

LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

We are Scotland's future



A GUIDE FOR CLUBS & SCHOOLS



Stage 1 - FUNDamentals



Stage 2 - Learning to Play



Stage 3 - Developing the Player



Stage 4 - Learning to Compete



Stage 5 - Training to Compete



Stage 6 - Training to Win



Stage 7 - Retire & Retrain

The Seven Stages

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INTRODUCTION

Scottish Rugby, working in partnership with **sportscotland**, has developed a vision and strategy for the development of players within our game. Led by the principles of long term player development, this links with the emphasis on strong sporting pathways within Reaching Higher, the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Sport.

Long term player development (LTPD) is a player-centred approach to achieving a player's full potential throughout their involvement in rugby. This strategy will help us with future work within Scottish Rugby which relates to the development of our game and players.

The model represents a seven stage progression, each stage relative to the important physical, psychological and social developments in a young person's life. LTPD is about achieving appropriate training, competition and recovery throughout a player's career, particularly in relation to these important growth stages.

The process emphasises the role of quality preparation and delivery mechanisms, matched to individual development. It is focused on stages and developing performance over the long term rather than winning as a short-term objective ("peaking for the weekend").

The main aims of the LTPD plan are to outline to coaches, parents, administrators and the rugby and sporting community in Scotland what a long-term approach to training and preparation means. This acknowledges that not all children develop at the same rate.

The research underpinning long term player development has enabled Scottish Rugby to recommend the necessary playing, training and competition environments to improve the future development of all players in our game. This can only be achieved if the most appropriate and effective development environments can be created in our clubs, schools and pathway programmes.

It is a framework that allows Scottish Rugby to work towards three linked aims:

- 1. START - To give more people the chance to play rugby.**
- 2. STAY - To keep more players and participants in the game.**
- 3. SUCCEED - To have more players achieving their potential whether at club, school, pathway, age-grade international, professional or international level.**



THE PLAYER JOURNEY

From first touch to senior rugby / Stopping playing and giving something back

Scottish Rugby aims to create the most appropriate and effective development environments in our clubs, schools and pathway programmes. Scottish Rugby requires a structured development programme, which links the range of rugby providers, to give a seamless transition from first touches of a rugby ball to senior rugby and lifelong participation in the sport. Research has indicated that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become world class. In practical terms this equates to three hours' practice each day for ten years. This does, however, include time spent doing physical education, a wide range of other sports, informal play, other exercise and, of course, specific rugby practice (both coached and informal).

Our "player continuum" diagram on page 10 highlights the various programmes players can be involved in throughout their rugby career. There needs to be a shift away from the "win by Saturday" culture – which dominates our sport through all levels of the game – to a player-centered developmental approach which puts the players' needs first rather than those of the coach, parent or supporter. In the earlier stages of the continuum, making players better from one stage to the next is vital. Proof of that development is evidenced by their performance in matches – not by the result! Plainly speaking it means doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way to give young players the chance of developing to their fullest potential. As this document details, this strategy provides us with the most favourable opportunity for competitive rugby, at all levels of the game, in future years.

The proposed programme of LTPD would ensure that players and coaches are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to help maximise players' potential at the appropriate stages of their development, through appropriately structured programmes, guided by a national rugby curriculum. These programmes match

developmental stages in a young person's life, with training methods that will maximise the effects on his / her training. At younger age groups, players would be encouraged to develop good basic movement patterns through participation in a variety of different sports, not just rugby. This will benefit their rugby development in the long term through increased levels of competence (the ability to do), confidence (in being able to do) and commitment (the desire to do).

A properly structured player continuum should ensure that our sport grows both in the number and quality of players.

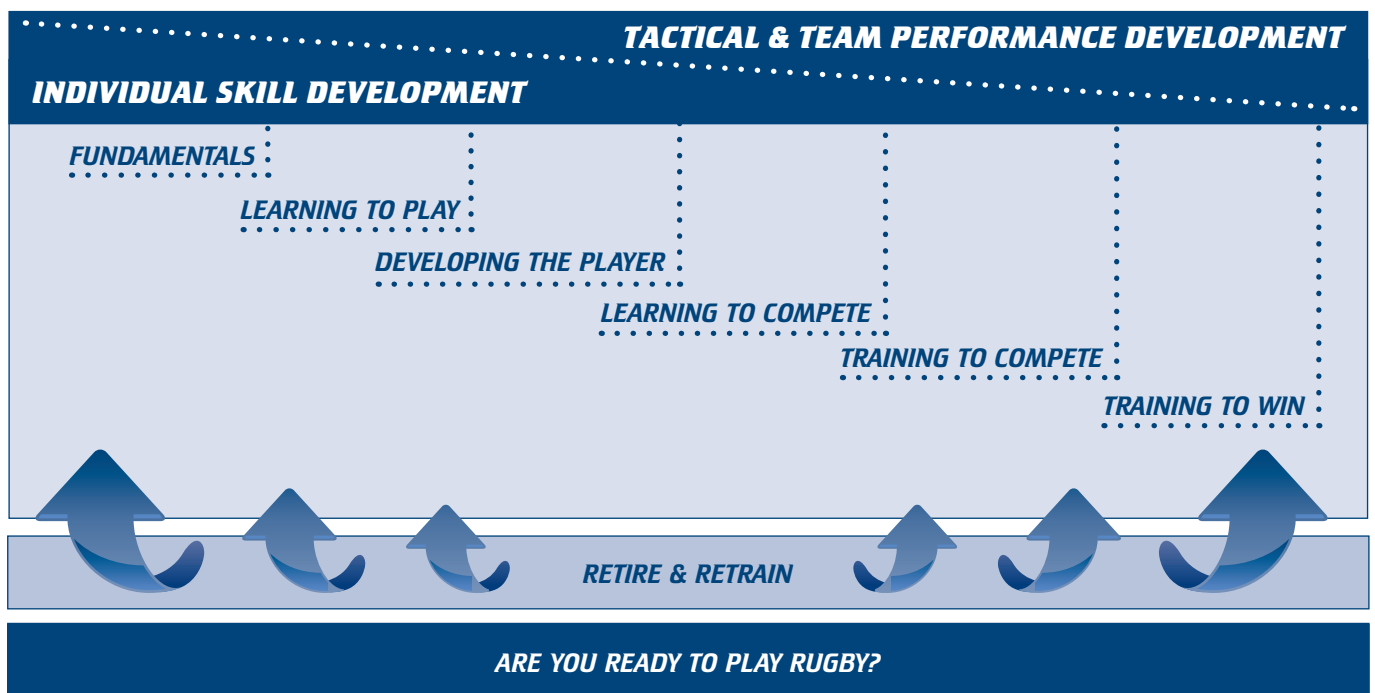
- With more younger players being better prepared and motivated to play, clubs should benefit from increased quality and quantity of players moving from child and youth programmes into adult rugby.
- These players will all be better prepared to play at as high a level as they are capable of.

The Player Development Model

The Scottish Rugby model of player development is a seven stage model (stages detailed in diagram below).

Each stage comprises of five components, each with the developmentally appropriate input at each stage. These five components are:

1. Technical & Tactical
2. Physical Conditioning
3. Movement Skills
4. Mental Factors
5. Lifestyle Management



Coach Education

A long-term approach to maximising individual potential and involvement in sport emphasises the importance of having high-quality coaches working with and understanding the development of children and young people as they embark upon their sporting journey. Although a primary aim of LTPD is to produce greater numbers of players who are capable of achieving at all levels, it also provides a platform for coaches to encourage and support participants at every level to fulfil their potential and remain involved in sport.

In future it will be possible for an individual coach to become better qualified without having to move through age groups. This should assist in retaining experience within each age range. Qualifications and continual professional development (CPD), both formal and informal, will be available relative to the stage a coach is operating in. This is necessary to ensure that we can provide the environment within which young people with potential can truly flourish with the right coach, with the right skills, at the right time for the player.

Realignment of the Coach Education Pathway to the tiered qualification structure of the new UKCC (United Kingdom Coaching Certificate) has resulted in a constant thread throughout the coach education programme being "how to coach" skills. This will ensure that coaching is more learner-centred (ie focused on the player) rather than coach-centred.

Research has indicated that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become world class

Are You Ready to Play Rugby?

Scottish Rugby launched the 'Are you ready to play rugby?' campaign to review all areas of the game, to ensure that a consistent approach to player safety is being adopted by all coaches, teachers, referees and volunteers across Scotland.

Scottish Rugby, as the governing body for the sport, believes that player safety is paramount and will continue to proactively review and refine the game to ensure it remains a fun, safe and enjoyable sport for all.

At the beginning of February 2009 a consultation paper was circulated to all clubs, schools and other stakeholders. A series of regional presentations was also organised to give people the opportunity to discuss the proposals with Scottish Rugby staff. Stakeholders were encouraged to give feedback both at the presentations and also in writing. Almost 300 people attended the presentations and around 50 written responses were received from across the country. Further details on the consultation groups are listed on page 9.

Scottish Rugby would like to thank all those within the rugby community who gave up their time to contribute to this important piece of work. Your feedback has been invaluable in developing the following policy changes which will further reduce the risk of serious injury in our game. Scottish Rugby would also like to thank the SCOT group of Orthopaedic Consultants who have contributed significantly to this process.

Although recent research* shows that the risk of catastrophic injury in rugby union is extremely rare, Scottish Rugby takes its responsibility to player safety very seriously and, as a result, the following policies have been introduced to further reduce the risk of serious injury, for the start of season 2009/10. It is critical to the future of our sport that the following policies are universally adopted by the whole rugby community for the start of next season.

* Dr Colin Fuller, Centre for Sports Medicine, University of Nottingham – Catastrophic Injuries in Rugby Union: An assessment of risk (July 2007)



ARE YOU READY TO PLAY

Age Banding

1. U16 players in U18 rugby

Male players U16 should not play U18 school or club rugby.

This policy must be followed unless exceptional cases can be demonstrated where a player's physical maturity, skill level and experience are of a comparable standard to that of the game / competition that they will play in

- Front row players (props & hooker) will not be eligible
- Clubs and schools who have a player that they wish to put forward for exception will need to follow procedures detailed in the U16 Players in U18 Rugby policy. This consists of an application form to be submitted to Scottish Rugby followed by a physical maturity assessment at a Scottish Rugby assessment centre
- Player completes online rugby ready course.

2. U18 players in senior rugby

Male players U18 should not play senior/adult rugby.

This policy must be followed unless exceptional cases can be demonstrated where a player's physical maturity, skill level and experience are of a comparable standard to that of the game / competition that they will play in.

- Front row players (props & hooker) will be eligible for exception if they complete a further level of assessment.
- Clubs and schools who have a player that they wish to put forward for exception will need to follow the procedures detailed in the U18 Players in Senior Rugby policy. This consists of submitting a consent form and additional front row exemption form, if relevant, to Scottish Rugby.
- Player completes online rugby ready course.

3. U18 cut-off date for local / regional competition

- A review of research literature into this area shows that the determining factor in increasing risk occurs when playing physically immature players against physically mature players i.e. U16 players playing U18 rugby. There is no evidence to suggest that boys (16 – 18 years old) playing together increases the risk to 16 year olds.
- Schools and clubs have the flexibility to agree age eligibility date for U18 school and club players prior to competition/game.
- Scottish Rugby will continue to adopt the 1st January age date for all national age grade club and school competitions and representative squads. This is in line with IRB competition age date and Scottish Education school entry date.

4. Scottish Rugby school & club competitions

For next season the following national competitions will be in place:

School	Club
• U18 Schools Cup	• U18 Cup
• U15 Schools Cup	• U16 Cup
	• U15 Cup

5. Women and Girls Age Banding

Following integration, Scottish Rugby is working to ensure a consistent approach to age banding for the womens' and girls' games.



RUGBY? POLICIES

Law Variations

1. Age grade law variations

All clubs and schools to follow age grade law variations for season 2009/10. This policy must be followed with the exception that schools who currently play larger sided teams can continue to do so – if in line with the exception below – as long as both teams agree and the law variations outwith player numbers are applied:

- S1 age grade law variation 13-a-side, exception up to 15
- P7 age grade law variation 10-a-side, exception up to 13 (6 forwards, 7 backs)
- P6 age grade law variation 8-a-side, exception up to 13 (6 forwards, 7 backs)

2. Long Term Player Development sub group

A group consisting of coaches, teachers, referees and Scottish Rugby staff will be set up to review current age grade law variations and produce recommendations for season 2010/11.

Minimum Standards For Coaching & Refereeing

Coaching

1. The IRB online rugby ready course will be the minimum criteria for all teachers and coaches in Scotland for season 2009/10. Scottish Rugby will monitor schools and clubs for their 'rugby ready' status.
2. Scottish Rugby to design an annual mandatory update course for coaches and teachers, with associated network of tutors, for introduction at the start of season 2010/11.
3. Scottish Rugby to investigate the introduction of a coaching licence as part of the UK Coaching Framework by 2012.

Refereeing

1. All licensed referees to complete IRB online rugby ready course prior to start of season 2009/10.
2. Referee re-licensing process to be reviewed during season 2009/10.

Injury Management

1. Basic minimum standards of pitch-side care to be established and communicated to all clubs and schools prior to season 2009/10.
2. A rugby first aid qualification to be developed and put in place prior to start of season 2010/11.
3. All team managers are encouraged to take the IRB online rugby ready course.

Injury Reporting

1. Pilot new injury reporting form and process with schools who enter schools cup.
2. Circulate and raise profile of existing forms and process for injury recording for season 2009/10.
3. Set up group to monitor and evaluate injury trends in season 2009/10.

Injury Prevention

1. Develop information on basic physical preparation and skill development prior to playing rugby for all coaches, teachers and referees for start of season 2009/10.
2. All players from the age of 15 to be encouraged to complete IRB online rugby ready course. Compulsory for all U16 in U18 rugby and U18 in senior rugby.

Risk Assessment

1. Scottish Rugby to create template risk assessments for all areas of development, coaching and performance work.
2. Scottish Rugby to produce Game Management Guidelines – including pre match protocol – for all youth coaches, teachers and referees to use prior to games, to reduce any areas of potential increased risk.

Insurance

1. Scottish Rugby to widely circulate insurance guidelines for season 2009/10 to all schools and clubs.
2. Scottish Rugby to update insurance company to changes in policy.

Consultation Details

External groups consulted:

All clubs and schools, 32 local authorities, **sportscotland**, Scottish Government, referee societies, Association for PE Scotland, Association of Directors of Education Scotland, School Sport Federation, SCOT Group – Orthopaedic Consultants, SWRU Board and member clubs

For further information on the Are you ready to play rugby? policy, including policies on U16 players in U18 rugby and U18 players in senior rugby, please visit www.scottishrugby.org and click on **Are you ready to play rugby?**

THE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player pathway

KEY

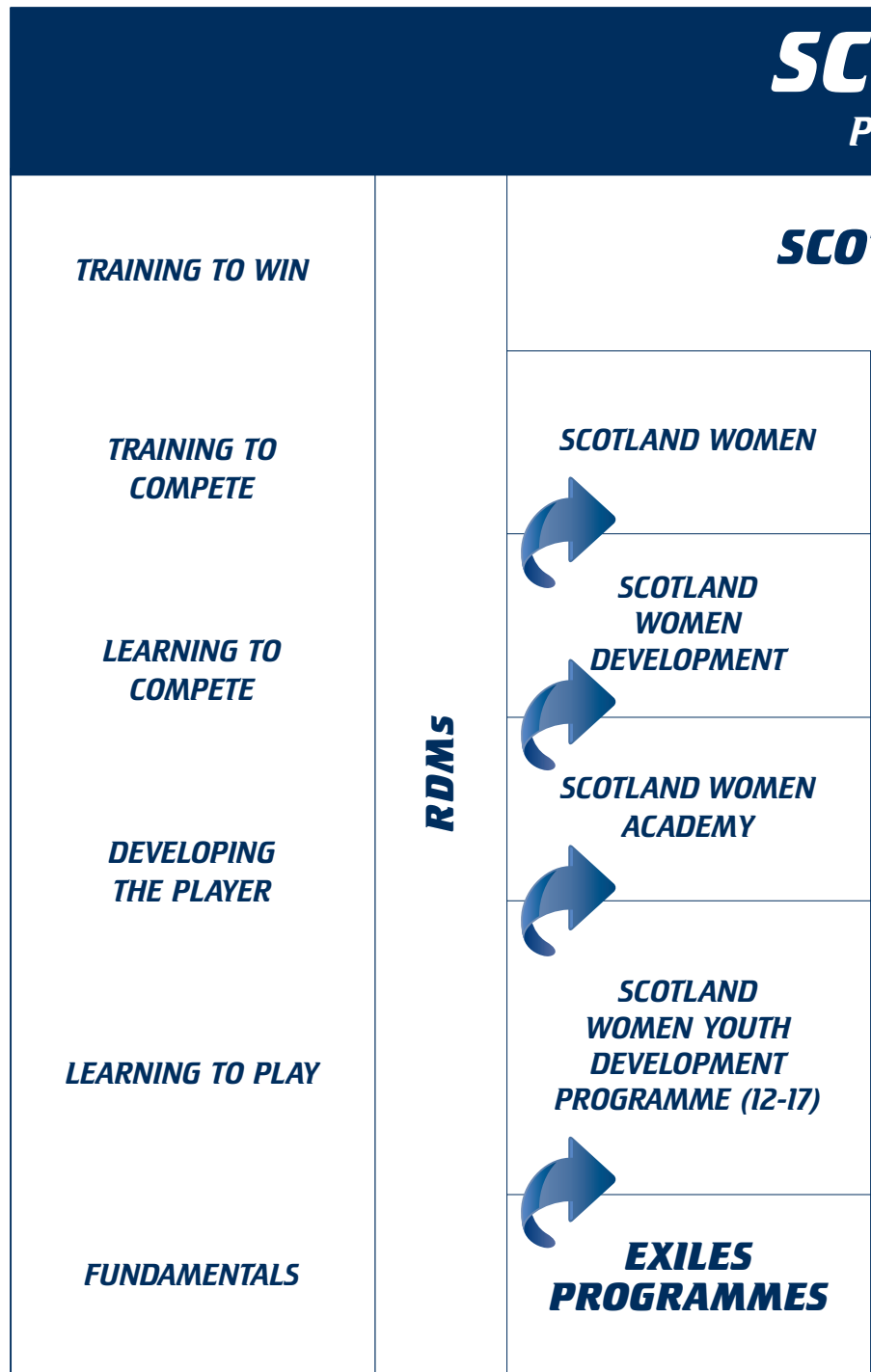
RDM
Regional Development Manager

PDM
Performance Development Manager

CDOs
Club Development Officers

AIS
Area Institutes of Sport

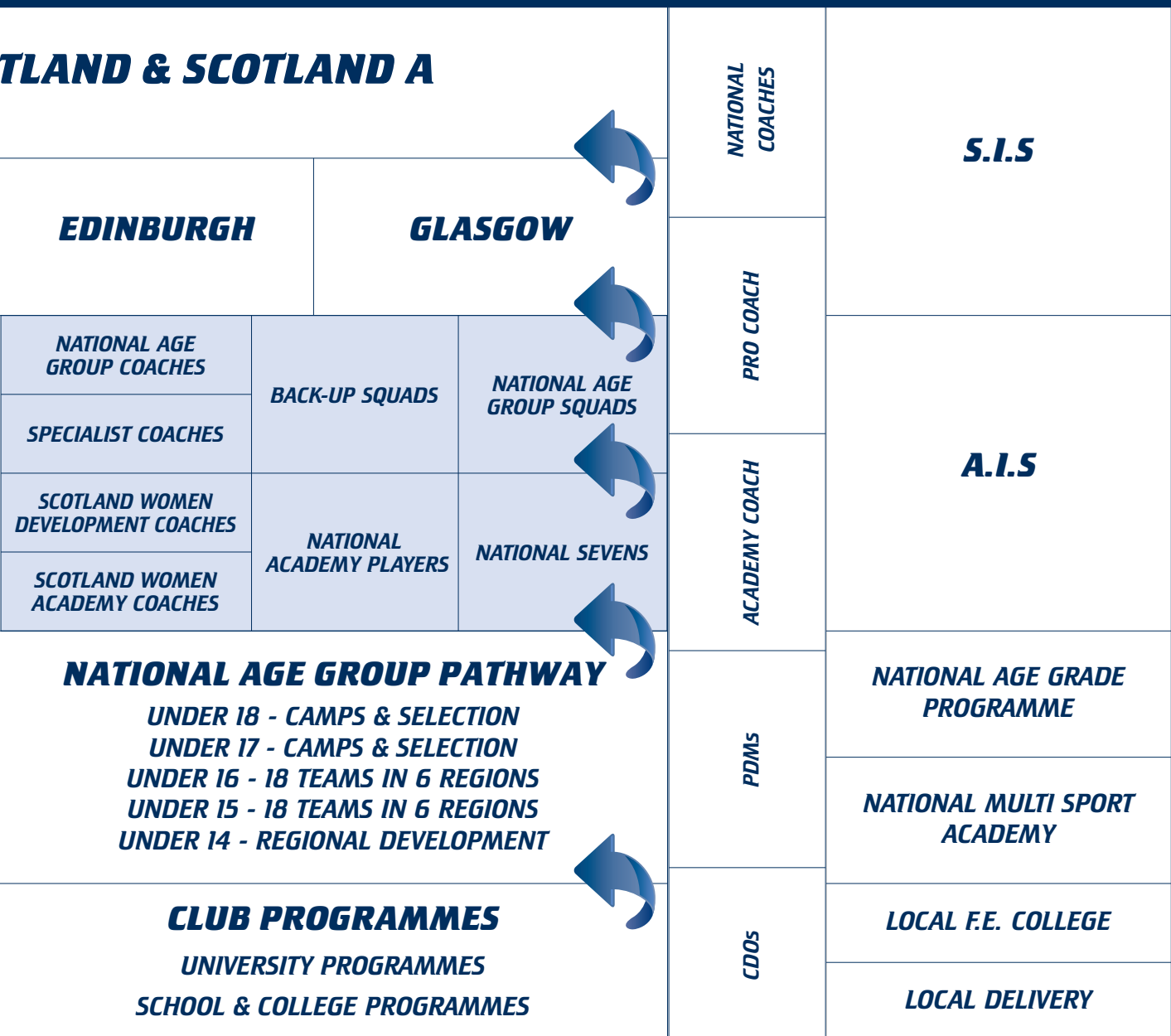
SIS
Scottish Institute of Sport



T CONTINUUM

SCOTTISH RUGBY

PLAYER CONTINUUM DIAGRAM



FUNDAMENTALS

6-9 Males

6-8 Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Learning to love the game, learning to move

- The major objective of this stage is to develop physical literacy within children, through rugby and other sports participation
- These skills will be delivered through games-based and FUN (Foundation, Understanding, Nurturing) activities, with 100% involvement at all times
- Festivals and small-sided tag and touch games that allow the opportunity to express enjoyment and develop skills
- Without speed, agility, balance and co-ordination, as well as the ability to run, jump, throw, kick, catch and control the body (sensory awareness), children will not only be incomplete as rugby players, but will not have the confidence or competence to take part in many sporting activities
- For more information please contact Scottish Rugby's Coach Education Dept on 0131 3465167 or hit the coaching link on www.scottishrugby.org

ROLE OF THE COACH

- Provide well organised, well communicated, planned and structured practices that involve 100% activity and enjoyment that promotes fundamental skills that will underpin future player development
- All sessions to follow APES principles (Activity, Purposeful, Enjoyable, Safe)
- Coaching through games to be used as much as possible

Qualified coaches who are working with players in this age stage should refer to the FUNDamentals resource developed by **sportscotland** (in conjunction with Scottish Rugby) for skills information and practice examples that can be delivered in their coaching sessions.

For more information please contact Scottish Rugby's Coach Education Department on 0131 3465167 or hit the coaching link on www.scottishrugby.org



TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

Evasion and invasion game skills

- Basic sports skills: throwing, catching, running, supporting, go forward into space, defend space
- Being comfortable with the ball
- Tag and touch and mini rugby programmes (as per Age Grade Law Variations)

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

- All players should wear a gumshield
- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to Foundation and UKCC Levels 1-2
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills / technique prior to playing (Note – there should be no contact for players below Primary 4). Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP YOU?

- New six hour Foundation coaching course designed incorporating coaching, refereeing and RugbyReady practical to be launched for 2009/10 season. All mini coaches encouraged to qualify to this level - details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Foundation / UKCC qualified coaches able to access the new online FUNDamentals coaching resource developed in partnership with **sportscotland**
- UKCC courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Referee courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – refereeing
- Strength & Conditioning courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Mini-specific coaching CPD (continual professional development) currently being produced with RFU and WRU. These to be delivered by Club Development Officers
- Coaching resources and law variation cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources



MENTAL FACTORS

A foundation built on confidence

- Confidence: (coaches can model confidence in players, provide opportunities to enable success in tasks, set basic goals for players to better their own performance)
- Make them feel involved: 100% activity, 100% of the time
- Intrinsic (self) motivation: (Make rugby fun, encourage children to play and practice away from coaching, for example, set homework challenges)
- Imagery skills (introduce imagery: "See it, feel it, do it – which way worked best for you?")



PHYSICAL FACTORS

A foundation based on speed

- Multi-directional speed (0-10m, 0-4 seconds and high speed movements) is massively important
- Feeling and sensory awareness
- Endurance through playing small-sided games
- Strength through body weight exercises



LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

A foundation for good habits

- Introduce simple ethics and concepts of sports
- Introduce partnership and team working
- Respect for coaches and officials – appreciative of parents and volunteers
- Always have water bottles available and provide the chance to use them
- Coaches can work with parents to reinforce the importance of good nutrition and hydration, and providing healthy food for children from an early age



MOVEMENT SKILLS

Developing physical literacy

- Catching and throwing / passing
- Agility, balance and coordination, with and without the ball: encourage the child to do gymnastics
- Running, jumping, hopping, and bounding: encourage the child to do athletics
- Throwing and catching: encourage the child to take part in other ball games
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position

LEARNING TO PLAY

9-12 Males

8-11 Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Learning the basic skills of the game

- These ages are known as the skill hungry years as, motivationally speaking, children are geared to learn skills at this time. So this is an ideal opportunity to focus on building the skills of the game onto the movement skills of the children
- Using games based approaches to skill learning; the emphasis should be on developing basic handling and contact skills that will form the foundation of the players' future participation in the game
- Competition opportunities should reflect developmental principles (e.g. equal playing time for all) through small-sided games (tag and mini rugby); these will allow enough involvement in the action to develop the necessary endurance fitness in children without additional training
- Key physical qualities to develop in every training session are speed and agility. The growth of the nervous system continues until approximately 12 years of age and the development of fast-twitch muscle fibres (the fibres that generate power) is still able to be influenced
- Coaches should focus on developing confidence, the vital ingredient to future participation and performance, through fostering and reinforcing success in achieving basic goals for each player. Focusing on praising and reinforcing effort is very important; without understanding why it is important to try hard, players will not develop characteristics such as commitment and training intensity that will enable them to succeed (in life and rugby) in later years
- Parents and players need to be educated on the lifestyle factors (nutrition, hydration, recovery, support) that underpin player development
- The basis of commitment to future training is formed at this stage, and coaches should encourage "homework" and independent practice in children, as well as participation in a range of sports, including team games and athletics, gymnastics and swimming. This could include informal play and non-structured practices and games (for example, games of touch rugby between friends)

ROLE OF THE COACH

- Motivate and stimulate confidence in children to develop skills and game sense through planning and delivering well-structured programmes with progression within and between sessions
- Provide an enjoyable environment that fosters a love of the game and promotes an environment that encourages children to continually challenge themselves
- Challenge by setting basic goals, valuing effort and persistence and reinforcing improvement by providing objective and constructive feedback. Differentiate between individuals within a practice – make things more challenging for those who can do a task, less challenging for those who can't yet do it, but keep the task the same. This helps the player develop both self-esteem and the ability to realistically evaluate their performance
- Provide equal playing and training opportunities for all players, regardless of how good you think they might be at this stage
- Foster understanding of, and respect for, rugby's laws, cultural ethics and equity practices



TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

Learning through deliberate play

- Basic rugby skills: catching, passing, evasion and support skills
- Fundamental skills progressively refined, especially through multi-direction movement and "linking skills" activity
- Developing confidence with and around the ball
- Develop game-sense by playing of games that foster anticipation, action and reaction to others
- Introduce to contact skills, emphasising confidence and posture as skill progresses in complexity through tackling, rucking and mauling situations
- Progressed development of the scrum and the lineout, following the guidelines of Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations
- Introduce how to create and exploit space
- Willingness and knowledge to practice skills independently
- Play through tag and mini rugby
- Anticipated ratio of practice to game is 4:1 (play more often, compete less)

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

- All players should wear a gumshield
- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to Foundation and UKCC Levels 1-2
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills / technique prior to playing. Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP YOU?

- New six hour Foundation coaching course designed incorporating coaching, refereeing and RugbyReady practical to be launched for 2009/10 season. All mini coaches encouraged to qualify to this level - details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
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MENTAL FACTORS

A foundation built on confidence

- Achieving success in increasingly challenging practices, with the coach providing constructive feedback, develops self-confidence
- Acknowledge ability but reward and praise effort; this encourages hard work and provides the foundations for committed effort to overcome challenges
- Practices should be structured to encourage decision-making. Have a small number of choices in game-related practices, with support and guidance from the coach
- Demonstrations and feedback should identify relevant information that will enable the child to complete tasks. This shapes attention-control skills
- Coaches can make children aware of how the body feels, and what they are thinking relative to how 'activated' or 'energised' they feel. This means they start to understand when the body is over and under activated
- A positive attitude to training and performing is important to develop and reinforce at this early stage
- The player should be encouraged to control those factors that they can control and not worry about those that they can't

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Developing speed and a foundation for power

- Multi-directional speed technique (0-20m, 0-5 seconds):
- Decision-making and reactions
- Acceleration from different starting positions (jogging, jumping, standing still, on the floor)
- Chaotic speed (acceleration, deceleration, direction change, re-acceleration)
- Endurance developed through playing in small-sided games, both in training and competition
- Any coach can make a player tired. Develop speed and power first!
- Use 'speed play' (interchanging fast and slow running / activities) to enhance endurance
- Strength developed through bodyweight (gymnastic-type exercises), wrestling (grappling) and contact activities that emphasise postural control and structured, progressive introduction to free weight training by coaches qualified through the Scottish Rugby/UKSCA Strength & Conditioning coach education programme
- Warming up dynamically for each session, and cooling down with some static stretching; educate children about preparation and exercise techniques
- Flexibility – activities promoting full joint range of movement



LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

Developing good habits

- Working with parents, coaches should consistently reinforce the importance of good hydration and good nutrition. Increasingly, the young player will take more responsibility for the foods they choose to eat, based upon their early experiences
- Always have water bottles available and provide the chance to use them
- Choosing to follow a healthy lifestyle can be developed through rugby and other sports
- Understanding of the laws of rugby should be fostered, as well as concepts of ethics in relation to how we play the game
- Players and parents should be aware of the structure and philosophy of Scottish Rugby's development programmes and competition systems

MOVEMENT SKILLS

Learning to move efficiently with and without the ball

- Agility, balance and coordination – encourage the child to do gymnastics
- Running, jumping, hopping and bounding with good posture – encourage the child to do athletics
- Throwing and catching – encourage the child to take part in other ball games
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position
- Controlling the posture – physical literacy will enhance this
- For guidance please refer to the FUNdamentals resource developed by **sportscotland** (in conjunction with Scottish Rugby). For more information please contact Scottish Rugby's Coach Education Department on 0131 3465167 or hit the coaching link on www.scottishrugby.org

DEVELOPING THE PLAYER

12-16 Males

11-15 Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Learning the game, developing the rugby athlete

- This stage is about practicing and playing to develop the player towards competence in individual and increasingly unit-based skills
- During this stage, players enter peak height velocity (PHV: the growth spurt associated with the onset of puberty), which means that coaches will have to differentiate between early, normal and late maturing players
- Whilst a player may be 14 years old chronologically, they can be physically still 11 (late maturer) or up to 17 (early maturer). The physical developmental age of the player will dictate the physical input into their programme, which is a key emphasis of this stage
- As players' skill and game competence develops, technical-tactical development becomes more emphasised. The objective now is to progressively develop physical qualities such as strength, power and anaerobic (without oxygen) speed and endurance. This is a key requirement of a rugby player, who needs to be able to recover between high intensity periods of play
- During this stage, the player will be more identifiable as a committed athlete. This commitment should be reflected in the player being increasingly self-motivated, increasingly self-responsible, and be able to work towards goals and be able to realistically evaluate their own ability
- Being able to regulate the training and playing regime of individuals at this stage will prevent overloading of the players' capacities and provide equitable playing opportunities for young players regardless of their ability
- At 14+, players should have an annual plan based upon preparation, competition and transition phases which integrates with a nationally structured season
- This means taking a player-centred approach to balancing the demands put on talented players who may be approached to play for school, club and regional pathway squads. As selection into Scottish Rugby's performance development programmes ("The Pathway") becomes important, talented players should be playing as much rugby as they need. Participation players should be able to play as much rugby as they want!
- The focus of training is still on development; players' natural desire to win on the park should be fostered by the coaches. Training should not be focused on preparing a team to win but developing the individual player's capabilities

ROLE OF THE COACH

- Continue the development of core technical skills and be able to do them with power
- Promote the development of all players' potential over the identification of talent
- Develop game understanding in players, with an increasing focus on unit as well as individual skills
- Devise practices that develop players' decision-making abilities in understanding when and how to use specific skills, and also develop an understanding of the consequences of the decisions they make
- Foster strategic thinking that will underpin tactics both in and out of possession
- Foster individual physical development, competitiveness and commitment to set and achieve goals
- Promote commitment to maintaining intensity in training sessions
- Continually provide objective and constructive feedback – this is important in maintaining confidence and focus

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

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- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Players and team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to UKCC Levels 1-4
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing. Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U16 in U18 rugby policy adhered to (available from www.scottishrugby.org - Are you ready to play rugby?)

TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

- Recommended training sessions to games played is 4:1
- Be aware of and receive coaching in Key National Themes
- Individualisation of skills training to address strengths and weaknesses
- Consistency in performing core skills/ techniques with increased power, under increased pressure, and with increased accuracy
- Progressive introduction to kicking skills that is phased into open game play
- Perform skills under competitive conditions
- Develop techniques through tactical links
- Positional awareness and unit skills in relation to the ball, the area of the pitch and the opposition
- Knowledge of principles of play
- Undergo the early stages of tactical preparation (what, how, when, why)
- Implement basic team and unit principles
- Play effectively in small sided training games
- Introduction and playing of the full 15 a-side game according to Scottish Rugby Age Grade Law Variations
- Play and understand different positions
- Understand the laws of the game
- Read and understand the game

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP YOU?

- New three hour RugbyReady practical course developed and launched for season 2009/10 - details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- UKCC courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Referee courses available throughout the country - details on www.scottishrugby.org – refereeing
- Strength & Conditioning courses available throughout the country - details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Youth specific coaching CPD (continual professional development) currently being produced with RFU and WRU. These to be delivered by Club Development Officers
- Coaching resources and law variation Cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources

MENTAL FACTORS

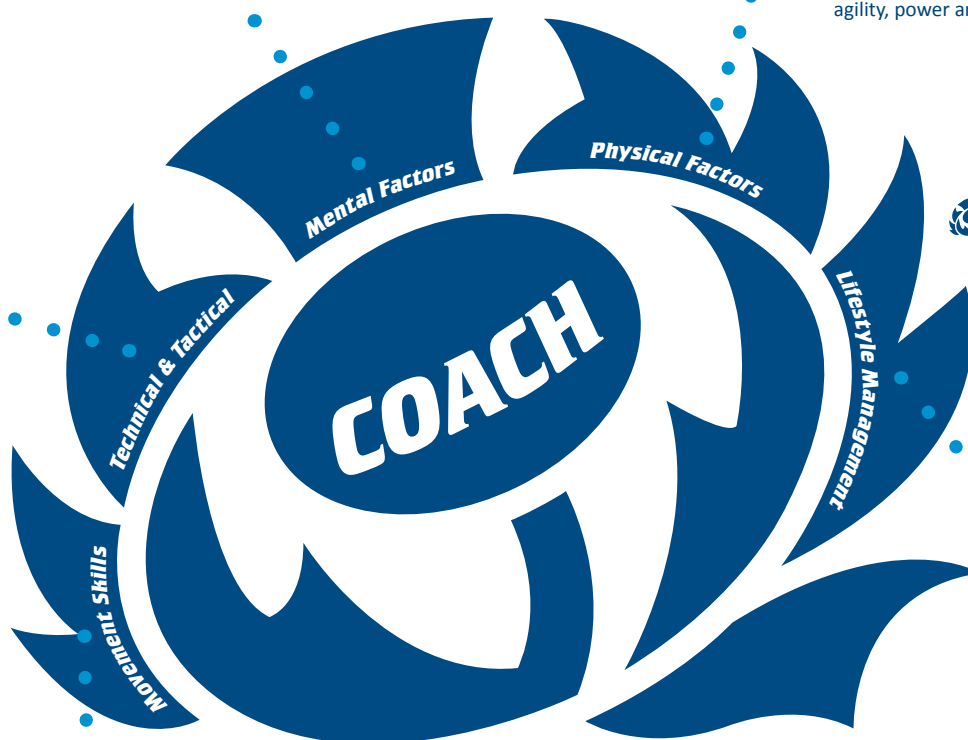
Developing commitment and the foundations for excellence

- Coaches and parents set the environment for the players. The environment within which people operate is one of the biggest developmental influences on the psychological qualities of the young player
- Development of goal-setting abilities in training and individual practice, including the skill of self-setting goals
- Develop understanding of high quality training and competitiveness
- Development of the ability to focus on relevant cues, at the right time. Attentional training introduced to develop ability to switch attention
- Introduction to pre-performance routines to help develop focus
- Introduction to techniques to control emotions before, during and after games
- Develop ability to keep highs and lows in perspective—developing self-concept
- Coaching processes should develop mental coping strategies under pressure situations
- Psychological skills including imagery, self-talk, commitment, goal setting and performance evaluation techniques should be encouraged by the coach
- Development of individual profiling to guide goal-setting and training

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Developing the athletic player

- The onset of Peak Height Velocity occurs during this stage (PHV: the adolescent growth spurt), which influences skeletal growth, nervous system development and hormonal development
- At its simplest level, PHV can be monitored by recording weekly the players' standing and sitting height and weight – as growth accelerates, players are entering PHV. As the rate of growth slows over time, players can be seen to have finished PHV
- Speed sessions should focus on quality not quantity; rugby specific acceleration, top speed and chaotic speed (accelerate, decelerate, reaccelerate, change direction, etc.) should be focused on
- Strength comes before power and is developed through Olympic and power lifting techniques from early on in this stage. Dynamic posture control should be incorporated into training through jumping, landing and rebounding (plyometric) activities
- Power is promoted by introducing multi-directional hopping and low intensity jumps (plyometrics). As strength develops, increasingly intense exercises can be incorporated
- Endurance is developed through multiple sprint activities with different lengths of work and recovery: After PHV, the player is able to work anaerobically (without oxygen) with increasingly high intensity working periods
- Flexibility is very important in maturing the individual and is developed through dynamic exercise and static stretching sessions
- Introduction to field based fitness tests for acceleration, speed, agility, power and endurance



LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

Learning the lifestyle of a performer

- Performance = Training + Recovery + Adaptation. Players to take increasing responsibility for each of these factors
- Rest, nutrition and hydration are all key factors
- Education regarding doping control and substance abuse
- Introduction to injury prevention and injury management
- Introduction to performance analysis to guide players' own approaches to training and playing
- Players may be selected for talented development programmes such as Scottish Rugby's Pathway programme. Players with potential will become involved in games of higher intensities which will be more demanding
- Players selected into the performance pathway should play as many games as they need to – recreational players should be able to play as much rugby as they want to!
- (Scottish Rugby's performance development managers can help and advise coaches and parents on such issues)

MOVEMENT SKILLS

Applying athletic qualities

- Agility, balance and coordination at speed
- Running efficiently with and without the ball
- Jumping, hopping, and bounding with good posture and technique – encourage the child to be athletic
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position
- Postural control in many different positions and activities, including in contact situations

LEARNING TO COMPETE

16-18 Males

15-17 Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Playing the game, developing performance

- Developing and confirming core skills and tactical application (with positional specificity) in competitive environments and different game situations
- Building on technical / tactical skills, there is also an emphasis on individualised physical development, with strength, power and anaerobic power
- Players should have individual strength and conditioning programmes and be moving towards competency in weight lifting and plyometric activities
- Increased player and coach responsibility and expectation for commitment to achieving success. This means the player having full responsibility for managing their lifestyles (with support from parents and significant others) to fully support the playing, training and education demands
- A balanced approach ensures the rugby demands upon young players (playing for school, club, pathway / regional squads and Scottish age-group teams) are managed appropriately
- At 16+, all players should have a structured annual plan based upon general and specific preparation, competition and in-season development and transition phases
- Regulating the training and playing loads of individuals at this stage will prevent overloading of the players' capacities and provide adequate playing opportunities for all. Scottish Rugby Performance Development Managers (PDMs) can assist coaches in determining this for players
- The focus of training is still on development; players' natural desire to win on the park should be fostered by the coaches, and training should now be moving towards a focus on preparing a team to win whilst developing the individual player's capabilities. National Age Grade teams give our young players a developmental experience of competing in international rugby

ROLE OF THE COACH

- Encourage players to develop and demonstrate independent thought and skill execution and performances relative to overall team and unit strategy in practice and competitive situations
- Further develop game understanding in players, with an increasing focus upon team skills as well as the accurate and forceful execution of individual and unit skills
- Devise practices that utilise players' decision-making abilities in understanding when and how to use specific skills, and reinforce understanding of the consequences of their and others' decisions
- Coach within an environment that encourages a 'can do' attitude where players commit to trying things whilst maintaining intensity in training sessions
- Foster strategic thinking that will underpin tactics both in and out of possession through encouraging the players to critically evaluate performances
- Foster individual physical development, competitiveness and commitment to self-set goals. Promote self-reflection against identified goals
- The coaches' plans enable the player to learn to adapt training to maximise competitiveness in matches whilst still training for longer-term development aims
- Continually provide objective and constructive feedback – this is important in maintaining confidence and focus

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

- All players should wear a gumshield
- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to UKCC Levels 1-4
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing. Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U18 in senior rugby policy adhered to – available from www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?



TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

- Recommended training sessions to games played is 4:1 (depending on position on Player Continuum)
- Further develop and refine Key National Theme skills
- Individualisation of skills training to address strengths and weaknesses
- Proficiency in core skills with increasing power, under increased pressure, and with increased accuracy
- Further develop technical coaching of types of kick
- Perform skills under increasingly pressured competitive conditions
- Utilise techniques that are appropriate to the tactical situation
- Positional awareness and unit skills in relation to the ball, the area of the pitch and the opposition
- Further develop and demonstrate principles of play in attack and defence
- Develop strategic and tactical thinking through playing the game involving 'what if?' questioning
- Become increasingly specialised in positional knowledge
- Develop a winning mentality and implement 'winning tactics'
- Understand and play to adaptive game format (U19 laws) and have an understanding of the full laws
- Read and understand the game, and be increasingly able to react accordingly while maintaining width, depth, support and penetration

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP YOU?

- New three hour RugbyReady practical course developed and launched for season 2009/10 - details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- UKCC courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Referee courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – refereeing
- Strength & Conditioning courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Specific coaching CPD (continual professional development) currently being produced with RFU and WRU. These to be delivered by Club Development Officers
- Coaching resources and law variation cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources



MENTAL FACTORS

Preparing for excellence

- Learning to develop a performance process driven approach
- Coaches and players set the practice environment; young players should now begin to take responsibility for establishing consistency and commitment in high quality and competitive practice and performance
- The players should apply goal-setting abilities in training and individual practice, including the skill of self-setting goals based upon feedback and performance analysis
- Development of techniques to control arousal on and off the pitch. Full use of positive thought techniques including positive self-talk and imagery
- Players learn and refine pre-performance routines, developed in practice (including game simulation) and match situations
- The player should begin to demonstrate independent and realistic thoughts relative to their individual performance in practice and competitive situations. They should be able to keep highs and lows in perspective and have a realistic perception of their capabilities. Coaches should be aware of this, particularly in relation to selection / non-selection and aid the player in establishing the appropriate perspective for this. The player should be encouraged to receive and act upon constructive feedback from coaches (especially during selection processes with external pressures from significant others)
- Psychological skills including imagery, self-talk, commitment, goal setting and performance evaluation techniques are important and should be reinforced by the coach
- A continued awareness of the selection process and increasing importance of performance (not result) outcomes will test players' confidence levels and reinforce individual confidence and competence in relation to competence achieved in training
- Development of mental coping strategies in structured practice and real pressure situations
- Ensure the player has a balanced approach to the sport, relative to their desire, potential and capabilities



PHYSICAL FACTORS

Improving the athletic player

- Individual programmes based upon the players' physical development
- Speed sessions should focus on quality not quantity; rugby specific acceleration, top speed and chaotic speed (accelerate, decelerate, reaccelerate, change direction, etc.) should be further developed. Reactions and decision-making can be increasingly linked to tactical decision-making
- Players should achieve competency in weight-lifting techniques during this stage. Dynamic posture control forms the basis of training through jumping, landing and rebounding (plyometric) activities that also include contact. Training intensity and volume should be manipulated for individuals in a structured and progressive programme
- Power is developed through multi-directional hopping, bounding and increasingly intense (depending on developed strength) jumps (plyometrics)
- Endurance is developed through multiple sprint activities with different lengths of work and recovery: this can be adapted to time of the year, with anaerobic base leading into high anaerobic game-based work
- Flexibility is very important in the maturing individual and developed through dynamic exercise, working through full ranges of movement and static stretching sessions
- Monitoring achieved by field based fitness testing



LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

Supporting optimal performances

- Optimise personal approaches to nutrition, hydration, recovery and regeneration (reinforcing the importance of sleep) and lifestyle management (including drug-free principles and practice)
- Players should keep an accurate record of training and game performances
- Develop personal injury prevention and management plans
- Coaches and players work together to analyse performance
- Introduction to the concept of 'coaching teams': specialist physiotherapists, fitness coaches etc.
- Continued development of strategies to taper training to allow peak performances to occur
- Engagement with coach and referee education for continued development of game and law knowledge



MOVEMENT SKILLS

Applying athletic qualities

- Agility, balance and coordination at speed
- Running efficiently in acceleration, maximum speed and direction change with and without the ball
- Jumping, hopping, and bounding with good posture and technique – encourage the player to be athletic
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position
- Being able to put the posture into a position where it is always able to exert, and withstand, forces.

TRAINING TO COMPETE

18-20 Males

17-20 Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Optimising performance

- Consistent application of core skills and tactical application with respect to team play in competitive environments
- The players' technical, tactical and physical ability will determine where they are on the performance pathway. The strongest, fastest players who can consistently demonstrate skills under pressure will be the most successful in any given level of performance
- Building on this, there is also an emphasis on individualised physical development, with strength, power and anaerobic power being the focus of the physical training programme
- Whatever the playing level, players and coaches have full responsibility for expecting, and committing to, achieving success. This means the player having full responsibility for managing their lifestyles to fully support their playing, training and education demands, as appropriate to their ability and performance expectations.
- Club, National Age Grade and National Academy programmes allow every player to develop to the best of their ability and desire through player centred and managed programmes that are complimentary and not over-burdening on our better young players
- National Age Grade teams give our young players an experience of competing in International tournaments at Six Nations and world level

ROLE OF THE COACH

- Encourage players to demonstrate independent thought and high levels of skill execution relative to overall team strategy in practice and competitive situations
- Physical development is optimised and the player learns to adapt training to maximise competitiveness in matches whilst still training for longer term development aims
- Providing objective and constructive feedback, and involving players in reviewing this, to maintain commitment, confidence and focus
- Prepare a team to perform competitively with understanding of 'what, how, when and why'



TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

- Recommended training sessions to games played is between 2-6:1 depending on the level of the player
- Consistency and control are key themes
- Proficiency in core and position-specific skills with increasing power, under increased pressure, and with increased accuracy
- Perform skills under increasingly pressured competitive conditions
- Utilise techniques at speed and under pressure that are appropriate to the tactical situation
- Positional awareness and unit skills in relation to the ball, the area of the pitch and the opposition, developed by competition-simulation training
- Increasingly advanced team play and principles in the full game whilst maintaining team shape and unit role
- Demonstrate the ability to link players / units in and out of possession through phase play
- Awareness of differing styles / systems of play
- Become increasingly specialised in positional knowledge and skills, and have clarity in relation to specialist positional roles within the team shape
- Demonstrate a winning mentality and implement 'winning tactics'
- Reading the game: having an awareness of opponent's tactics, strengths and weaknesses and be able to adapt play to different situations in both attack and defence.

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

- All players should wear a gumshield
- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to UKCC Levels 1-4
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing. Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U18 in senior rugby policy adhered to - available from www.scottishrugby.org - Are you ready to play rugby?

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP YOU?

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- Coaching resources and law variation cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources

MENTAL FACTORS

Preparing for optimal performances

- Continued development of the performance process-driven approach with a higher emphasis on outcome (result) goals. Players should be self-setting goals and using these to plan and review performance
- Players' training records form the basis for the evaluation of performance and planning future sessions
- There is an increased club / squad emphasis, driven by the players, on the desire to be highly competitive
- Players have consistent pre-performance routines, developed in practice, in match simulated environments and match situations
- Players able to demonstrate role clarity and commitment within team preparation and play
- Refinement of individual techniques to control arousal on the pitch. Full use of positive thought techniques including positive self-talk and imagery
- Increased awareness of attentional distracters, combined with distraction training, in increasingly competitive environments. A consistent attentional focus is developed under pressure by increasingly challenging practice and performance conditions
- Continued development of emotional control techniques in practice and matches in relation to individual and team performance. Optimisation of mental coping strategies in game simulation and real pressure situations
- Player to demonstrate increased thought relative to individual performance in practice and competitive situations and in accordance with relevant laws. Strong support for players through constructive and objective feedback in increasingly competitive environment
- Results become increasingly important – players may need their confidence levels reinforced in progressively demanding conditions / situations during practice and matches
- Performance players and coaches have access to specialist psychologists to aid development, where appropriate, through Scottish Institute of Sport support service network

PHYSICAL FACTORS

Individual programmes to prepare for competition

- Multi-directional speed, incorporating speed and power endurance (0-40s), positional specific acceleration patterns, chaotic and reactive speed
- Maximising strength, strength-speed (power) and speed based upon postural control, weight lifting, plyometrics and complex training methods
- Anaerobic and aerobic energy systems fully trainable in rugby specific manner. This means endurance and skill training can be integrated at times to ensure effective training programme delivery
- Speed endurance and multiple high intensity interval training (incorporating wrestling, contact / tackle situations, etc) over various durations to develop anaerobic power, anaerobic capacity and aerobic power
- Low intensity aerobic training (swimming, cycling) can be important in recovery
- Flexibility is very important in maturing individual, and developed through dynamic exercise, working through full ranges of movement and static stretching sessions
- Monitoring achieved by field based fitness tests



LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

Supporting optimal performances

- Maximise personal approaches to nutrition, hydration, recovery and regeneration (including regeneration training and sleep) in managing lifestyle (including drug-free principles and practice)
- Implement and review personal plans, injury prevention and management strategies
- Players' programme is delivered by 'coaching teams': specialist physiotherapists, fitness coaches etc
- Media training for professional players and understanding of the responsibility for modelling and promoting a healthy lifestyle
- Utilise individual strategies to taper training to allow peak performances to be possible
- Further engagement with coach and referee education for continued development of game and law knowledge

MOVEMENT SKILLS

Efficient and effective movement

- Ensure posture is able to exert and withstand forces at all times
- Functional posture control and muscular recruitment exercises fully integrated into players' training, especially through warm-ups
- Agility, balance and coordination at speed
- Running efficiently with and without the ball
- High intensity jumping, hopping and bounding
- Refining of footwork patterns and skills linked to decision-making
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position at speed, under pressure

TRAINING TO WIN

20+ Males

20+ Females

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Consistently maximising performance

- This is the final stage of the player development process, which lasts for the rest of the individuals' playing career
- The focus of training at this stage is about creating winning performances on every occasion, whether this is at club (regardless of level), professional game and / or international level
- To maximise performance the players and coaches must embrace the full spectrum of technical, tactical, physical conditioning, psychological support and lifestyle maintenance to support their individual level of playing and training
- The higher the level a player is performing at, the more committed they must be – being a top-level player means being a 24/7 athlete. This must also include being a positive role model at all times for those aspiring to follow in their footsteps. Being a club player also has responsibilities relating to commitment to the club, not just on the playing field
- The higher the level of performance the more specialist coaching and support expertise is required

ROLE OF THE COACH

Shaping fully developed players into a team that is prepared technically, tactically, physically and mentally to win matches consistently



TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

Consistently and effectively applying skills

- Complete refinement of individual, unit and team skills
- Ability to improvise skills to enable performance in open play
- Automatic and consistent performance of skills in games of the highest intensity
- Recognise and react to situations by making consistent, correct decisions in high pressure training and game environments
- Develop effective competition strategies
- Clarity of team shape and roles within the team and the ability to change these dependent on opposition
- Maximise on national and international competition opportunities
- Successful tactics and strategies with necessary variation needed in attack and defence in both set-piece and open play to create winning ways

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

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- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Coaches should be suitably qualified to UKCC Levels 1-4
- All players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing. Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U18 in senior rugby policy adhered to – available from www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?

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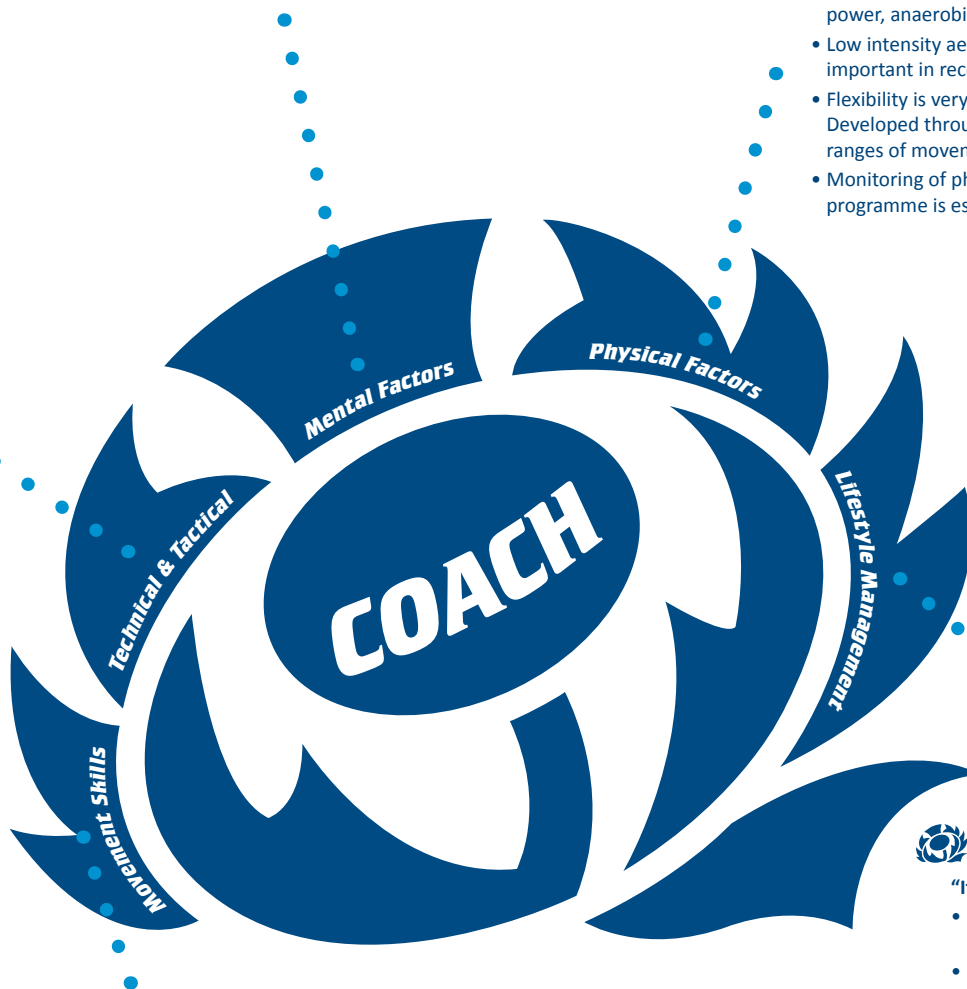
MENTAL FACTORS

Consistently being 'in the zone'

- Goal-setting is integral to all aspects of training and performance. Players work in unison with coaches to continuously plan, monitor and review goals
- Continued development of mind / body awareness and arousal regulation techniques that are refined regularly for training, preparation and performance situations
- Highly focused pre-performance routines and advanced attention control strategies in training and match environments under the highest pressure
- Consistent and effective emotional control demonstrated in match environments
- Advanced use of coping strategies in highest-pressure situations
- Advanced individual use of psychological skills to maximise performance
- Performance players and coaches have access to specialist psychologists to aid development where appropriate through Scottish Institute of Sport support service network

PHYSICAL FACTORS

- Training for all fitness factors integrated into individualised, planned, periodised and appropriately tapered programmes to allow peak performance for matches
- Multi-directional speed, incorporating speed and power endurance (0-40s), positional specific acceleration patterns, chaotic and reactive speed
- High force, maximum velocity and advanced training techniques develop maximum strength and maximum power, with the rate at which forces can be developed being the key objective
- Anaerobic and aerobic energy systems trained in a rugby specific manner, with heart rate monitoring to allow training intensity to be monitored. This means endurance and skill training can be integrated at times to ensure effective training programme delivery
- Speed endurance and multiple high intensity interval training (incorporating wrestling, contact / tackle situations, etc) over various durations to develop anaerobic power, anaerobic capacity and aerobic power
- Low intensity aerobic training (swimming, cycling) can be important in recovery
- Flexibility is very important in the maturing individual. Developed through dynamic exercise, working through full ranges of movement and static stretching sessions
- Monitoring of physical status as part of the training programme is essential



MOVEMENT SKILLS

Putting the posture into positions where it is always able to exert and withstand maximum forces

- Efficient and effective movement is the key training goal
- Functional posture control and muscular recruitment exercises fully integrated into players' training, especially through warm-ups
- Agility, balance and coordination at speed
- Moving efficiently with and without the ball – at international level the fastest players move 10.5m per second (equivalent to a 9.5 second 100m!)
- High intensity jumping, hopping and bounding
- Spatial awareness and sensory awareness of body position at high speeds, under the highest pressure

LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT

"It's what we do every day that counts"

- Understand responsibility for healthy lifestyle, role modelling and promotion
- Maximise and take full responsibility for personal approaches to nutrition, hydration, recovery and regeneration, lifestyle management (including drug-free principles and practice)
- Optimise all approaches to tapering to peak performance
- Further engagement with coach and referee education for continued development of game and law knowledge
- Learn new skills through coaching and refereeing

RETIRE AND RETRAIN

DRIVING PHILOSOPHY

Redeploying experience for a lifelong involvement in rugby

At such time that a player retires from playing, they have a bank of experiential knowledge which needs to be refocused in order to ensure our game has more opportunity to grow.

Whether as a coach, match official, club volunteer, committee member and / or spectator, Scottish Rugby is keen to support the individual to stay within the game and help the next and current playing generations to be the best that they can be.

Details of Coaching and Refereeing Education programmes can be found on the relevant sections of www.scottishrugby.org

Staying actively involved in rugby will aid you in participating in regular physical activity, a key factor in remaining healthy for life.

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY RUGBY?

- All coaches / teachers / referees must have completed the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Team managers encouraged to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Become suitably qualified in either coaching or refereeing or both.
- Coaching – Foundation level or UKCC levels 1-4
- Refereeing – Foundation level or levels 1-3
- Regularly attend relevant CPD opportunities – coaching updates etc.
- Your players should learn and / or refresh themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing (Note – there should be no contact for players below Primary 4). Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations are adhered to (including timings)
- Ensure any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U16 in U18 and U18 in senior rugby policies are adhered to available from www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?

HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY STAFF HELP?

- New Foundation Coaching Course designed incorporating Foundation Coaching, Refereeing and RugbyReady Practical launched for 2009/10 season. All mini coaches encouraged to qualify to this level – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Foundation / UKCC qualified coaches able to access the new online FUNdamentals coaching resource developed in partnership with sportscotland
- New three hour RugbyReady practical course developed and launched for season 2009/10
- UKCC courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Referee courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – refereeing
- Strength & Conditioning courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Specific coaching CPD (continual professional development) currently being produced with RFU and WRU. These to be delivered by Club Development Officers at a local level
- National coaching updates delivered by international and professional coaches throughout the country
- Coaching resources and law variation cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources



ROLE OF THE PARENT

Is your child / club / school ready to play rugby?

What can you do to ensure as safe a rugby environment as possible for your child?

- Ensure your child's club / school has a player profile on your child containing information on emergency contact details, medical history, health and fitness information, previous history of injury and exposure to rugby – form available from www.irbrugbyready.com
- Ensure your child wears a gumshield
- All players must use approved equipment – e.g. boots / clothing – for guidance see IRB Regulation 12 www.irb.com
- Ensure that your child's coach / teacher / referee have completed the compulsory online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Encourage your child to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment yourself – available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Encourage your child's team manager to complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-assessment available at www.irbrugbyready.com
- Encourage your child's coach / teacher / referee to become suitably qualified in coaching / refereeing or both
 - o Coaching – Foundation level or UKCC levels 1-4
 - o Refereeing – Foundation level or levels 1-3
- Encourage your child's coach / teacher / referee to regularly attend relevant CPD opportunities – coaching updates etc
- Ensure your child learns and / or refreshes themselves with contact skills technique prior to playing (Note – there should be no contact for players below Primary 4). Pre-season training has been shown to reduce the incidence of injury during the first two months of the season
- Ensure your child plays to Scottish Rugby's Age Grade Law Variations relevant to their specific age group (including timings)
- Ensure that your child's club / school knows how to deal with injuries and has an up-to-date emergency plan and suitable medical equipment
- Ensure that any injuries requiring hospital admission are recorded by the club / school and reported to Murrayfield
- All coaches, teachers and referees to follow Game Management Guidelines – for guidance see www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?
- Ensure Scottish Rugby's U16 in U18 and U18 in senior rugby policies are adhered to (available from www.scottishrugby.org – Are you ready to play rugby?)
- Ensure that your child's club / school promotes fair play
- Ensure fellow parents and spectators follow the code of conduct – available in coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources

The environment that the child is brought up in has a massive influence on who they become. Parents are the single biggest influence in this, and therefore we value them and the positive role that they can play in developing the young player. We understand that, in the heat of the moment on the touchline, many people may have an opinion on what the coach and players are doing, but it is important to realise that such decisions are done for reasons that are not always obvious to all. We have provided a few suggestions that parents can adopt to assist the coaches in developing children towards excellence – not just in the rugby context but also in terms of life skills.

How can Scottish Rugby staff help?



- New Foundation Coaching Course designed incorporating Foundation Coaching, Refereeing and RugbyReady Practical launched for 2009/10 season. All mini coaches encouraged to qualify to this level
- Foundation / UKCC qualified coaches able to access the new online FUNDamentals coaching resource developed in partnership with sportscotland
- New three hour RugbyReady practical course developed and launched for season 2009/10.
- UKCC courses available throughout the country. All midi, youth and adult coaches are encouraged to gain UKCC Level 1 coaching as a minimum – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Referee courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – refereeing
- Strength & Conditioning courses available throughout the country – details on www.scottishrugby.org – coaching
- Specific coaching CPD (continual professional development) currently being produced with RFU and WRU. These to be delivered by Club Development Officers at a local level
- National coaching updates delivered by international and professional coaches throughout the country
- Coaching resources and law variation cards available for download from coaching section of www.scottishrugby.org

Before your child's match / training session

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



During your child's match / training session

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

After your child's match / training

- Provide praise for the effort your child has given. Praising effort encourages the child to work harder – focusing on ability encourages the child to carry on doing what they currently do!
- Provide them with unconditional support and encouragement
- Identify with the child the things that they can learn from this match / practice and use this to help them improve
- Engage with the coach to identify things that you can encourage your child to practice away from the rugby club
- As a parent, you are not just a transport manager but part of the rugby community and the social network of the club. Even if you don't want to volunteer to help the coach (you will be welcomed!) Mix with other parents, especially after the game. Support the rugby club as a vibrant community that is trying to provide many people with the opportunity to play and develop through sport

COMPETITION

Focus on development

Children and adults play rugby to play games. Games, or competition, can have different emphasis; for the Scotland team, the most important element in every Six Nations match is winning. However, in preparation matches for the world cup, whilst winning is important, the emphasis will be on embedding tactical elements of the game.

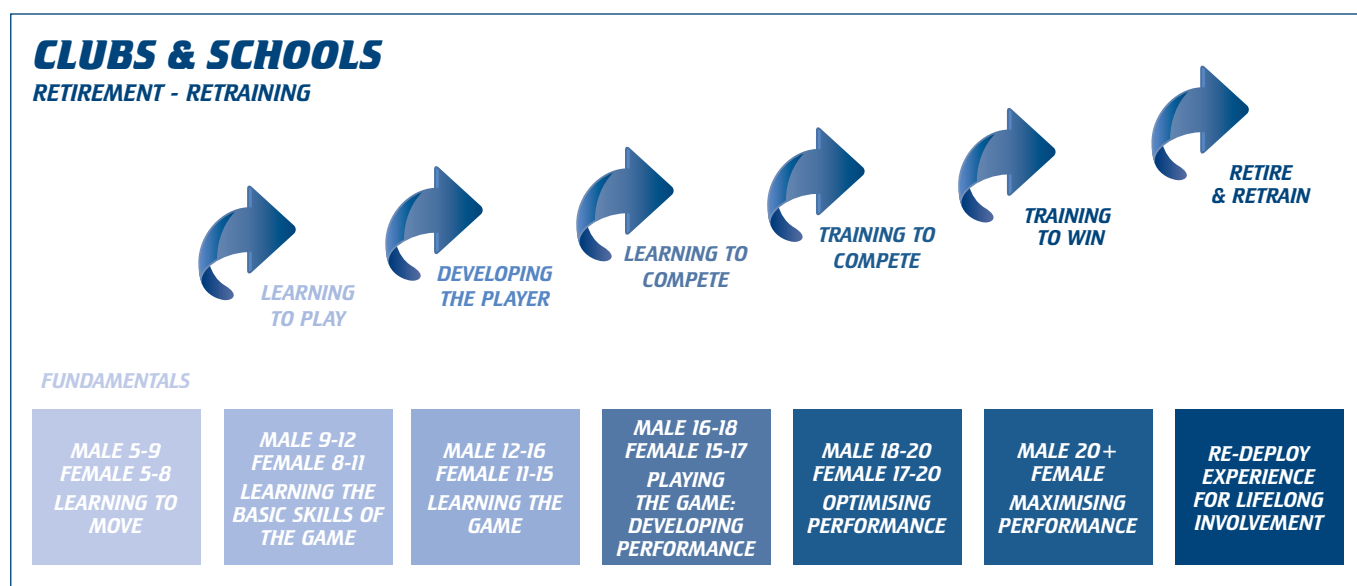
But what about at the other extreme, what should a six-year-old player in their first game focus on? They will understand that they are trying to win the game. All children will want to win; it is how they prepare for winning that is important. At this age they have limited attention span, have limited ability to process complex situations and it is the optimum time to develop skills. This indicates that for this age, the focus of competition and therefore coaching and parental support should be on the developmental aims of skill practice and development rather than competitive outcomes.

Competition between the two extremes illustrated needs to take into account a developing player's skills, tactical ability

and physical capacities. Also coming into the equation is the desire to win, in individual matches and across a season. There is a need to balance the focus of competition through a young player's development to ensure that they are motivated by developmental goals.

Many people confuse the message of not emphasising the result with not developing a 'winning mentality'. The key message is that if we develop better players who are committed, play and train with intensity, who can self-set goals and evaluate their own performance, then the winning mentality will be nurtured. A talent development environment that praises effort (to develop problem solvers) over ability (when one way of doing something is reinforced) and which encourages 'critical' (evidence-based) evaluation of performance, with players assuming responsibility for their actions, will develop players who want to win.

Children will always want to win. There is nothing wrong with this. As coach, parent or supporter we should encourage,



support and praise developmental goals. By doing this we will support players' development for the long term. This means, for example, supporting coaches of mini and midi teams when they enforce equal playing time for all who train, regardless of their ability and the stage of competition that the game is in.

Scottish Rugby is committed to working with clubs, schools and coaches to develop a competition structure that enables all to benefit optimally from appropriately structured competition at every level. One of the key challenges for the rugby community to embrace and overcome is to ensure that players on a participation pathway get as much rugby competition as they want and players on a performance pathway get as many appropriate games as they need.

There is a need to balance the focus of competition through a young players' development



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Winning isn't emphasised until the latter stages of this process: is there a danger in not emphasising winning to developing competitiveness in our young players?

This is one of the most frequently misinterpreted fields within player development work. Young children will always want to win. If we gave them a ball and a field, the first thing they will do is organise teams and a try-line, so that they can compete against each other. We want that to continue – as the players get onto the park, the coach should be encouraging and praising effort in all his / her players to do the best they can and learn from the competitive experience. The key difference proposed by LTPD is that the training sessions building into games are focused on making the player better in the long-term, and providing them with confidence, competence and commitment. What happens on the pitch during a game will then take care of itself. If playing well becomes the focus of the game, then coaches and parents can focus on praising skills and skill attempts, which fosters confidence and a 'can try' attitude in young players. And we know that being confident is the biggest predictor of both choosing to do an activity and being successful in that activity. (If a child cannot catch, there are 42 sports that they are likely not to be confident to participate in).

What's wrong with what we do now?

It is important to recognise that there is much good practice that occurs within player development across Scotland. If we are to grow our game and develop our players however, we need to adopt good practice across the nation. We appreciate the challenges that volunteers face, such as lack of time, lack of finance and limited rugby education opportunities. However, it is important to recognise that currently some of our young performers play too much rugby, have disjointed training programmes that do not have the appropriate emphasis or intensities for optimising player development, and also that some of our young players are often lacking in playing opportunities. We also have fixture congestion at certain times of the year, and competitions that compete for the same players occurring at the same time. Not all training sessions are planned or delivered by an appropriately qualified coach, and also many programmes do not have individual development as a focus – team performance is often the driver for training sessions. It is also important that we recognise the training environment as being crucial in developing the mental aspects of player development. By highlighting the existing good practice and addressing each of these factors as part of the LTPD strategy we aim to increase the quantity and quality of our players – growing the game.

What's new here – we do this already at our club?

This strategy needs all of rugby to be working together in the right direction. Whilst your club may be an example of best practice in delivering many aspects of this model, if we are honest it is not uniformly delivered across all clubs, schools, regions and national bodies. The major aim is to get everyone working together in an integrated structure aligned to one delivery pathway for rugby.

What is Scottish Rugby doing to help us deliver this?

Work has been ongoing for the last three years on LTPD. Not only has the framework been developed and a national consultation held, we have also revised coach education with significant input to UKCC generally and more specifically ensuring that the rugby content meets Scottish rugby's current and future needs. With the help of those delivering rugby, we can work to develop and deliver more resources that will assist coaches, clubs and schools to deliver programmes based upon the LTPD framework. These will include resources for coaches and parents. We have also worked with **sportscotland** to develop a web-based resource that will be available to coaches to assist in the effective delivery of the **FUNDamentals** stages and physical literacy throughout the rugby continuum. The range of resource development will be significantly influenced by the delivery needs of the rugby community as LTPD expands.

What evidence have you got that this will produce better players?

This work is based upon internationally published and peer-reviewed scientific information relating to how children mature and develop physically, socially and psychologically. We have also worked to incorporate the thinking of national and respected international rugby coaches into the technical, tactical and lifestyle aspects of this framework. It is informing not only this strategy, but Reaching Higher, the national strategy for sport, and also wider developments such as the UK coaching framework. It is an evidence-based process that enables all participants to have the best chance at achieving their potential as both a player and a lifelong participant in rugby union.

The training sessions building into games are focused on making the player better in the long-term, and providing them with confidence



CONCLUSION

The potential benefits of LTPD to Scottish Rugby

This strategy outlines how Scottish Rugby will work to provide more structured and better opportunities to support the development of rugby players in Scotland.

It provides support for players from their first touches to a lifelong participation in the game, providing a logical progression of technical and tactical input, physical conditioning, movement skills, mental factors and lifestyle management factors which are fully supported by appropriate competition opportunities. The strategy also totally supports the growth of the game by fully recognising the need for an increased number of coaches, officials, volunteers and administrators and also the required support for them to develop.

The implementation of LTPD will have an effect on the following key aims of Scottish Rugby's strategic plan.

1. Increase the number of adults (men and women) participating in the game (i.e. playing, coaching, refereeing, volunteering)
2. Increase the number of young people (boys and girls) playing the game
3. Develop stronger clubs and schools (i.e. sustainable, with a range of teams at all age groups and supported by well-trained volunteers)
4. Improve performance at all levels and become one of the top nations in the world through the implementation of the Performance Plan
5. To ensure support systems are in place and are accessible throughout the performance pathway, to enable players to develop

In short, Scottish Rugby's LTPD programme can provide a means of developing an integrated, systematic approach to player development that will both ensure that all players are able to achieve their full potential through rugby union and help foster an intrinsic passion for the game. With the right support, this will lead to lifelong involvement as players, coaches, officials, administrators and volunteers throughout all levels of the game.





The strategy provides support for players from their first touches to a lifelong participation in the game



HOW CAN SCOTTISH RUGBY

Are you ready to play rugby?

Scottish Rugby launched the Are you ready to play rugby? campaign to review all areas of the game, to ensure that a consistent approach to player safety is being adopted by all coaches, teachers, referees and volunteers across Scotland.

For further information on the Are you ready to play rugby? policy, including policies on U16 players in U18 rugby and U18 players in senior rugby, please visit

www.scottishrugby.org and click on Are you ready to play rugby?

The IRB RugbyReady online course is available on www.IRB rugbyready.com



FUNDamentals

A multi-sport coaching resource produced by sportscotland, in conjunction with Scottish Rugby, offering interactive media clips and guidance to assist you in the coaching of players in the FUNDamental stages of their development. Access to this resource is through participation in Scottish Rugby's coach education programmes. This resource is currently under development and will be available to coaches once completed.



Coaching

Scottish Rugby runs a variety of coach education and developmental courses and updates for coaches working at all levels of the game. Our aim is for every player from mini to adult to have the opportunity to develop to their full potential by receiving the right coaching from suitably qualified, up-to-date coaches who are continually seeking to improve their coaching knowledge, delivery skills and attributes.

Scottish Rugby also provides a range of strength and conditioning coach education courses, fully accredited by the UK Strength & Conditioning Association.

For details of all our coach education programmes, developmental opportunities and further coaching resources please visit www.scottishrugby.org and click on the coaching link. A free web-based resource developed by the IRB is also available on www.IRBcoaching.com

Positive Coaching Scotland

Scottish Rugby is currently working with **The Winning Scotland Foundation** on various pilot projects aiming to ensure that the best developmental environments are created for children in our sport.



Positive Coaching Scotland (PCS) is based on a highly successful US model, which was developed at Stanford University in 1998 to combat escalating health and social problems.

Since then, it has been used by over 1,100 sports organisations, affecting over three million young people, and is helping to create a positive sporting culture in the US.

PCS creates a positive environment in youth sport which focuses on encouraging effort and learning, improving performance and fostering competition which helps young people deal positively with mistakes.

Scottish youth sport: time for change

Scotland faces a number of challenging social issues which are now overflowing into youth sport:

- violence on the touchline
- disrespect for officials
- coaches who are only focused on winning, at all costs
- reduced levels of physical activity and rising levels of obesity
- falling levels of volunteer participation
- 'win at all costs' sports clubs

Together, these factors contribute to increasing numbers of young people dropping out from sport. Why is that so important? Because today's young people are being denied the opportunity to learn vital life lessons through sport.

STAFF HELP?

PCS offers a visionary new approach – a practical alternative to the ‘win at all costs’ mentality and a timely response to the challenges facing youth sport.

Piloted in five Scottish local authorities, PCS will engage all of our national governing bodies of sports and targets initially around 75,000 adults and pupils.

The Current Way...

99.5% of children never make it to elite sports level. Yet we still have a coaching approach that’s based on the win at all costs mentality inherited from professional sport. We should be coaching children as individuals and focusing on their long-term development.

The PCS Way...

PCS promotes a more sustainable alternative: the ‘Double Goal Coach’. The first goal is trying to win the competition, but the second and more important goal is teaching young people life skills.

The Current Way...

Over 70% of young people drop out of sport by the age of 14. The figure is significantly higher for girls, who are missing out on the opportunity to develop character-building life skills and remain physically active.

The PCS Way...

Using proven tools and techniques, developed over the past ten years in the US, PCS creates a positive environment in youth sport which focuses on encouraging effort and learning, improving performance and fostering competition, which helps young people deal positively with mistakes.

Scottish Rugby will continue to work with PCS to integrate positive coaching into our coach education and development programme.

For further details on Positive Coaching Scotland, please visit their website on www.positivecoachingscotland.com

Officiating

For details of all officials’ education programmes and developmental opportunities please visit

www.scottishrugby.org and click on the refereeing link.

A free web-based resource developed by the IRB is also available on www.IRBLaws.com

Law variation cards are available to download from the coaching section of our website www.scottishrugby.org – coaching resources.



Volunteering

For details of Scottish Rugby’s Volunteer Strategy please visit www.scottishrugby.org and click on the volunteer link.

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