussion

The Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 2 (SCAT2)*, the text of which in abbreviated form (Pocket SCAT2) is set out below, is approved by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), its independent research body F-MARC (FIFA-Medical Assessment and Research Centre), the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Rugby Board itself.

Pocket SCAT2



Concussion should be suspected in the presence of **any one or more** of the following: symptoms (such as headache), or physical signs (such as unsteadiness), or impaired brain function (e.g. confusion) or abnormal behaviour.

1. Symptoms

Presence of any of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion.

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Amnesia
- Headache
- "Pressure in head"
- Neck Pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Balance problems
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like "in a fog"
- "Don't feel right"
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Fatigue or low energy
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- More emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious

2. Memory function

Failure to answer all questions correctly may suggest a concussion.

"At what venue are we at today?"

"Which half is it now?"

"Who scored last in this game?"

"What team did you play last week / game?"

"Did your team win the last game?"

3. Balance testing

Instructions for tandem stance

*"Now stand heel-to-toe with your **non-dominant** foot in back. Your weight should be evenly distributed across both feet. You should try to maintain stability for 20 seconds with your hands on your hips and your eyes closed. I will be counting the number of times you move out of this position. If you stumble out of this position, open your eyes and return to the start position and continue balancing. I will start timing when you are set and have closed your eyes."*

Observe the athlete for 20 seconds. If they make more than 5 errors (such as lift their hands off their hips; open their eyes; lift their forefoot or heel; step, stumble, or fall; or remain out of the start position for more than 5 seconds) then this may suggest a concussion.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY, urgently assessed medically, should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

* Developed by a group of international experts at the 3rd International Consensus meeting on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, Switzerland in November 2008. The full details of the conference outcomes and the authors of the tool are published in British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2009, volume 43, supplement 1.

Disclaimer The injury management information provided in this IRB Rugby Ready product is intended as a tool to assist in the care and management of injured players. It does not displace the benefit of having suitably qualified personnel available to treat injuries. The IRB (including its operating entity IRFB Services (Ireland) Limited and other associated entities) does not accept any responsibility or liability in negligence or otherwise relation to the treatment, care or management of injured players.

Soft tissue injuries

Soft tissue injuries are typically ligament sprains and muscle strains, tears and bruises. They should be treated using the method known as **PRICED**.

P rotect	Once an injury has occurred, it is of vital importance that the injured area and the player are protected from further injury. Failure to do so can exacerbate the problem and delay healing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abrasions / lacerations should be covered • The injured joint should be supported by taping or bracing • Weight-bearing should be avoided
R est	Adequate rest to enable tissue healing and repair is vital for any injury. Remember - if it hurts, it is probably not good for the injury. Don't put any weight on the injured part of the body.
I ce	Application of ice to an injury helps prevent bleeding and further swelling. Regular use of crushed ice in a damp towel is helpful in shortening recovery time and decreasing pain in the interim. Apply ice to the injury for 20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 48 hours. Protection of the skin with petroleum jelly or oil avoids unnecessary thermal injury.
C ompression	Compression of a soft tissue injury prevents swelling and shortens recovery time. Compression using a firm bandage is effective. Ensure that bandaging is not so tight that it cuts off circulation or causes tingling or pain past the bandage. Bandage the area between ice treatments.
E levation	Elevation of the affected area decreases swelling and pain.
D iagnosis	Early diagnosis by an appropriately qualified health professional and correct management are the fastest route to recovery. Consult a medical professional, especially if you are worried about the injury, the pain or swelling gets worse or the pain or swelling has not gone down within 48 hours.



Ice helps to prevent bleeding and further swelling



Elevation decreases swelling and pain

Once the injury has been diagnosed, avoid any element of **HARM** for 72 hours.

H eat	Can increase bleeding and swelling and worsen pain and stiffness.
A lcohol	Can increase bleeding and swelling as well as masking pain and the severity of the injury.
R unning	Rest is essential.
M assage	Best avoided as it can increase bleeding and swelling, thereby delaying recovery.

Bleeding

When treating a bleeding player, gloves should be worn to protect the player and the first-aider from possible transmission of blood-borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis. Blood must not be transferred from one player to another. Any items that have been contaminated by blood must be sealed in a plastic bag and discarded appropriately.



Major bleeding must be treated as soon as possible to reduce the flow of blood, as this may be enough to preserve a life. Apply direct pressure to a wound first and only apply indirect pressure if this is not possible. Arrange urgent transport to a hospital or doctor's surgery.

Phase 2 – Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation requires supervision and management by appropriately trained medical staff, doctors, physiotherapists and fitness advisors. The aim of rehabilitation is to restore the player to full fitness, which includes:

- recovery of muscle strength
- restoration of a full range of movement in the joint
- recovery of co-ordination and balance
- fitness maintained by exercises such as cycling and swimming
- when ready - the gradual introduction of Rugby-specific skills
- contact drills followed by full contact.

If all these are achieved - return to play.

Phase 3 – Return to play

Players should only return to play once the coach, doctor or physiotherapist has tested them to ensure that they are ready to get back onto the field.

These returning players must once again demonstrate that they are Rugby Ready. The tests should include similar fitness tests to those used at the beginning of the season and Rugby skills and movements that the players will perform in a game, e.g., tackling, sidestepping, jumping, etc.

Player profiling information should be used to compare performances and see if players are once again Rugby Ready. If players can demonstrate the same performance level as pre-injury, then they are once again Rugby Ready.

Normally, the best advice is, if it hurts, don't play.



REFEREE TIPS

Visit the IRB's Law Education web site at www.irblaws.com

- If a player is injured and continuation of play would be dangerous, the referee must stop play
- Players must not wear any items of clothing that are contaminated by blood
- Players who have an open or bleeding wound must leave the playing area and must not return until the bleeding is controlled and the wound has been covered



Summary

Everybody involved in organising and playing Rugby has a duty of care in relation to the players. The IRB 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.

Now you're *Rugby Ready*, stay *Rugby Ready*

All stakeholders have a collective responsibility to ensure the Game is played with a sense of fair play. Rugby is intensely physical so players must be continuously taught the importance of discipline. That means that foul play, thuggery or referee abuse must not be tolerated. All custodians of this great Game need to promote fair play.

- Respect yourself, the opposition, the officials and the Laws of the Game
- Win with honour, lose with dignity
- Try to stay calm
- The referee is in charge; support him/her by playing fair and respecting his/her decisions

Hopefully you now have a full understanding of what it takes to be Rugby Ready.

- 1 Screen / profile your players before they start playing
- 2 Ensure your equipment and environment are safe, and develop an emergency plan
- 3 Ensure players prepare thoroughly:
 - physical conditioning
 - lifestyle
 - warm up / cool down

4 Teach and re-teach safe techniques:

- balance, stability and posture
- tackle and 1-on-1 contact
- scrum and lineout
- ruck and maul

5 Do not tolerate foul play

6 Know how to deal with all injuries:

- if in doubt, get help quickly and do not move the player
- for non catastrophic injuries:
 - a) TOTAPS
 - b) be wary of concussion
 - c) for soft tissue injuries use PRICED
 - d) avoid HARM
- ensure players rehabilitate properly
- allow them to return to play only when fully fit
- report the injury where appropriate

If you follow these Rugby Ready steps as a player, coach, referee, administrator or Union, you will enjoy your Rugby even more.

For further information and downloads please go to:
www.irbrugbyready.com





Do it right... be Rugby Ready



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