

Coach Handbook

Coaching
6-12-year olds





Foreword

Welcome to the world of coaching!
Thank you and congratulations
for volunteering your time to help
develop and nurture the next
generation of our Rugby League
community.

This is an exciting time for our game as
we embark on a new era for Junior Rugby
League participation and talent development
with the introduction of the Player Development
Framework.

Our vision is to ensure that Rugby League is a
sport for Australians of all ages, abilities and
aspirations. We provide a sense of community
by connecting people and offering everyone the
opportunity to realise their full potential.

You hold the key to unlocking this potential
by fostering an environment of inclusion,
confidence, and a sense of community that
develops camaraderie, respect, self-esteem,
patience, dedication, teamwork, selflessness
and resilience.

Don't underestimate the impact you can have
on a child's life, not only as Rugby League
players, but more importantly as people.
Children can learn so much about life through
sport, and as a coach you have the ability to
influence them well into their adult lives. I look
back with many fond memories on the Coaches
who influenced me over the years and who have
helped me become the person I am today.

It's because of this I want to encourage you to
take in the information within this course, it's
this information that will help you create an
environment the kids can develop in and will
see them create their own memories about
the impact you've had on them. For me, this
is enormously rewarding, and I hope you feel
the same satisfaction as I do when you see the
kids in your team developing as Rugby League
players and people.

Good luck and enjoy the experience.
Yours in Rugby League



Mal Meninga
Head Coach – Australian Kangaroos

Acknowledgement

The NRL would like to acknowledge the contribution, and guidance
from our friends at the School of Human Movement and Nutrition
Sciences, University of Queensland (UQ), in particular Professor
Cliff Mallett, Dr Stephen Rynne and Mr Bob Crudgington.



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OF QUEENSLAND**
AUSTRALIA

The Player Development Framework

In 2019, a series of new concepts will be introduced to South East QLD and Victoria as part of the game's Player Development Framework (PDF). The PDF provides Rugby League a set of guidelines that will enable the game to prosper by offering age appropriate participation and development opportunities.

The objectives of the Player Development Framework are to...

- Attract & Retain Participation
- Foster Personal Development
- Transition & Nurture Performance

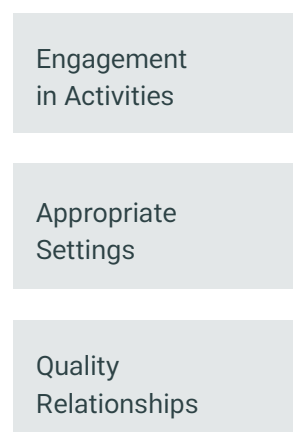
These objectives will be achieved in a coaching context by endeavouring to **offer appropriate settings** (specific to age, ability or aspiration of players), **develop quality relationships** (with

players, parents and stakeholders), and **ensure maximum engagement in activities** (so every player gets equal opportunity to be involved).

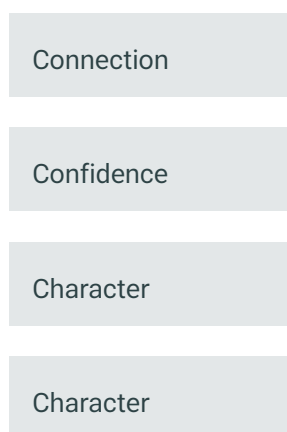
If the framework is delivered effectively, players will develop stronger **Connections** (with coaches, team mates and the game of Rugby League), **Confidence** (in their team and club environment and their ability), **Character** (by becoming happy, healthy, positive members of society) and **Competence** (improving physical, technical and tactical skills). This will strengthen the Rugby League Community and encourage life-long involvement in the sport.

Throughout this course, you will develop the skills to achieve these objectives and therefore contribute to the future of the game and the players under your care.

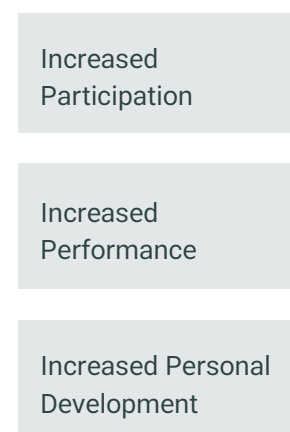
Environment



Personal Assets



Objectives



TIME



Contents

How to Coach

Keeping Everyone Safe

Child Safety	07
Environmental Conditions	08
Hydration & Hygiene	08
Injury Prevention and Injury Assessment	08
Concussion	12
Emergency Plan in Case of Serious Injury	13

The Player

Why do kids play sport?	14
Stages of Development	16
The Sampling Phase	17
One of Your Biggest Challenges	20
Acknowledging the Relative Age Effect	22

The Coach

The Role of the Coach	25
Contributing to Player Development	26
Guiding Principles for Coaches	29
A Positive Learning Environment	32
Effective Coaching	34
Activities	35
The Coaching Process	39

Developing & Maintaining Relationships

Why are relationships important?	40
What relationships exist?	40
5 Steps to an Effective Parent Orientation Meeting	43
Ask for Help	45



Program Management

Manage	46
Prepare	46
Deliver	47
Reflect & Review	47

Becoming a Better Coach

Why should a coach keep learning?	48
The learning process	48
How does a coach learn?	50

Game Day

Developing a Competitive Spirit	53
What Game do They Play	54
Safeplay Code	61
Code of Conduct	61

What to Coach

Training

Delivering a training session	64
Fundamental Movement Skills	65
Tackle Ready	72
Technical Skills	73

Community Coach Course Workbook

Activities	82
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How to Coach

Keeping Everyone Safe

The NRL is a Child Safe organisation and is committed to promoting a safe environment for all children and to assist everyone involved in Rugby League to fulfil their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. As a sport, we must promote the safety and welfare of children as the top priority. Coaches will need to ensure the safety of all participants before, during and after each session. Things that you will need to consider to safely deliver each of your sessions are:

Child Safety

When coaching children you will need to adhere to the child safety guidelines in your state, including having a working with children check/ Blue Card, maintaining appropriate boundaries and reporting any suspicious or potential abuse to the relevant authorities. As there is currently no national child safety system or legislation, you will need to understand what is required in your state or territory. For more information on child safety laws in your state go to www.playbytherules.net.au, and for information on the NRL's Child Protection and Safeguarding Children go to <https://www.nrl.com/community/inclusion/rights-and-responsibilities>

When interacting with children it is recommended that you maintain appropriate boundaries to keep children safe. These boundaries include:

› Physical boundaries

- Only use physical contact that is appropriate for the development of a particular skill and with the permission of the child.
- Work within sight of others at all times.
- Use drills to develop fitness, not as a punishment.

› Emotional boundaries

- Use positive feedback on performance, not negative feedback about the person.
- Be encouraging and avoid put downs.

› To protect yourself and your child, avoid being alone with a child

- Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any child.
- If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately, do so in an open area and in sight of other adults (e.g. other coaches, officials or parents).
- Try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children.

Lastly, as coaches you must report suspicious or potential physical, sexual or psychological abuse to the relevant authority in your state.

Environmental Conditions

Ensure that you are aware of any potential temperature extremes or electrical storm activity and plan accordingly. For example, if hot weather is forecast remind participants about sun protection, hydration and provide adequate breaks in a shaded area.

Please refer to the NRL's policies for **Heat, Sun Protection** and **Electrical Storm Safety** for more information.

Hydration/Hygiene

Children can overheat and dehydrate quickly as they are not able to regulate their body temperature as well as adults. Hot and humid conditions can lead to increased fluid losses through sweat, reminding participants of the importance of hydration and ensuring that they have access to water throughout the session is vital to player safety. If extreme heat is forecast, consider postponing the session to a cooler part of the day to prevent any heat related illness.

If a participant complains of dizziness, light headedness, muscle cramps, nausea or headache, they may be suffering from dehydration. In this instance remove them from the session, sit them in a shaded area and get them to sip cool fluids.

If possible ensure that each participant has their own water bottle which can be used throughout the session to minimise the potential transfer of infectious disease. If communal water bottles are being used, remind all participants to hold the water bottle away from their mouth as they drink and ensure that the bottles are thoroughly cleaned after each session.

Please refer to the NRL **Infectious Disease Policy** for more information.

All NRL Policies can be found at www.playnrl.com/policies

Injury Prevention and Injury Assessment

Taking steps to prevent injury is as important as injury assessment. Injury prevention includes ensuring all players complete a warm up and are encouraged to use protective equipment such as mouthguards.

Injury Prevention

Spending time to teach players how to fall safely, how to make a tackle and how to be tackled safely will be the most effective way to protect against injury. Custom-fitted mouthguards are strongly recommended to help protect against injury in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Headgear can also be worn to potentially minimise cuts and abrasions around the head area.

Injury assessment

If any injury has occurred during a training session you will need to follow basic First Aid procedures of DRSABCD and TOTAPS.

DRSABCD

This initial process should always be followed by the first responder. This could be the coach, League First Aid officer or Spots Trainer.

Danger

- › Check for Danger
 - To yourself
 - To others/bystanders
 - To the casualty

Response

- › Check for a Response
 - Is the casualty conscious or unconscious?

Send for Help

- › Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance
 - Or ask another person to make the call.

Airway

- › Check the Airway
 - Is the airway clear and open?

Breathing

- › Check for Breathing
 - Look Listen Feel
 - Look to see if the chest is rising and falling
 - Listen for the sound of breathing
 - Feel for air from nose or mouth

Circulation

- › If there are no signs of life (casualty unconscious, unresponsive, not moving and not breathing normally) commence CPR.
 - CPR protocol: Thirty (30) compressions, followed by two (2) breaths (rate of approximately one hundred (100) compressions per minute).

Defibrillation

- › Apply a defibrillator if available.



TOTAPS

After assessing the injured person using DRSABCD, follow the TOTAPS assessment. This should be completed by a Sports Trainer or First Aider as they receive all of the relevant training.

Talk – Ask the injured player

- › How did this happen?
- › Where does it hurt?
- › How did you land? Twisted/straight?
- › Did you hear or feel clicking, locking, grating, snap, rip, tear or giving way?
- › What kind of pain? Throbbing, burning, searing pain? Pins and needles? Toothache pain?
- › Ask any other questions relevant to the players suspected condition.

Observe – Look for the following:

- › Bones: alignment, deformity or unusual shape
- › Soft tissue: contours shape, comparing both sides
- › Note any swelling
- › Colour: redness, inflammation, pale or bluish colour

Touch – This should only occur after the above has been completed

- › Be gentle and consider player comfort
- › Do not drag the player to their feet
- › Is it tender to touch?
- › Start away from the injured site and work towards and beyond
- › What is the extent of the painful area?
- › Try to locate the exact site and relate it to a particular anatomical structure.

Active – Movement

- › Ask the player to move the injured limb until restricted by pain
- › Significant restriction indicates possible serious injury

Passive – Movement

- › You, as the examiner, gently move the injured area to the point of pain or restriction
- › Return to play should not be considered unless pain free full range of movement is evident

Skills

- › Ask player to stand unaided
- › Ask them to walk, jog and carry out specific skills related to the injured part
- › Return to play if pain free

Return to play should not be considered unless pain free full range of movement is evident



Concussion

Although you will be teaching young children to tackle safely in a controlled environment there is still the chance a concussion could occur. As a result, you will need to have a basic understanding of what a concussion is and what the signs and symptoms are.

What is a concussion?

Concussion is a disturbance in brain function rather than a structural injury to the brain. It is caused by direct and indirect force to the head, face, neck or elsewhere where the force transmitted to the head. A player does not need to have been knocked unconscious to have a concussion. Loss of consciousness is seen on only 10-15% of concussion cases.

For more information, visit
www.playnrl.com/concussion



Concussion Management

The 3 most important steps of concussion management are:

1. Recognise

Although some signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion are obvious (e.g. loss of consciousness) it is important that you know and can recognise the subtler signs and symptoms of concussion. These include:

- › Headache
- › Dizziness
- › Confusion
- › Ringing Ears
- › Nausea
- › Repeated Vomiting
- › Vision Disturbance
- › Loss of Balance
- › Memory Loss (amnesia)
- › Difficulty concentrating

2. Remove

Any participant who is suspected of having a concussion must be removed from the activity immediately and must not be allowed to return to the training session. Ensure that the player is monitored and is not left alone for at least 1-2 hours.

3. Refer

A player with a suspected concussion should be referred to medical practitioner or an accredited NRL sports trainer. Remember only a medical professional can diagnose a concussion.

Emergency plan in case of serious injury

In the unlikely event of a serious injury you need to ensure you have an emergency plan. When putting together an emergency plan you need to consider the following.

- › Make sure you have access to a landline or mobile phone.
- › Make sure you know the emergency phone numbers (e.g. 000, 112)
- › Make sure you know the street address of the venue and nearest cross street.
- › Make sure you know where the entrance to the venue is located and ensure it is unlocked and unobstructed.
- › Make sure a designated person meets the emergency vehicle and someone is available to accompany the injured person in the ambulance.

Whenever an injury occurs, the coach must ALWAYS follow the advice of an adequately qualified person before determining whether a player is ready to participate in game or training sessions.



The Player

Why do kids play sport?

If you think back to when you played sport as a child, and reflected on what you enjoyed about it, you would probably talk about the friendship you made and the fun you had. Nothing has changed. The three main reasons children play sport are:

- › To have fun
- › To play with their mates
- › To learn new skills.

They also like to compete with others, Competition can be extremely beneficial under the right conditions, however when there is an overemphasis on winning at a young age, it can have a negative impact. As coaches we need to be conscious of this and provide opportunities for healthy competition so the kids can learn and test themselves in challenging conditions without the result becoming the overarching measure of success.

Research has shown a negative experience because of poor coaching can have lasting effects on players and can lead directly to player drop-out. The key for you as a coach is to understand why the players in your team play the game and create strategies that cater for this.

No matter where you're players in your team end up when they're grown up, they'll all need the same experience as a child.

Fun, Friendships & Fundamental Skills!



"I played when I was younger, and now I want to give back to the game and teach the kids."

Coach

"I've played at my club since a junior. It's a real community, and all of my best mates are here."

Recreational Player

"I absolutely loved the game when I played as a junior. I can't play anymore, but keep involved by refereeing."

Referee

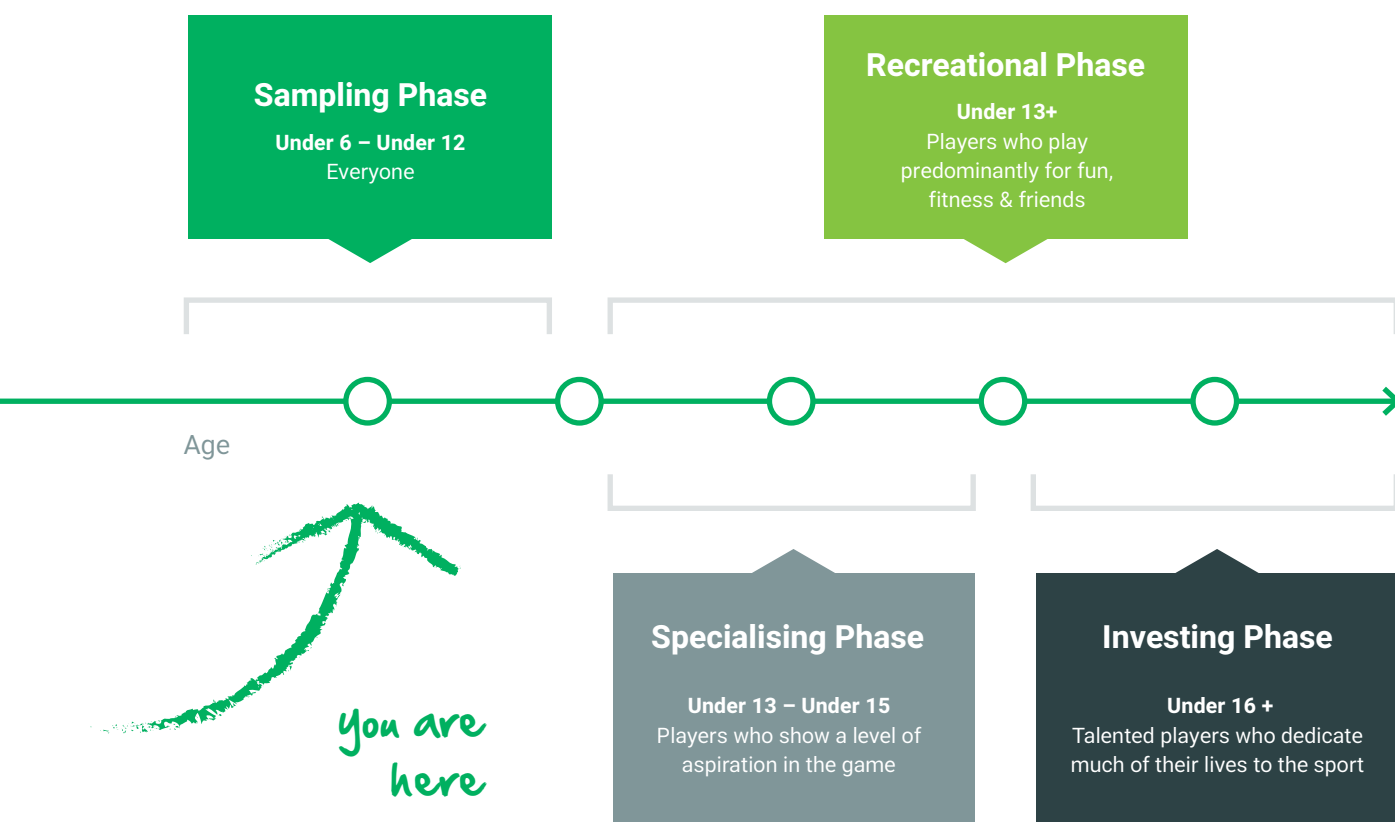
"My experience as a junior gave me a passion for Rugby League and provided me with the fundamental skills that have allowed me to excel."

Elite Player



Stages of Development

The most effective coaches have a great understanding of the development stage of their players and adjust their coaching accordingly. Within Rugby League, we focus on four main development phases.



The Sampling Phase

It is within the sampling phase that children will kick start their **love of the game** and develop the **fundamental skills** and **creativity** that will last them a life time.

Within each development phase there are a range of development stages. Each stage requires its own specific age appropriate game rules and development strategies.

The following focus areas have been developed specifically for the players you are coaching and take into consideration typical physical, emotional and cognitive capabilities of children at that stage of development.

Under 6 & 7's

Technical Skills

- › Catching and Passing
- › Play the Ball
- › Running in Possession
- › Falling and landing safely
- › Tackle (U7's Only)

Physical Development

- › Agility
- › Coordination
- › Balance

Personal Development

- › Fairness
- › Sharing
- › Socialisation
- › Cooperation

Tactical Skills

- › Awareness of Game Rules
- › Basic Attacking Concepts
- › Basic Defensive Concepts

Mental Development

- › Self Esteem
- › Cooperation
- › Positive Attitude to Sport
- › Self-Confidence Concepts



Under 8 & 9

Technical Skills

- › Catching and Passing
- › Play the Ball
- › Running in Possession
- › Falling & landing safely
- › Tackle
- › Kicking (U9's only)

Physical Development

- › Agility
- › Coordination
- › Balance
- › Flexibility

Personal Development

- › Positive Response to discipline and structure.
- › Self Control – Balance personal needs / wants with others

Tactical Skills

- › Understanding basic attacking and defensive principles.
- › Further understanding the laws of the game
- › Sample multiple positions

Mental Development

- › Tolerance / Resilience
- › Focus on Concentration



Under 10 – Under 12

Technical Skills

- › Catching and Passing
- › Play the Ball efficiency
- › Running in Possession
- › Tackle
- › Kicking

Physical Development

- › Agility
- › Coordination
- › Balance
- › Flexibility
- › Speed (U12 Only)
- › Strength (U12 Only)*

Personal Development

- › Identification with positive role models
- › Creative thinking
- › Communication skills
- › Working as a team
- › Awareness of health and safety issues

Tactical Skills

- › Application of attacking and defensive principles in different situations
- › Further understanding the laws of the game
- › Sample multiple positions

Mental Development

- › Development of self image
- › Social Confidence – Response to positive reinforcement
- › Enthusiasm & commitment



* These physical skills develop naturally in players through age-appropriate games and activities. Coaches shouldn't design strength or conditioning programs for players at this age.

One of your biggest challenges...

All players mature and develop at different rates. In sports like ours, it's extremely common for coaches to assume that early bloomers are the most talented. This means that the more mature players are sometimes favoured by their coach over the late developers or younger members of the team. This can result in the late developers becoming discouraged and dropping out of the sport.

The sad truth is that these children are not necessarily "less talented" but may just be disadvantaged due to the later onset of puberty

and maturation. Very often these kids don't just turn away from Rugby League, but drop out of sport all together

Coaches should consider how children at each stage process information (Cognitive Development) & recognize, express, and manage their feelings (Emotional Development). As mentioned, children will develop at various rates, however, here are some typical characteristics of junior players.

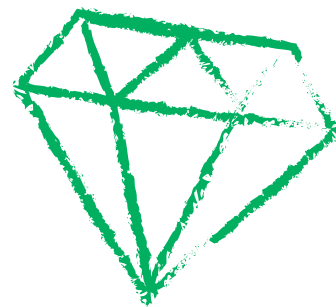
	Cognitive Development	Emotional Development
Under 6 – Under 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Imaginative, curious, impatient & subjective. › Developing the ability to remember and recall basic information › Starting to understand the concepts of space and time. › Short attention span › Relatively limited vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Typically egocentric and individualistic. › Rarely share › Limited awareness of team mate's emotional status and feelings. › Often lack the ability to fully accept criticism › Have a strong need for adult approval
Under 10 – Under 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Curious and logical thinkers. › Have a longer attention span. › Can self-correct using comparison. › Likes to understand the purpose of activities › Have an eagerness to show off their abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › May become easily embarrassed and discouraged. › Often argue over what is correct or incorrect.

Players Age and Effects on Participation

The Relative Age Effect (RAE) is a phenomenon where children born at the start of an age cut-off period often have an advantage in both sporting and academic endeavours. An earlier birth is typically associated with increased ability; however, the perceived advantage may only be due to being physically, emotionally and cognitively more developed. This is most relevant between the 6 and 9 year old age group. After these age groups, the Maturation Effect is the most impactful for players aged 11-16.

It's natural for coaches to gravitate towards players they perceive as more talented, but it's important that all players receive the same amount of attention. Acknowledging the Relative Age Effect and the Maturation Effect will help you dedicate the same amount of attention to every team member.





Acknowledging the Relative Age Effect

Players Born January – March (Q1)

List your players here:

General Characteristics

Many of these players may appear more physically and emotionally mature and display a greater level of confidence. This is partly because they can be as much as 12 months older than some of their team mates (for a 6 year old that's almost 20% of their life). Players born in Q1 are often favoured by coaches and teachers because they can be perceived to be more talented and intelligent.

Coaches Should:

Avoid focusing all of your attention on these players and neglecting the younger members of the team. If Q1 players are a long way ahead of their team mates, encourage them to practice teamwork and leadership skills by encouraging and helping their friends.

Player Born April – June (Q2)

List your players here:

General Characteristics

Much like players born in Q1, Q2 players are often the more mature players in the team but to a lesser degree. They may be fairly confident, and can be 9-6 months older than other members of the team.

Coaches Should:

Dedicate an equal amount of time with these player as the rest of your team. Develop their teamwork and leadership skills, but be aware that they may not be quite as confident as their Q1 teammates.

Interesting Fact.

A player born in the 4th quarter of the year is 15% more likely to drop out of Rugby League than a player born in the 1st Quarter.

Player Born July – September (Q3)

List your players here:

General Characteristics

Like Q4 players, Q3 kids may lack confidence and be smaller and less physically developed than their older team mates. They can still be 3 months older than some of their team mates but up to 9 months younger than others.

Coaches Should:

Treat them equally. Work hard on their confidence and ensure they feel as though they are making a positive contribution to the team.

PLEASE NOTE: This information is meant as a guide only, it is very generalised and based on the broad population and recent research into the Relative Age Effect and Maturation Effect. As previously mentioned, all individuals will develop at varying rates and the way in which you engage with your players may differ dependent on their situation.

Player Born October – November (Q4)

List your players here:

General Characteristics

The small kid, who may lack confidence and can't quite comprehend some of the things you're trying to teach them could quite possibly be born in Q4. Physical team sports like Rugby League aren't often the first choice for parents of Q4 kids, meaning they are generally under-represented in our sport. Unfortunately, they are at most risk of dropping out of the sport due to feeling undervalued and overly challenged.

Coaches Should:

Remember that these players deserve just as much attention as anyone else in the team. Age, maturation or current skill level aren't an indicator of talent, and it's crucial that these players get a fair and equal opportunity to enjoy their experience and develop their skills. Work hard on their confidence, and appreciate that they may need a little more time to take things in. By adolescence, they will have caught up with their mates and could possibly even be even more talented than their Q1 counterparts.

If you identify that a player is overly challenged and really not enjoying their experience, you might like to discuss the option of utilising the 18 month registration policy and applying to play back an age group.

The key is to ensure that every member of your team feel they are making a **valuable contribution**. This can be done by making sure all players are **equally involved in activities and games**, and making a concerted effort to **regularly engage with all of your players**.

The Coach

Role of the Coach

Coaching may have always been an ambition for you, but it's likely that you ended up as the coach because you were last person to step back when the club asked if someone would take on the role. After the initial shock wore off, you probably started to wonder "what next?!" A great place to start is to understand the role of a coach!

It's not just WHAT you coach, it's HOW you coach.

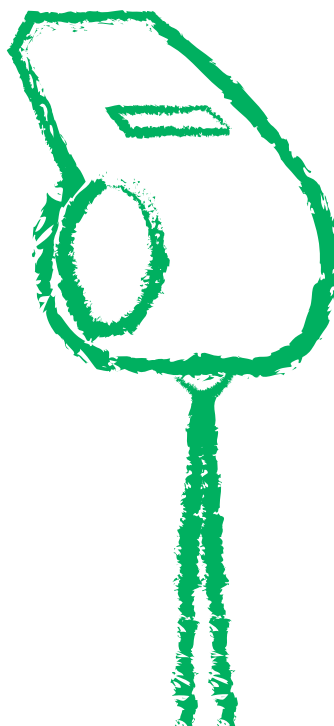
The primary role of any good coach is to ensure that every player has the opportunity to enjoy an environment with an emphasis on having **fun**, making **friends**, and developing **fundamental skills**. If you can get this right it will result in positive gains in the development of each and every player under your care. This approach to coaching is known as **player centred coaching**. This philosophy prioritises the player, and their individual needs over winning and has been proven to increase player retention, improve personal development and enhance sporting performance.

Reflection:

Take a moment to think about why you coach. Does it compliment the reasons why kids play?

Interesting Fact:

Players who leave the game rate unfairness, not feeling valued and low levels of fun as the main negative experiences that influenced their decision not to return.



Contributing to player development

Coaching is about more than just teaching kids how to play Rugby League. There are a range of benefits that sport can provide young people. These benefits extend further than just the development of skill. Coaches can positively impact the overall development of each player and enrich their lives both on and off the field by providing an environment that fosters the 4 C's of player development. Competence, Confidence, Connection, and Character.

"A good coach can change a game, a great coach can change a life."

John Wooden





1.

Competence

Physical, technical & tactical Rugby League skills.



2.

Confidence

Internal sense of overall positive self-worth and confidence to "have a go".



3.

Connection

A sense of belonging and the feeling of being valued within the team, club and Rugby League community through positive relationships with the coaches, team mates & club officials.



4.

Character

Respect, integrity, empathy and sportsmanship.

The ultimate indicator of an effective coach is their ability to consistently contribute to the development of these attributes in their players.

Development Area	Considerations for player development
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Develop fundamental movement skills as well as basic sport specific skills › Deliberate play where players have high amounts of success, is driven by them, and focuses on enjoyment. › Coaches need to be aware that high levels of competence at these age groups isn't a predictor of future expertise. › The environment should be Inclusive and not focused on recognition of physical competence. › It is important coaches focus feedback and recognition on players improvement and effort. › Coaches who are more supportive with limited use of punishment, produced more positive outcomes
Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Self-confidence is shown in curiosity, initiative, independence, and capacity for flexibility in response to environment change. Deliberate play assists in developing these characteristics. › Evaluating their confidence against peers increases the risk of low self-confidence. They should be encouraged to compare against themselves by recognising their personal improvements.
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Building positive peer relationships that focuses on friendship. These peer relationships play a vital role in developing social skills. Children relate this to loyalty, helping, and taking care of each other. › Children need time and opportunity to develop these friendships and display pro-social behavior. › Connection with adults is also important. Children will learn to connect with others by modelling adult's behaviour.
Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Positive behaviour can be learnt through interaction with adults. › Players need positive role models and opportunities to demonstrate character › Encourage healthy competition, where players strive to win without winning being the overarching measure of success. › The Focus should be on performing to the best of one's ability rather than the outcome of performance. If this is achieved, opponents are viewed as fellow competitors over enemies.



Guiding Principles for Coaches

It can be difficult for coaches to know where to start or what to do. Especially if you are coaching for the first time. A great place for coaches to start is to understand the age-appropriate guiding principles for coaches.

These principles should provide you with some direction on what your coaching philosophy should be based around and what your players need from their coach.



Coaches adopt a guiding role in making it all about the player

Sport is a wonderful activity for children that can have a positive effect on the development of the child as a player and a person. However, this development doesn't happen by chance and only occurs when they are exposed to a safe and enjoyable learning environment where the Coach adopts a player focused coaching philosophy.

Research tells us that Coaches who adopt a long-term development approach are far more likely to have a positive impact on a child's life than those who approach their Coaching with a focus on short-term results.

There is far more value in coaches shifting to a guiding role where they provide players with the opportunity to learn through concise instruction, informational feedback, and developing a respectful competitive spirit.

Coaches work on having positive relationships with everyone

Players consistently rate connection with their peers and coaches as being of great importance in their sporting experience. We know the more kids feel valued within the team, the more chance they have of engaging in activities and experimenting without fear of judgment.

Coaches are the key architects in creating an environment that fosters this sense of inclusion and this can be as simple as taking an interest in each player's life outside of Rugby League, or enquiring how school was on a particular day, or ensuring players are respectful of one another.

What's important is that this approach extends to every player and is not only offered to those who may be more capable at that particular stage.

Coaches who value and emphasise positive relationships with their players will help them develop not only as players but more importantly as people.

Coaches take an active role in shaping a great environment for learning

Coaches are the architect of the learning environment as they are responsible for the planning, facilitating, adjusting, and evaluating of the player experience. All the good things that are possible through sport can occur through the coach focusing on creating a fun and safe learning environment.

This happens by placing an emphasis on long-term development over short-term results. Coaches can do this by minimizing instruction, focusing feedback on effort and improvement, allowing players to learn from mistakes, and prioritising fun and development through games.

4

Coaches endeavour to use activities that are fun

The only players who can't be developed through positive Coaching are those who have already left the sport, and of those that do leave one of the main reason they nominate why they left is due to lack of fun. Using activities that are fun is a great place for a coach to start. This means coaches should use game-based activities, where players are challenged and involved, over more traditional, repetitive drills.

Using fun activities doesn't replace the development of a player's competence and confidence, it enhances it and contributes to the development of their connections and character. Fun activities will enhance the skill development of your players, not detract from it.

5

Coaches make every effort to keep players safe

Keeping everyone safe is a fundamental obligation for all coaches. Coaches have a duty of care to the players in their team and should always put safety ahead of anything else. This includes physical and emotional safety.

When most coaches think of safety, they might think only of the physical aspect. However, safety relates to much more than just physical safety and should also include considerations around developing respectful, nurturing relationships that avoid isolating people in your group, they should also align with the relevant Working With Children requirements.

Coaches can achieve a safe environment by keeping their equipment, environment, activities, and interactions safe and how they prevent and manage injuries and illness.

6

Coaches aspire to improve their coaching

The best coaches are those who prioritise their own development. This will allow you to provide your players with positive environments where they will also learn and develop. Coaches learn best on the job where they have the chance to experiment and learn from their mistakes. However, this learning is enhanced when coaches take the time to acquire some knowledge, through courses and researching, and reflecting on their own coaching.

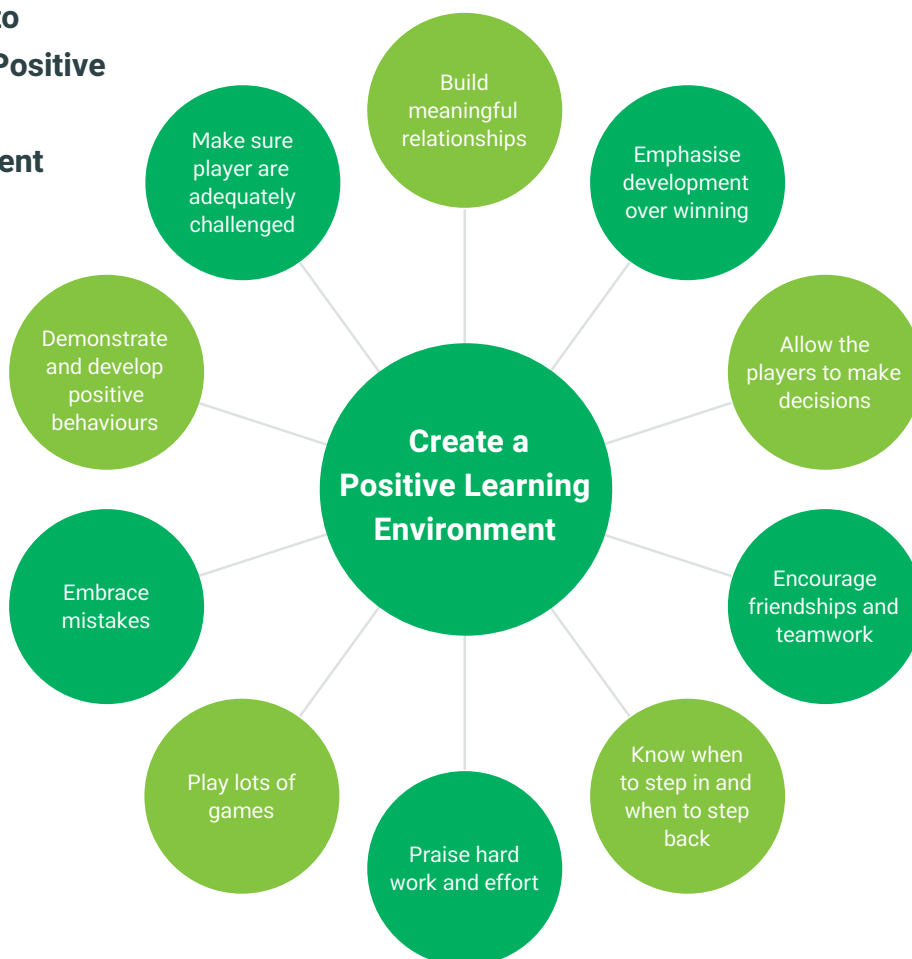
Creating a positive learning environment

The environment you create as a coach will impact the development and enjoyment of your players. Often coaches prioritise performance and winning over the development of each player. Whilst competition is the essence of sport, an overemphasis on winning can have a detrimental effect on the player's experience. If your focus is on winning, you will have very little chance of having a positive effect and will likely turn players away from the game.

Rather than defining your success as a coach on winning/losing, base it on how well you achieve the following.

1. Building Meaningful Relationships
2. Developing Life Skills
3. Creating Learning Environments

10 Ways to Create a Positive Learning Environment



Why should you focus on creating a learning environment?

A positive learning environment will foster the right type of motivation in players to want to improve and continue participating. Coaches can shape this learning environment to either be positive or negative for the players and the outcome of this will shape the way players are motivated.

A positive learning environment will result in the players developing internal motivation instead of external motivation.

1. **Intrinsic motivation** occurs when a player is encouraged to learn and improve where the player's success is based on their comparison with themselves.
2. **Extrinsic motivation** occurs when performance and winning are prioritised and success is based on the player's comparisons with others.

When players develop internal motivation, they are more likely to:

- › Develop good sportsmanship
- › Have positive attitudes towards players and coaches
- › Higher perception of their own ability
- › Have higher persistence
- › Increased well being
- › Continue to play Rugby League



Effective Coaching

Sport can have a huge impact on children. When coaches create a positive coaching environment, the likely outcome is that players will have positive development.

	Positive Coaching	Negative Coaching
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Allows players to have input › Understands mistakes are learning opportunities › Provides positive recognition based on effort and continual improvement › Includes lots of healthy competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Makes all decisions › Punishes players for making mistakes › Uses abuse and punishment as feedback
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Encourages friendships and camaraderie › Engages parents and communicates often › Models positive behavior in their relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Shows favouritism toward “more talented players” › Doesn’t communicate with parents well or at all
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Emphasises fun and enjoyment › Rewards effort › Fosters a respectful competitive spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Over emphasises winning › Focuses on their own achievements over the players
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Delivers a high amount of games › Offers a variety of activities › Focuses on age appropriate physical and technical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Delivers a high amount of repetitive, boring drills. › Focuses only on sports skills and neglects fundamental movement skills. › Doesn’t allow opportunities to try different experiences
Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Models good behavior › Encourages good sportsmanship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Demonstrates poor behavior and a lack of respect › Ignores good sportsmanship
Players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Every player matters and has equal opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Only the most talented players receive the attention

Reflection:

Consider how you coach. Are you a positive or negative coach?



Activities

What type of activity should I use?

When you ask kids why they play sport, the answer is usually “because it’s FUN”. It’s important for us to recognise that what’s fun for adults isn’t always what’s fun for children. If an activity isn’t fun for the players, find an alternative activity. Consider the following when deciding if the activity is fun:

What Makes it Fun?

High amounts
of **GAME BASED**
activities

Having a **VARIETY**
of activities or
modifications
within activities

Minimal
amount of
INSTRUCTION or
INTERFERENCE
from coaches

High level of
INVOLVEMENT
in activities

The ability
to develop
and display
COMPETENCE

High opportunity
for **SUCCESS**

SAFE
environment
where players
feel secure with
absence of fear

Positive
NON-VERBAL
COMMUNICATION
from coaches

Players having
INPUT into their
experience

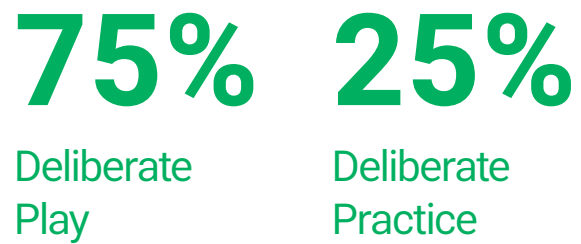
Play vs Practice

The activities we use as coaches can be divided into two main categories; 'Deliberate Play' and 'Deliberate Practice'.

Deliberate play is intrinsically motivating, designed to maximise fun and enjoyment and provide immediate gratification. It often requires minimal equipment, is flexible and allows participants to experiment with rules, tactics, participant sizes and ages. (Bayley et al., 2010. Cote et al., 2009). Deliberate practice is a highly structured activity that requires effort, generates no immediate rewards, and is motivated by the goal of improving performance rather than inherent enjoyment. (Cote et al., 2009).

Players in the sampling phase need to engage in high amounts of deliberate play over deliberate practice.

Your training sessions should consist of



"Play is the highest form of research".

Albert Einstein



Types of Activities

Closed Activities: These are activities that allow players to practice skills in an environment that has no external pressures. Closed activities are best for players to learn a skill initially, however they won't progress this skill into game situations unless they can apply these in open activities or skill-biased games. Closed activities are great if you are finding that players are struggling to perform a skill in a game environment. You can then implement a closed activity so they can improve that skill first, and then take them back to an open activity or skill-biased game.

Open Activities: These are activities that allow players to practice skills in an environment that provides external pressures. Closed activities are best for players to learn a skill initially, however they won't progress this skill into game situations unless they can apply these in open activities or skill-biased games. An example of the difference between an open and closed activity could be around a simple 2 v 1 activity. If we had 2 players run at a pole and practice a 2 v 1, it would be considered a closed activity because there is no defender placing external pressure on the players performing the catch and pass. If we add a defender, instead of a pole, the ball carrier needs to make a decision on if they pass or dummy based on what action the defender takes.



Skill-Biased Games: A skill biased game is a training aid designed to teach players an aspect of rugby league while practicing it in a game based situation. It can also provide a team with the same benefit of development. The reasoning behind a skill biased game is to modify the rules and situations of normal rugby league to suit what you are trying to teach or practice. Skill biased games are a great way to incorporate deliberate play into their training sessions. The benefits of using these games include:

- › Increased player participation
- › Increased core skill repetition within a game situation
- › More core skills such as passing and tackling can be attempted providing repetition for your players
- › Improved problem solving skills
- › Improved communication skills
- › Variety in your training

Reflection:

What activities did you find most fun when you were young?

Embrace the mess!!!

Deliberate play is essentially a type of **game based activity** that allows the players to learn by making mistakes.

There is a misconception that training sessions need to be squeaky clean. If we were conducting the Sydney Symphony Orchestra then we would obviously expect perfection, but that simply isn't the case in evasion sports like ours. The best Rugby League players are those who possess creativity, imagination and vision, and they don't learn those skills through rigid drills.

If there are no mistakes at training, we aren't challenging our players.

When coaching children you should never criticise players for making a mistake. Mistakes means the player is trying something new and learning. Instead of highlighting the mistake, congratulate them for their effort, and find ways to help them improve.

Healthy competition

Game based activities are a fantastic way to generate healthy competition within your team. Kids love to compete, and competition delivered in the right way can help develop your players character, confidence, connection and competence. There are some things you need to remember if you want the players to get the most out of the activity.

- › Make sure players are matched evenly.
- › Encourage and reward respect and good sportsmanship
- › Let the players know, it's OK to lose as long as they tried their best.



The Coaching Process

To ensure we get the most out of training sessions and to help us achieve our aims of making training fun and stimulating for the players, coaches should follow this coaching process. Getting started, observing and responding appropriately.

Get Started

Get started quickly – Explain the basic objectives and rules – Keep instructions to a minimum

For New Activities: Provide quick demonstration so the players can SEE IT, and do a half paced walk through so the players can DO IT .

Observe

Is it Safe? / Are they appropriately challenged? / Are they involved? / Is it fun?

Did I answer yes to all these questions? If so,

STEP BACK

- › Let them play
- › Provide Positive Feedback
- › Give them time

Did I answer no to any of these questions? If so, you can

STEP IN

and change something.

- › Stop the Activity
- › Change the Activity
- › Change Something (rule, field size, player)
- › Ask a question

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

Why are relationships important?

A Rugby League team is a **community** and the coach is the driving force behind it. Your community, is made up of **coaches, managers, players** and of course the **parents**. Relationships are the foundation of effective coaching. Establishing positive relationships within your group will enhance everyone's enjoyment, develop confidence, connection and character. Poor relationships can have the opposite effect and result in low engagement.

Relationships are the foundation of effective coaching.



What relationships exist?

There are three key relationships that you can directly impact as a coach. There are certain strategies you can implement to guarantee that the connections are positive.

Player-Player

- › Provide lots of opportunity for the players to develop friendship at training. Allocate some time for **free-play** where the coaches get out of the way and let the kids take the lead.
- › Plan social events outside of training and games. Maybe a BBQ at a local park so the kids can play and the parents and coaches get to know each other.
- › Encourage players to join you in congratulating their team mates when they do something well or show a good amount of effort.
- › If there is a new player to the team, encourage everyone to introduce themselves and welcome their new friend to the team!

Coach-Player

- › Players will learn from a coach's behaviour, so always demonstrate pro-social behaviours.
- › Show interest in your player's lives away from Rugby League. Do they have any siblings? What team do they go for? What school do they attend? The more you know about your players, the more meaningful conversations you can have, and the more connected they will feel.
- › There's an old saying. **"Players don't care how much you know, if they don't know how much you care"**. Showing genuine care for their development and wellbeing is crucial in coach-player relationships.
- › Always favour positive recognition over negative feedback. "I love the effort you put in there! How about trying it this way?"
- › Treat all players as equals and dedicate an equal amount of time with all of your players.

Coach-Parent

Your relationship with parents is the key to achieving a great culture within your group. By engaging and communicating effectively with parents you will enhance the learning environment for your players, and alleviate any potential issues through the year. It will also provide you with an opportunity to engage some volunteers to help out through the year.



Here are three things that will help you engage with your parents effectively:

1. Organise a pre-season orientation meeting for parents.

This is a perfect opportunity to introduce yourself and break the ice with the parents to get the season off to a positive start! On the next page are 5 Steps to an Effective Parent Orientation Meeting.

2. Regular Communication

Good communication with parents will ensure that they know where to be and what time to be there. You shouldn't rely on the players to pass on all the relevant information to their parents, so it's better that you provide the information directly to them. The easiest way to do this is to invite the parents to the end of training or end of game talk to the players.

Take the time to communicate with each parent individually on a regular basis as this builds rapport and trust. You can talk about how their child is improving and ask them for feedback about how their child is enjoying their experience.

Keep the parents informed about what you'll be doing at training by sending them your session plan. This makes you look professional and organised, and the parents will appreciate knowing what their children are learning.

Take the time to communicate with each parent individually on a regular basis as this builds rapport and trust.

Here are some more ideas that might help you keep your parents informed.

- › Create SMS & email lists.
- › Develop a season calendar
- › Utilise social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp or Team App
- › Stick around after training for a little longer so the parents can come and speak.

3. Encourage Parent Involvement

Research shows that parent involvement in children's sport can provide many benefits. Over engaging or not engaging at all can sometimes have negative effects on a child's experience.

There are three levels of parent involvement that you will encounter.

- › **Under involved parents** – These are the parents that you will rarely see. They might drop the children off and come back to collect them at the end of training.
- › **Moderately involved parents** – These parents are great. They are present, and happy to lend a hand when needed. They encourage their children but allow them to enjoy the experience without pressure.
- › **Over involved parents.** – These parents are sometimes known as "Helicopter parents". They tend to interfere in their child's experience and can make the coach's job difficult.

Try to encourage your parents to be involved, but if needed remind them that you're the coach, and it's important that their child gets some time to work it out themselves.

5 Steps to an Effective Parent Orientation Meeting

STEP 1

Introduction

Welcome everybody to the club, and let them know how excited you are to be working with their children. Tell them a bit about you, like what you do for work to help them understand that you are a volunteer, and a “real person”.

Inform the parent of the logistics (dates, times and venues) and any equipment, training attire the players will require.

STEP 2

Goals for the year

Inform the parent that your goal is to ensure every player has a huge amount of fun, grow great friendships and develop a range of skills that will help them in the future. Explain that fairness is high on your agenda and you will be doing your best to ensure that every player gets a fair go at training and games. Highlight that you will have a focus on effort, sportsmanship and respect over anything else, and although you hope your team will always strive to win games, it won't be at the expense of the fun and development of every member of your team.



STEP 3

Safety & modified rules

This may be some of your parent's first Rugby League experience. Talk about how Junior Rugby League is very different to what they see on the television. Let them know that these rules are there to ensure that their children feel both physically and emotionally safe. Explain that the modified game rules were developed to provide every player the opportunity to have as much involvement in the game as possible

Inform the group the game has strict guidelines and policies around safety, and with the help of the sports trainers you have a responsibility to abide by the policies.

STEP 4

Codes of Conduct

To help eliminate the likelihood of poor behaviour from parents and players, discuss the games Code of Conduct and how it is applied to coaches, players and parents. Let the parents know that their behaviour can impact the learning environment, and enjoyment for the players. Be clear that encouragement is fine on game day, but negative comments and abuse aimed at players, coaches, other parents and match officials will not be tolerated within your group. You may even like to talk about some of the consequences if your players don't abide by the rules. For example. “If a player behaves poorly, they will need to sit out of an activity”

STEP 5

Q&A

Give the parents a chance to ask some question. Do your best to answer, but don't worry if you can't. Just let them know that you'll get the information and get back to them.

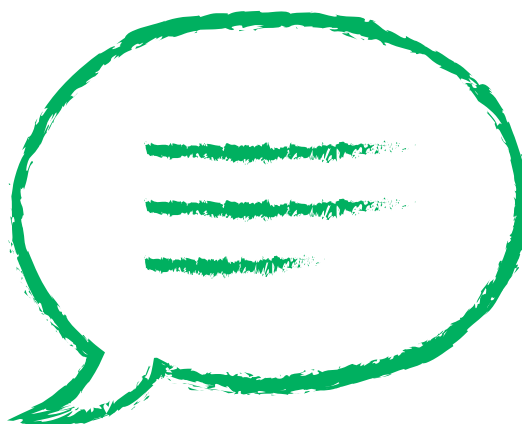
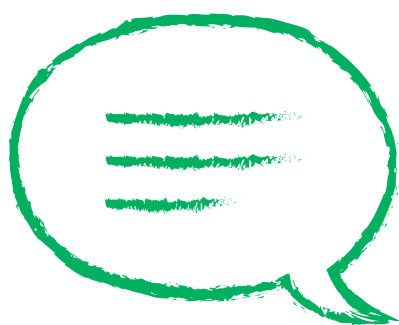
Ask for help

Having parents involved as volunteers will make your job a lot easier. Here are some roles you might need to fill.

- › **Team manager** – Someone organised and good with technology.
- › **Sports Trainers/First Aid Officers** – Someone caring who cares about the well-being of the players
- › **Assistant Coaches** – Someone who respects your coaching method and can enhance the enjoyment of the players.
- › **Social Committee** – A group that will help you develop a real community by organising fun get-togethers away from football

Having parents involved in this capacity will make your job easier and will provide the parents with a better understanding of what goes on. This understanding, together with good communication will help keep parents informed and happy.

"Parents are a resource to be developed, not a problem to be managed."



Program Management

You will have learnt by now that coaching is more than just turning up and teaching kids footy. There are some tasks that you will need to undertake between training sessions and games. Planning is one task that should not be overlooked. It will save you a lot of hassle, and ensure you run an efficient program.

Manage

- › Make sure you get every participant's key information like their preferred contact method (email, mobile number, etc.). Set up an email list or private social media page to make it easier for you to keep in touch with everybody and keep them informed. This also allows parents to communicate and organise car pools etc.
- › Recruit some parents to help (Team manager, sports trainer, social committee, assistant coach) and ensure they understand your goals and their roles and responsibilities within the team.
- › Work with the club to create a season schedule. This should include times, dates and venues for training sessions and games. Make it available to your volunteers and parents.
- › Plan a pre-season parent orientation meeting to meet the parents, discuss your expectations and plan for the season.
- › Ensure you and your volunteers obtain the relevant accreditation.

Prepare

- › Consider the following steps in planning training sessions and games.
 - Select activities that are FUN and are mainly game based with an emphasis on deliberate play.
 - Plan a variation of each activity in case you need to change what you had planned.
 - Limit standing around. Have quick transitions between each activity.
 - Ensure you have enough equipment and the balls are pumped up.
 - Factor in safety! Schedule water breaks and communicate with parents to ensure the kids have the correct equipment (mouthguard, headgear, boots, water bottle).
 - Share your session plan with your volunteers and parents.
 - Use the MyLeague App to find and plan training sessions.

*"By failing to prepare,
you are preparing to fail."*

Benjamin Franklin

Deliver

- › Ensure you are wearing the correct and appropriate attire. (Club shirt, runners/ football boots and sports attire). This enhances the professional image of the club and you as a coach.
- › Arrive to the session or game early so you have plenty of time to meet your staff, set up markers and fill water bottles etc.
- › Get yourself in a good frame of mind, be enthusiastic, energetic and enjoy yourself.
- › Begin with bringing the group together, and sit down to explain what they will learn during the session, and reflect on previous sessions.
- › Throughout the session, utilise the correct coaching process, offer plenty of positive feedback and encouragement.
- › Thank all of the players and parents at the end of the game or training session.



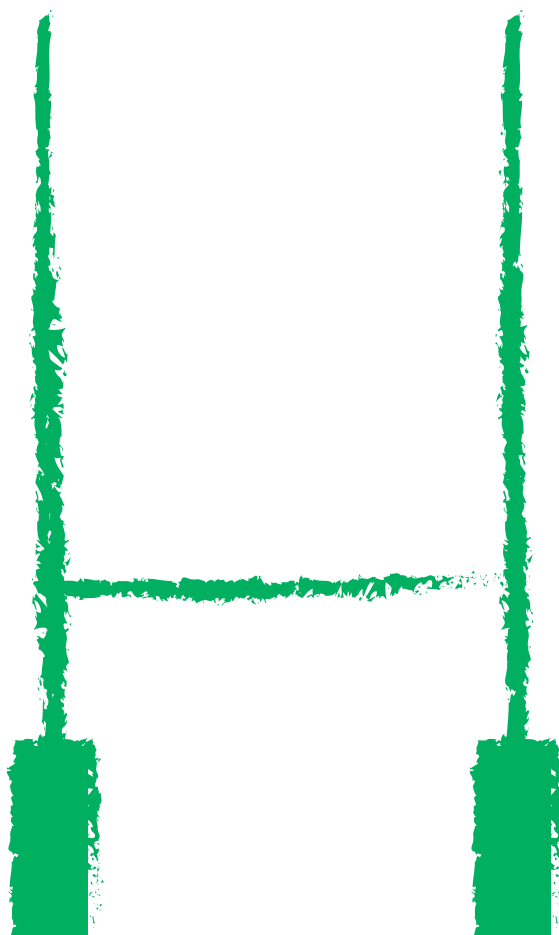
Review & Reflect

It's human nature to reflect and you'll find your self doing this whether you planned to or not. To help get real benefit out of this reflection here's some key questions you could ask to assist you in developing as a coach.

You should review and reflect after every session. Reflection is an important improvement tool in coaching and part of the review process.

Asking yourself the following questions will help you to develop as a coach.

- › Did I achieve the aim of the session?
- › What worked well?
- › What didn't work well?
- › Things to improve on for next time.



Becoming a better coach


Why should the coach keep learning?

The world's most successful coaches have one thing in common, an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Coaching sport is an ever-evolving process. We are constantly learning more about junior sport, player development and coaching strategies! We all want to do the best we can for our players, so keeping abreast of current coaching trends, and reflecting on your own experiences will assist you in delivering the best possible program to your players.

The learning process

Learning is essentially problem solving. Developing as a coach is a constant cycle of identifying a problem, working out what new skills you need, understanding how to implement them, and then reflecting on how well the new skill assisted you in solving the problem. Understanding this process will help you make the most of any learning opportunities.





"The capacity to learn is a gift, the ability to learn is a skill, the willingness to learn is a choice."

Brien Herbert

How does a coach learn?

There are multiple ways for a coach to learn how to improve. Taking advantage of these learning opportunities will help you develop as a coach which will in turn allow you to achieve great results in developing your players competence, confidence, connection and character.

1. Informal Learning

This is the most beneficial form of learning for coaches. It is self-driven and allows coaches to learn on the run, and find information that is relevant to them at that particular time. Informal learning derives from...

› Experience

The most effective way of becoming a better coach is quite simply, to COACH! Through gaining experience, you will get better at communicating and engaging with players and parents, and making sessions fun and engaging will become second nature.

› Other Coaches

Networking, sharing ideas, or simply asking for advice from other coaches can be very beneficial in the pursuit of information. Coaching the next generation of Rugby League people is a team effort!

› Players

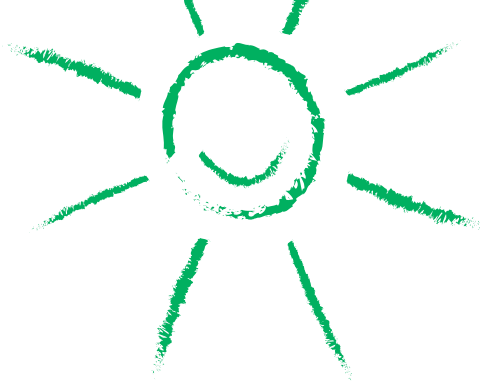
Don't discount how much you will learn from your players through your observations and feedback. Remembering, our primary focus is to provide the players themselves with a fun experience. Often they won't hold back in letting you know when it's fun, and when it's not! The challenge for coaches is to listen, respect and respond to their feedback.

› Research

There is an abundance of books, academic papers and online resources available specific to coaching junior sports participants. This is a great way to learn if you have time to search for what you're looking for, but often this is very time consuming as there is a lot of information out there that may be out of date or not relevant.

The good news is that the NRL have done a lot of the hard work. This handbook, the MyLeague App and www.playrugbyleague.com each have a library of session plans, activities and useful information that will help you in your coaching.

Our primary focus is to provide the players themselves with a fun experience.



2. Professional Development

Non-formal learning opportunities are additional non-obligatory sessions that supplement your coach accreditation course that allow you to gain further knowledge about your role as a coach. The NRL offer many opportunities to engage in non-formal learning through regional coach development club updates and seminars.

To find out more go to www.playnrl/coach and www.playnrl.com/learn

3. Accreditation Courses

These are courses where you achieve an accreditation or qualification. Rugby League requires you to hold an accreditation, appropriate to the level that you are coaching. This is to ensure that coaches are equipped with the basic information they need to start coaching. Formal Rugby League accreditation courses are essential in guaranteeing all entry level coaches understand their roles and responsibilities, particularly relating to the safety and enjoyment of participants.

The other hope is that the information provided throughout these courses inspire coaches to continue to develop and learn through informal and non-formal methods.





Game Day

Developing a Competitive Spirit

Competition is the essence of sport and it's important that coaches foster a strong competitive spirit in their teams, but it's also imperative that you don't prioritise your desire to win at the expense of the development of the players in your team. Research tells us, of the families that leave our sport, a win at all cost mentality is the main contributing factor why.

Coaches should always be looking for ways they can encourage their players to be competitive in a respectful way. You can do this by:

- › Create a competitive practice environment: This will allow kids to continually compete with others. Just remember to keep your feedback focused on their effort and improvement.
- › Model positive behaviour: Kids will learn character from the adults around them and how they behave.
- › Be grateful: Teach players to thank officials, don't blame them. You should also encourage players not to view the opposition as the enemy.
- › Teach players how to win and lose: We should want to be winners every time we take the field, but whether we win or lose, it shouldn't impact our self-worth or keep us from learning and growing.
- › Don't lose sight of development: teaching players to compete respectfully is a key job for a coach, but we shouldn't lose sight of how players develop. At these young ages, you need to ensure you continually focus on the individual player and how they improve. You also need to ensure you allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.

Just remember, sport can be both fun and competitive.



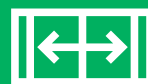
What game do they play?

Under 6

Please check with your local league to confirm if this age group is tag or tackle in 2020.



**6 Plays
Per Set**



**40x20m
Field Size**



**6 Players
Per Team**



**8 mins x 4
Game Time**



No Scrums



Chance Rule



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(No Markers)**



**1 Pass
Minimum**



**No Kicking
or Conversions**



**Tap Restart
on 5m Line**

What game do they play?

Under 7

Please check with your local league to confirm if this age group is tag or tackle in 2020.



**6 Plays
Per Set**



**40x20m
Field Size**



**6 Players
Per Team**



**8 mins x 4
Game Time**



No Scrums



**1 Pass
Minimum**



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(No Markers)**



**Tap Restart
on 5m Line**



**No Kicking
or Conversions**

What game do they play?

Under 8



**6
Tackles**



**68x30m
Field Size**



**8 Players
Per Team**



**8 mins x 4
Game Time**



No Scrums



**Conversions
Allowed**



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(No Markers)**



**2 Pass
Minimum**



**No Kicking
in General Play**



**Tap Restart
on Halfway**

What game do they play?

Under 9



**6
Tackles**



**68x30m
Field Size**



**8 Players
Per Team**



**8 mins x 4
Game Time**



No Scrums



**Conversions
Allowed**



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(1 Marker)**



**2 Pass
Minimum**



**Kicking in General
Play Allowed
(No Bombs)**



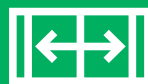
**Tap Restart
on Halfway**

What game do they play?

Under 10/11



**6
Tackles**



**80x48m
Field Size**



**11 Players
Per Team**



**20 mins x 2
Game Time**



No Scrums



**Conversions
Allowed**



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(1 Marker)**



**2 Pass
Minimum**



**Kicking in General
Play Allowed
(No Bombs)**



**Tap Restart
on Halfway**

What game do they play?

Under 12



**6
Tackles**



**100x68m
Field Size**



**13 Players
Per Team**



**20 mins x 2
Game Time**



No Scrums



**Conversions
Allowed**



**Defenders Stand
Back 5m
(1 Marker)**



**2 Pass
Minimum**



**Kicking in General
Play Allowed
(No Bombs)**



**Tap Restart
on Halfway**



Safeplay Code

The Safeplay Code was developed to emphasise safety and good conduct within the game of Rugby League by creating the best possible on-field environment and actively encouraging the core values of Rugby League, and a healthy respect for all participants. It applies to all players up to and including the Under 15 years age group.

The Safeplay Code can be downloaded at www.playnrl.com/safeplay

Code of Conduct

The Rugby League Code of Conduct provides a set of principles and actions that all participants can follow, to assist in creating a safe and positive environment for all.

Whether you are a player, parent, coach, match official, spectator, or official, you have the ability to set the standards of behaviour that will assist in creating better people and communities through Rugby League and allow our great game to grow. By adopting this and ensuring your actions reflect the code, you will ensure Rugby League will continue to be a positive experience for all participants.

All participants are required to abide by the Code of Conduct. By doing so, we will ensure that everyone has a wonderful experience with our great game.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Remember that junior players participate for pleasure and mateship. Your coaching should create a positive environment that is fun, safe, and inclusive.

- › Actively discourage foul play and/or unsportsmanlike behaviour by players.
- › Seek to maximise the participation and enjoyment of all players regardless of ability; avoid the tendency to over-use a talented player; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- › Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a physician and/or sports trainer to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- › Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- › Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- › Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- › Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- › Teach young players to realise that there is a big gap between their play and the professional game; do not coach them as if they are professionals.
- › Ensure that your coaching reflects the level of the competition being played; do not be a “win-at-all-cost” coach.
- › As coach, conduct yourself at all times in a manner, and in all situations, that shows leadership, respect for the game of Rugby League and respect for all those that are involved in the game – the players, officials, the fans, the parents, the referees and the media.

The Code of Conduct can be downloaded at www.playnrl.com/code-of-conduct



What to Coach

Training

Training sessions provide players the opportunity to learn, practice and develop. It should also be where players can connect.

Training sessions should be made up of four elements.

1. Fundamental Movement Skills

2. Games & Play

3. Tactical Skills

4. Technical Skills



Fundamental Movement Skills

Fundamental movement skills are very important to a child's physical development. They include a range of locomotor skills (moving the body), stability skills (balance) & manipulative skills (ball skills). When confident and competent in these skills, children can

develop more sport-specific and complex movement skills. A firm grasp of these skills allow children to enjoy their sport, and most importantly, a child may enjoy a long life of physical activity.

Here is a list of Fundamental Movement Skills:

Locomotor Skills

- › Running
- › Hopping
- › Skipping
- › Jumping
- › Dodging
- › Side Stepping

Stability Skills

- › Balancing
- › Coordination
- › Landing

Manipulative Skills

- › Throwing
- › Catching
- › Kicking
- › Striking

Whilst players will develop these skills simply through playing a range of games, we have developed the NRL Mascot Moves. These are a range of movements designed to increase the player's physical competence by enhancing their balance, coordination, strength and flexibility.



Mascot Moves

These are great fun activities that coaches can use to help develop some fundamental movement skills. These are great to use at the start or end of training as well and transitioning between activities.



Tiger Crawl



1. Start in the standing position.
2. Bend over and put both hands on the ground.
3. Now, walk forward with the same leg and arm together.
4. Try and keep your back straight, and look forwards.



Storm Cloud



1. Start by squatting down to the ground.
2. Lean backwards and place your hands on the ground.
3. Raise your hips so you look like a "table top".
4. Now walk backwards, forwards or sideways, while holding your bottom off the ground with your back straight.



Eel Squirm

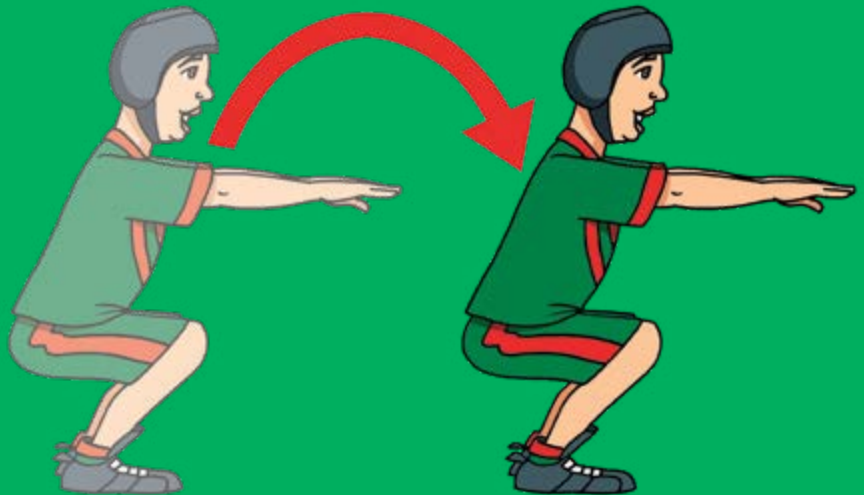


1. Start in a standing position and bend over with your legs straight placing your hands on the ground.
2. Try touching the ground as close to your toes as you can.
3. Slowly walk your hands away from your feet, as far as you can.
4. Finally walk your feet back to your hands, always keeping your hands on the ground.



Bunny Hops

1. Starting in the standing position, feet hip width apart and squat down low, keeping back straight and chin up.
2. Jump as long and as high as you can, landing on both feet before squatting again ready for your next jump.
3. It's important to pause and regain your balance between each hop.



Panther Prowl

1. Start in the standing position. Bend over and put both hands on the ground.
2. Spread your arms and legs wide so your torso is close to, but not touching the ground.
3. Now move your right arm and left leg forward, then the left leg and right arm at the same time, then repeat,
4. Keep the body close to the ground throughout the entire exercise.



Viking Lunge



1. Standing tall, with arms by your side, take one big step forwards,
2. Bend your front leg to 90 degrees, whilst dropping the back knee to about a centimetre off the ground.
3. In the same motion, raise your hands to the side, and clap above your head.
4. Then go back to your starting position before repeating with the opposite leg.



Bulldog Bound



1. Squat low with a wide stance, and lean forward.
2. With fists clenched, reach as far forward as you can, and place fists on the ground.
3. Now pull your legs past your feet so that your hands and arms end up between your legs before reaching out again and repeating.



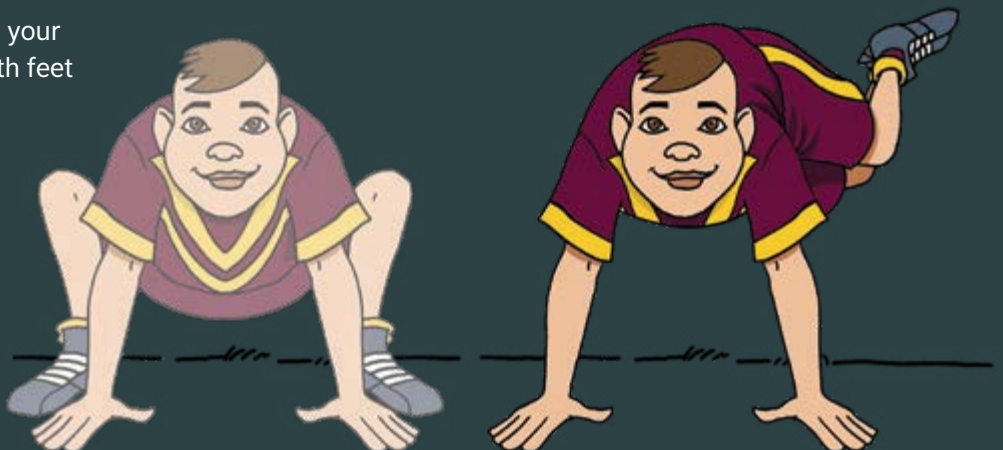
Titans Tumble

1. Make yourself small by bending at the knees and hips and tuck your chin into your chest.
2. Roll over one shoulder using your legs to generate momentum and bring yourself back to your feet in one fluid motion.
3. Then repeat and roll over the opposite shoulder.



Bronco Buck

1. Squat low, placing your hands on the ground in front.
2. Transfer your weight to your hands and kick with both feet up and out to the side.
3. Transfer weight back to your feet and move both hands so that you are back in the starting position before repeating, this time kicking your feet out to the opposite side.



Soaring Eagle

1. Standing tall with arms stretched out to the side, leap forwards onto one foot.
2. Lean forward with legs and back straight, raising your back leg directly behind you.
3. Balance for 2-3 seconds before standing tall and leaping onto the opposite foot and repeat.



Carioca Cowboy

1. Start with your feet a little wider than hip-distance apart, knees soft.
2. Use your left foot to push off, crossing it behind the right foot and transferring your weight onto it.
3. Move your right foot to the side until you're back to your starting stance.
4. Now cross your left foot in front, stepping onto it. Move your right foot to the side.
5. Continue moving to your right, crossing the left foot behind, then forward, until you reach the end of your planned distance.
6. Then reverse your direction.



Tackle Ready

The Tackle Ready program is a new initiative which aims to increase the confidence and competence of our youngest players to help kick start their love of the game. Accredited Tackle Ready deliverers will work with players and coaches as they enter the tackle version of the game at Under 7 to deliver the six-stage program. The activities and games utilised throughout the program are all available on the MyLeague App.

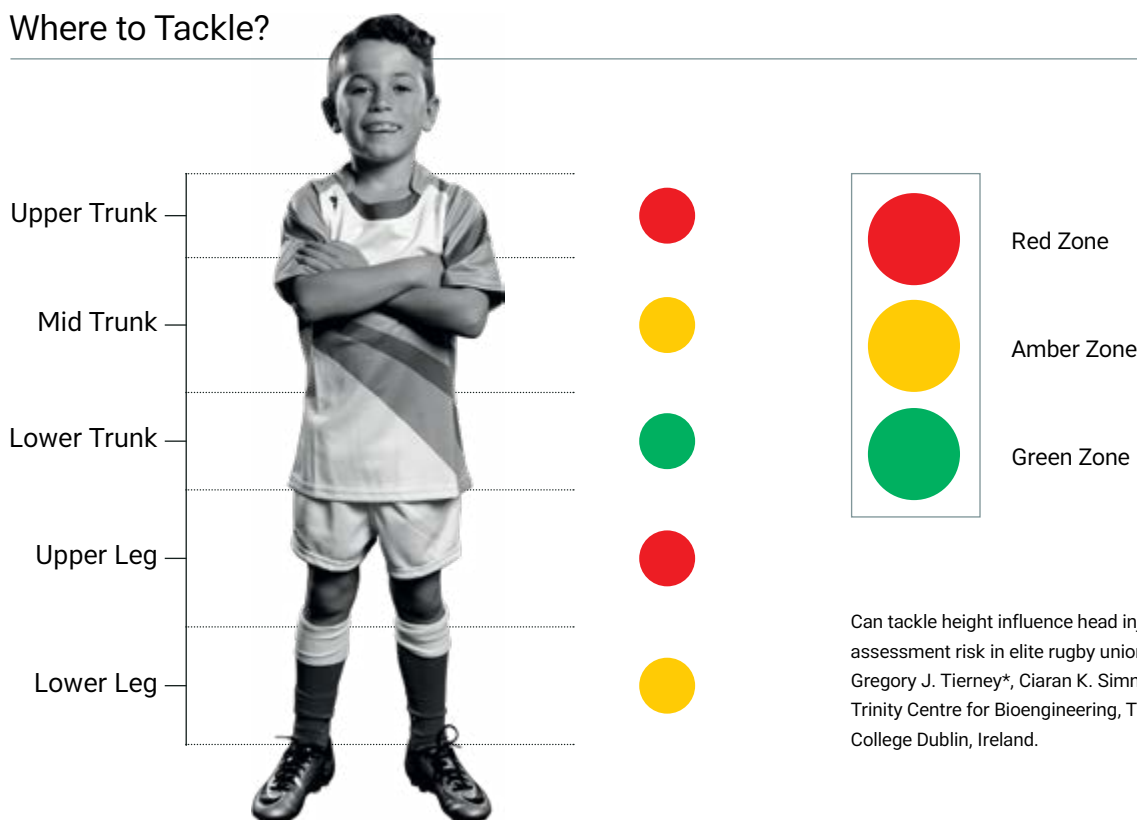
The Tackle Ready Program focuses on three key areas.

- › Safe Landing
- › Making a Tackle
- › Running into a Tackle

Safe Tackle Technique

Before we start on the skills, here is some important information. A recent study conducted by Trinity College Dublin identified the safest Tackle Zone. Findings from this study have had a strong influence in the way our deliverers and coaches should instruct tackle technique. We have defined this as the “bellybutton area” to ensure it is simple and easy to comprehend for the young participants.

Where to Tackle?



Can tackle height influence head injury assessment risk in elite rugby union?
Gregory J. Tierney*, Ciaran K. Simms
Trinity Centre for Bioengineering, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

Technical Skills

Technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. The technical skills of Rugby League within the sampling phase are...

- › Safe Landing (All Ages)
- › Making a Tackle (Under 7+)
- › Running into a Tackle (Under 7+)
- › Making and Receiving a Pass (All Ages)
- › Play the Ball (All Ages)
- › Kicking (Under 9+)
- › Draw & Pass (Under 9+)

When introducing and practicing skills, remember to use the coaching process!

Here are some key coaching points that will help you identify what might be happening if you observe a child struggling with a skill. When introducing and practicing skills, remember to use the coaching process! Be sure not to overload the players with too much information, providing simple instruction. Tell them what they are trying to achieve, giving them a quick demonstration so they can see it, and let them practice!

The techniques described here are guides only. Coaches should always focus on the outcome of the skill rather than ensuring every player executes the correct technique. Some players will develop other ways to achieve the outcome through their own idiosyncrasies. Try not to discourage these.



Safe Landing

Sink, Tuck, Roll



Sink

1. Make yourself small
2. Hinge at the knees & hips



Tuck

1. Bring ball to midline of the body
2. Tuck your arms and chin tight

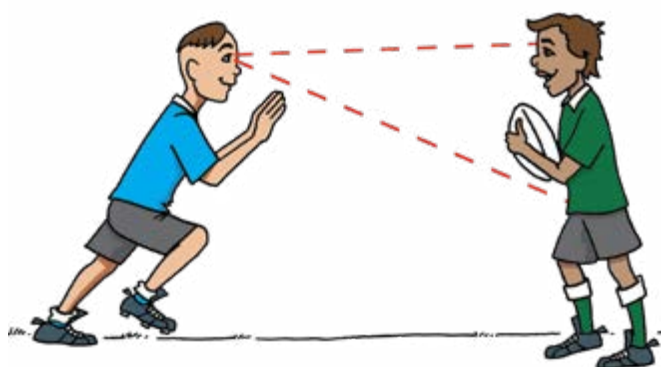


Roll

1. Collapse, don't fall.
2. Land on large part of the body

Making a Tackle

Approach, Hit, Wrap, Push & Roll



Approach

1. Chin up
2. Eyes at the target
3. Hands up
4. Short feet into contact



Hit

1. Aim for Tackle Zone (Belly Button)
2. Chin Up
3. Back Straight
4. Contact with Shoulder



Wrap

1. Head to the Side & Tight
2. Feet Close to Ball Carrier
3. Arms Wrapped
4. Squeeze



Push & Roll

1. Use ball carrier's momentum
2. Push towards the ball carrier
3. Roll them onto their back
4. Land on top with control

Running into a Tackle

Protect, Brace, Land, Play the Ball



Protect

1. Secure grip on the ball with finger spread
2. Tuck the ball into the midline of the body
3. Protect the ball with the non-ball carrying arm



Brace

1. Eyes up
2. Shorten your steps
3. Lean forward
4. Find Space



Land

1. Make yourself small
2. Hinge at the knees & hips
3. Land Safely



Play the Ball

1. Snap your knees up
2. Sweep your leg around
3. Touch the ball with your foot

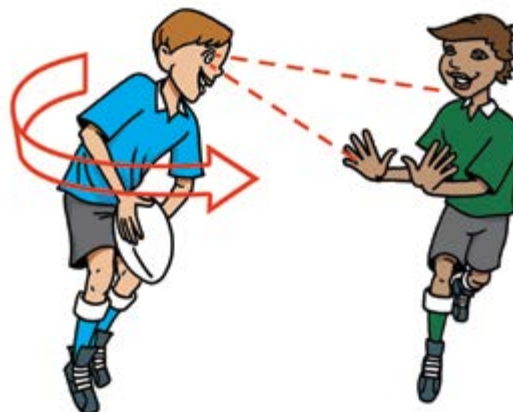
The Pass

Receive, Make



Receiving a Pass

1. Hands up early to provide target, forming a "W" with fingers
2. Keep elbows away from body
3. Eyes on Ball, early catch



Making a Pass

1. Two handed grip, fingers spread
2. Eyes on target
3. Rotate torso. Extend arms towards receiver
4. Pass off outside foot

Play The Ball

Snap, Sweep, Touch



Snap

1. Keep ball secure
2. Snap your knees to your chest



Sweep

1. Pick the ball up off the ground
2. Sweep the leg around
3. Place the ball on the ground with the points of the ball facing each sideline



Touch

1. Step over the ball
2. Touch the ball with your foot
3. Rolling it backwards with control

Kicking

Set, Drop, Kick



Set

1. Grip ball with two hands with point of the ball towards the ground
2. Hips pointing square to the direction you want the ball to go.



Drop

1. Head looking down over ball
2. Drop ball onto the laces of you boot

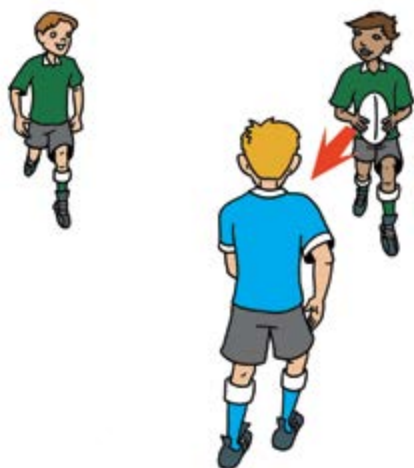


Kick

1. Swing leg through with toes pointing down and a firm ankle.
2. Kick through the ball, and follow the ball

Draw and Pass

Engage, Read, React



Engage

1. Run towards the defender
2. Shorten steps
3. Create space for your support



Read

1. Has the defender committed to tackling you?
2. Or have they moved their focus to your support player?



or



React

1. Decide if you should pass or run
2. If the defender follows you, pass into the space created
3. Otherwise hold the ball, and run

