



## --> SKILL: Receiving the Pass

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players maintain the continuity of play by receiving a pass from their teammate and continuing forward.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

Learning how to properly catch a rugby ball is very important for player safety and to keep the continuity of the game.

**Step 1:** Show players how to properly catch a rugby ball.

- Form the letter “W” with both hands by placing thumbs together and spreading fingers wide.
- Keep your eye on the ball all the way from the thrower to your hands.
- Catch the ball with both hands while keeping the “W” shape.
- Tuck the ball close to your body near your stomach and run forward keeping the ball in both hands.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 2:** Have players practice with a partner by forming two lines across from each other and work on receiving the ball in a stationary position. Start players closer together before having them spread apart to make the passes more difficult.

**Step 3:** Have players advance from a stationary position by walking, jogging, and running from one end of the field to the other, completing 10-20 passes each. Help players individually work on receiving the ball correctly.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players work on receiving the ball from different directions. Form a circle around one player and provide each player in the circle a ball. Call out different players to pass to the person in the center.
2. Allow players to work on receiving different types of passes. Have players start five yards apart receiving pop passes and then work up to about eight yards apart receiving a spin pass.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players always move forward after receiving the ball.
2. Make sure players are forming the letter "W" with their hands, away from their chest.
3. Always have players call for the ball, even when practicing.





## --> SKILL: Defensive Shape

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players work as a team to prevent the offensive team from scoring.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

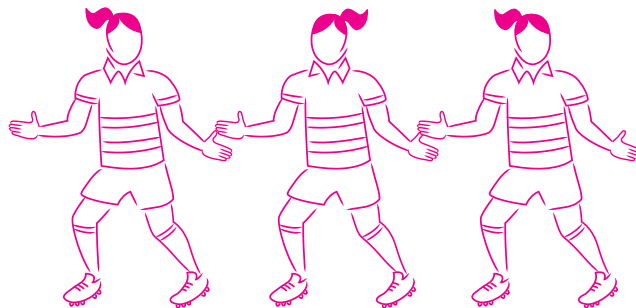
5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

The best defensive shape in rugby is a flat line. Flat line defense is when players are lined up across the width of the field in a straight line. Players should work together to keep this line when moving forward and backwards on the field.

**Step 1:** Demonstrate and instruct a flat line defense.

**Step 2:** Have players line up in a flat line defense and have them jog in every direction as a team in a flat line. Begin with them holding hands.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** A great teaching tip is to have players “cross the street” on defense. Be sure players are looking both ways (right and left) before advancing or retreating to make sure their entire team is together.

**Step 4:** Encourage players to constantly communicate to keep the flat line together. Some common terms are:

- Use “Up” to instruct the line to move forward
- Use “Back” to instruct the line to move backward
- Use “Slide Left” or “Slide Right” for side movements

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Set up five different defensive lines up the length of the field. On the instructor’s signal, have all the players move together as a defensive unit. The addition of other lines adds an increased challenge.
2. Add in offensive players to challenge the flat line defense. Have players practice keeping a flat line as two to four offensive players move up and down the field with a rugby ball.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players are communicating to stay together.
2. Make sure players are checking their position at all times.





## --> SKILL: Offensive Shape

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players work as a team to penetrate the defense and score.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

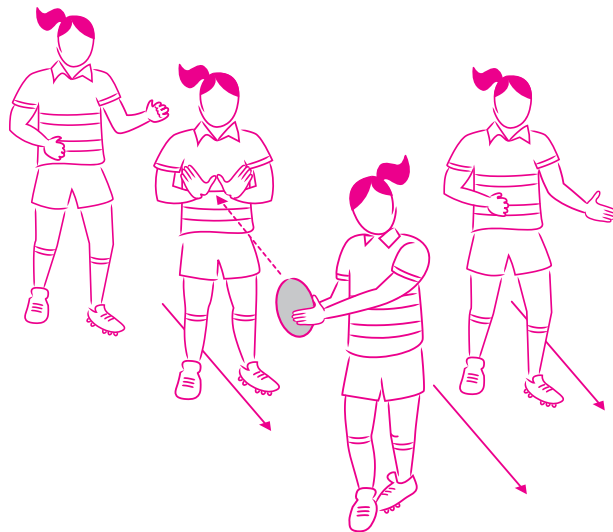
5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

A good offensive shape consists of a ball carrier and two support players forming a triangle on the field. Additional players will line up in support in a staggered position.

**Step 1:** Help players understand offensive shape by placing them in a triangle formation.

**Step 2:** Have players practice by setting up on the field; change the ball carrier so they can adjust to keep a good formation.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** Have all support players move forward to receive a pass. This allows them to attack at a running pace.

**Step 4:** Have support players attack the weakest point in the defense. The weakest point in the defense is where the most space is between two defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Add defensive players to apply pressure to the offensive shape.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure all players work to stay behind the ball carrier.
2. Make sure that players are communicating with each other to maintain offensive shape at all times.





## --> SKILL: Running with the Ball

### OBJECTIVE:

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5-10 minutes

To have players run effectively with the ball in two hands.

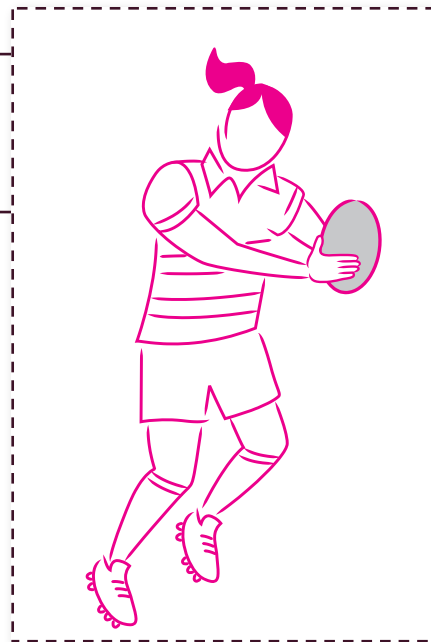
### WHAT TO COACH:

Learning how to properly run with a rugby ball is very important for player safety and to properly develop basic skills.

**Step 1:** Introduce this skill by showing players the correct way to run with the ball:

- Fingers are spread on each side of the ball
- Ball is carried at chest height
- Elbows are tucked in

**Step 2:** In a small grid marked by cones, have players run around and carry the ball. Help correct individual form as they run.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** Demonstrate the skill for players and have them call out when you carry the ball incorrectly:

- Carry the ball below your chest
- Tuck the ball under one arm
- Carry the ball above your chest
- Hold elbows out

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Create a shuttle game where players run and place rugby balls at certain cones.
2. Have players form one line facing one defensive player. Have player in line run with the ball towards the defensive player. Instruct players to work on an evasion skill while running at their opponent with the ball in hand.
3. Incorporate picking up a rugby ball on the run.
4. Use progression number two with an additional player running with the ball carrier so they can pass the ball when they get to the defender.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players are holding the ball with two hands when they are running or evading.
2. Correct players if they are carrying the ball too high or too low.







## --> SKILL: Basic Pass

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players maintain continuity of play by passing to a teammate in a better position.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

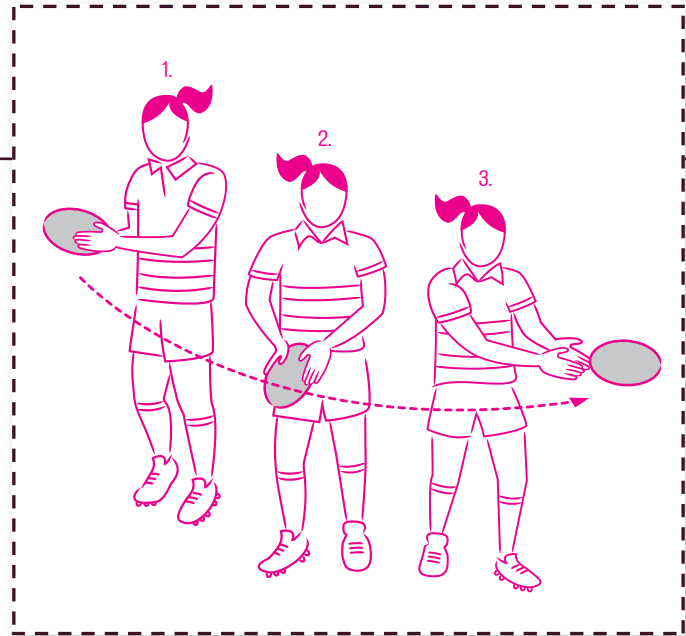
5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

It is important for players to remember a few simple rules to effectively pass a rugby ball during play. Once practiced enough, these rules should become second nature and players will be able to perform a basic pass easily.

#### Step 1: Show players what a basic pass looks like:

- Run straight
- Hold the ball with both hands
- Look at the receiver
- Pass at chest height in front of the receiver
- Be sure the pass is made laterally or backwards
- Complete the pass and follow through by pointing hands at the receiver



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 2:** Have players practice with a partner by forming two lines across from each other and passing in stationary positions. Start with a short distance between players. Increase the distance between lines to make it more challenging.

**Step 3:** Have players practice the basic pass in small groups of 2-6 players going from one end of a grid to the other, completing 10-20 passes each. Help players individually learn how to pass by correcting their form.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players work on different types of passes in the passing line that they have learned (i.e. pop pass).
2. Make exercises dynamic by incorporating running with passing.
3. Increase the distance passed.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure every player passes with two hands on the ball.
2. Ensure that players pick a target area before making any pass. They should be looking at their receiver and know where the ball is going before they pass.
3. Make sure players are following through with their arms when they pass, pointing at the receiver.
4. Make sure their arms are straight when they follow through.





## --> SKILL: Advanced Passing

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players widen their offensive skill set to more effectively move the ball to space and increase continuity on the field.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

**5-10 minutes**

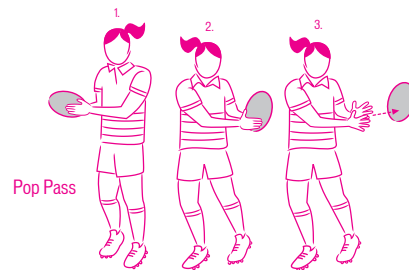
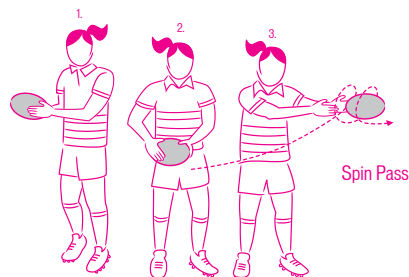
### WHAT TO COACH:

There are many different types of passes in rugby, but in youth rugby the most common passes used are the basic, spin, and pop pass. Players should learn these passes and when to use them during play.

#### **Spin Pass**

**Step 1:** The spin pass is used for long distances and should be practiced by using the following technique:

- Hold the ball in two hands: The hand furthest from the receiver will be used to deliver the power and should be held at the back of the ball. The hand closest to the receiver will guide where the ball moves.
- Move your hands across the body and use the power hand to apply spin by rotating the hand as you release the ball.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

- Follow through—Guide hands will point to the receiver with the power hand on top.

**Step 2:** Have players practice with partners. Help individuals work to perfect the spin pass.

### Pop Pass

**Step 1:** The pop pass is used for short distances when throwing into the path of a teammate running forward. The technique for a pop pass is:

- Using two hands, throw the ball up. The ball will be “placed” into the space to the right or left of the passer.
- The ball should be thrown into the path of support player who can run onto the ball to receive it.

**Step 2:** Have players practice with partners. Help individuals work to perfect the pop pass.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players work on their spin pass by skipping the payer immediately next to them, performing a “skip pass”.
2. Have players practice switching the direction of their passes.
3. Include defenders when practicing. Have players complete a specific type of pass when they approach a defender.
4. Play Ultimate Rugby, only using a specific type of passing.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Always have players call for the ball, even when practicing.
2. Ensure players know the differences between each pass. Test their knowledge during practice.
3. During pop passes it is important that players receiving the pass are moving forward and not standing static.





## --> SKILL: Draw and Pass

### OBJECTIVE:

**SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:** 5-10 minutes

To have players maintain continuity of play by engaging the defense and passing to a teammate in a better position.

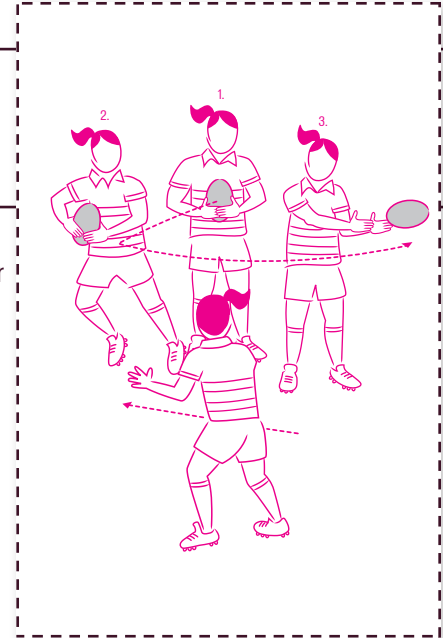
### WHAT TO COACH:

The draw and pass is an offensive move where the ball carrier runs with the ball and draws the defense towards them to create more space. Once the defensive player commits to the ball carrier, the ball carrier passes the ball to a teammate.

**Step 1:** Begin with a demonstration of the draw and pass:

- Hold the ball in two hands
- Run at the defender and then move to the right or left in order to force them to defend you
- Look at the receiver
- Pass at chest height in front of the receiver
- Complete pass and then support

**Step 2:** Have players work in teams of three, rotating between one defensive player and two offensive players.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** Have players work to draw in the defender before passing the ball to their teammate. Incorporate critical thinking - if the defender does not commit, the player continues to run forward.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players work on the skill in a 3 v 2 and 4 v 3 situation.
2. Encourage supporting teammates to read the actions of the ball carrier and react by utilizing the newly opened space.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players are following their pass to get in support as soon as they are no longer in possession.
2. Make sure players have a straight follow through with their pass.
3. Make sure players are throwing the ball to their target area, which is the receiver's "W".





## --> SKILL: Defense with Flags

### OBJECTIVE:

**SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5-10 minutes**

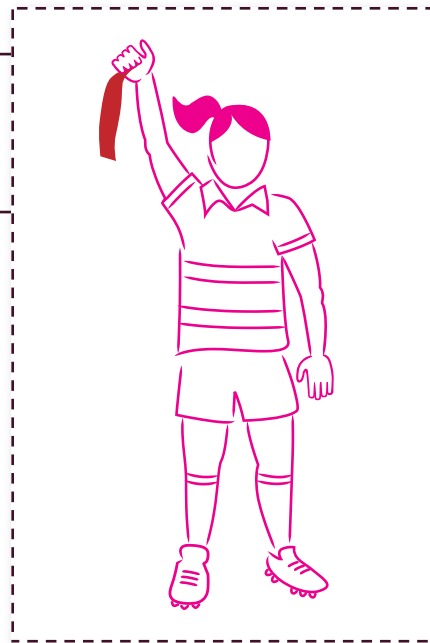
To have players understand the process of playing with flags and execute smart flag pulls.

### WHAT TO COACH:

There is a four step process when making a full defensive flag pull. This process keeps players safe and will help players learn the progressions when transitioning to tackle rugby.

**Step 1:** Provide a demonstration that walks players through the four steps:

- Defender removes ball carrier's flag and yells, "FLAG!" to communicate the flag pull.
- Ball carrier can take up to three additional steps after a flag pull before passing to a teammate. Ball carrier then passes to a teammate.
- Defender returns the flag to the ball carrier and then returns to play.
- Ball carrier replaces the flag on their flag belt and then returns to play. Both players are out of play until the flag is returned.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** Have players work in pairs to practice the process of pulling a flag. Begin by having players remain stationary and then advance to walking and running.

**Step 4:** After each player practices the progressions play 3 v 3 Keep Away Rugby and have players practice real time flag pulls.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players play Flag Fury and focus on making proper flag pulls.
2. Play Freeze Tag, using flag pulls as the way to freeze a player.
3. Incorporate flags in games like USA Eagles in order to add a more advanced progression.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure all flags are clearly visible and worn properly.
2. Make sure players are yelling "FLAG!" loud and clear every time they pull a flag.
3. Double check to make sure players are putting their flags back on correctly.
4. Make sure players always return their opponent's flag before returning to play and are not throwing flags on the ground.







## --> SKILL: Ball Familiarization

### OBJECTIVE:

**SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:** 5-10 minutes

To have players become familiar with the shape and size of a rugby ball.

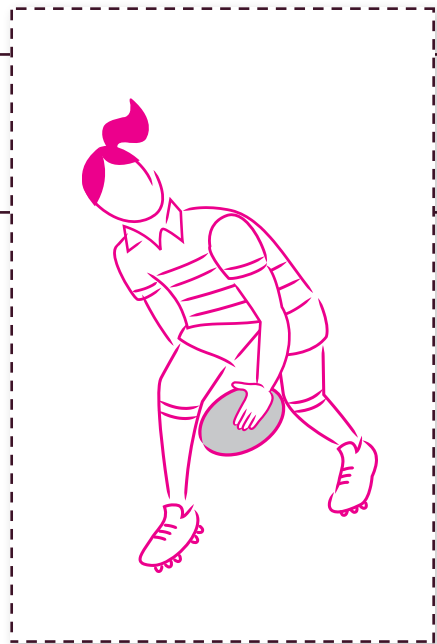
### WHAT TO COACH:

Describe the rugby ball by comparing it to other sports that kids will know. A rugby ball is bigger than a football and about the size of a soccer ball. The shape is similar to a football so that the ball can easily be passed, but the shape is more round than a football so that the ball can be kicked as well.

**Step 1:** Have kids pass the rugby ball around and have them pick out differences and similarities between a rugby ball and other sports balls.

**Step 2:** Have everyone hold their own ball, instructing them to carry the ball with two hands at all times.

**Step 3:** Make a small square space with cones and have players run from one side to the other, making sure to hold the ball in two hands at all times.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 4:** On the instructor's signal, have them all put their balls down and pick up someone else's, making sure to use two hands at all times.

**Step 5:** Have players throw the ball into the air and catch it 5-10 times each.

**Step 6:** Lastly, have them move the ball around their bodies. Start around the waist and then try under each leg. Make it a fun contest to see who can perform various skills without dropping the ball during each exercise.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. If players are older, shorten your introduction and have players run in the grid and perform a different action every time you signal. For example, every time you blow the whistle, players must move the ball around their waist and feet before finding a new ball.
2. If players are already experienced with a ball, this skill can be used as a warm-up or conditioning game.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players use two hands at all times.
2. Make sure players are communicating with you and their teammates.
3. Make sure players are varying their movements.
4. Help players identify the best method for performing each skill.





## --> SKILL: Go Forward

### OBJECTIVE:

**SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5-10 minutes**

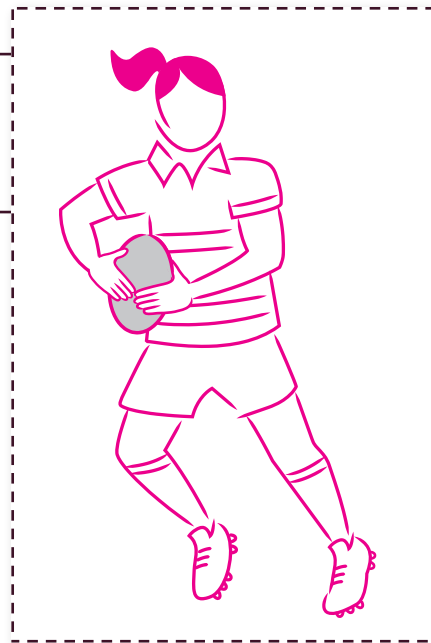
To keep players focused on scoring by developing the instinct to move forward when carrying the ball.

### WHAT TO COACH:

When facing defenders it can sometimes be unnatural for players to keep moving forward instead of passing or moving backwards to find space. Players should be taught that moving forward when carrying the ball is essential to scoring points and keeping the flow of the game.

**Step 1:** Have players get into pairs of two, with one player holding a rugby ball.

**Step 2:** Have one player on defense challenge the player with the ball, but make it a rule that the ball carrier can only go forward even if they think they will get their flag pulled. Make it a contest to see how far each player can go without getting their flag pulled.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 3:** Let each player take a few turns until they are naturally moving forward through every play.

**Step 4:** Ensure that players are safe by emphasizing that Rookie Rugby is non-contact.

**Step 5:** Practice one on one evasion drills that will encourage players to move forward instead of running away from the defense. If needed, restrict playing space by forming a narrow grid and forcing players to stay within the boundaries.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Play a progressive flag rugby game starting with 4 v 1 then moving into 4 v 2 and 4 v 3. Players will feel more comfortable moving forward when there are less defenders.
2. Have players play a 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 flag rugby game and make the rule that ball carriers are not allowed to move backwards.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. If a player steps or runs backwards, make sure to correct them right away.
2. Make sure players are holding the ball correctly as they run.
3. Encourage players to move forward by using simple commands during play. "Run Forward!" is commonly used in youth rugby.



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## --> SKILL: Running in Support

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players utilize space and provide options for the ball carrier.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

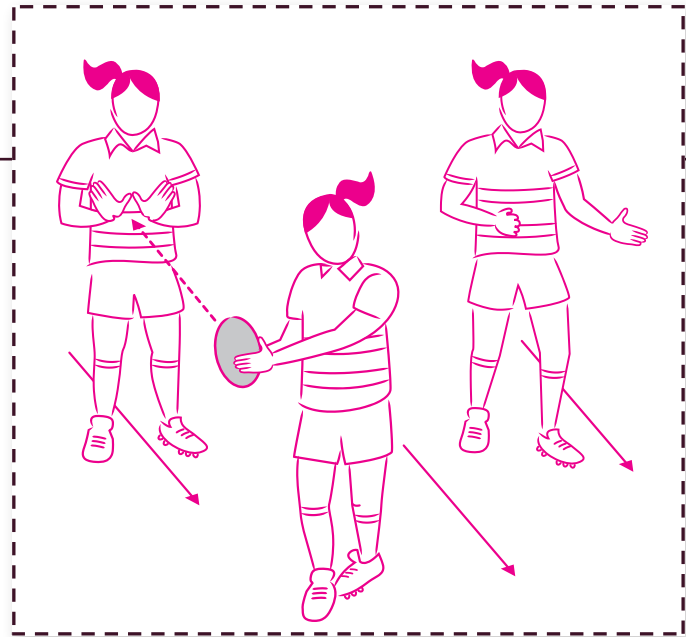
Running to support teammates when on offense is vital to keeping the game continuous and is the first step to scoring.

**Step 1:** Teach players about offensive shape and supporting the ball carrier in a triangle formation.

**Step 2:** Teach players the three key factors:

- Anticipate point of attack
- Stay behind the ball initially
- Communicate your position

**Step 3:** Have players form a triangle with the ball carrier in the front.



more on back...

# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

Have other players remain behind the ball carrier on the left and right sides, completing the triangle.

**Step 4:** Practice the skill by having players pass the ball and adjusting to the new ball carrier.

**Step 5:** Add additional offensive players and have players work to get into support.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Have players walk through the skill and then progress to jogging and full speed.
2. Add defenders to challenge players to read situations and adjust.
3. Have players work in smaller offensive groups so they are working harder and more often to get in support.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Make sure players are moving fast to get into support positions.
2. Make sure support players are keeping depth and not remaining aligned with the ball carrier.
3. Encourage constant communication that is clear and concise. Example, "I'm on your left; pass now!"



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## --> SKILL: The Wiggle

### OBJECTIVE:

To have players maintain continuity of play by evading defenders and moving forward.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

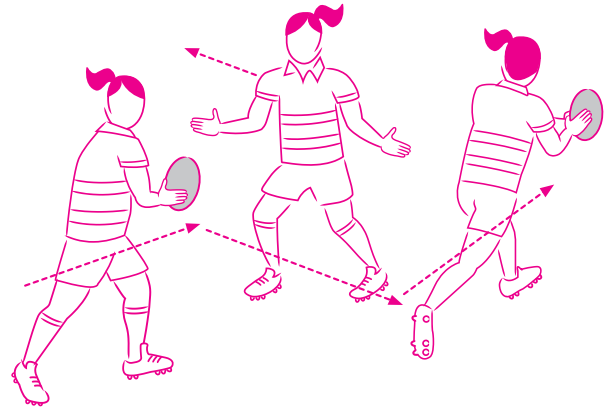
5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

The “wiggle” is an offensive evasion technique used to get past the defense. Similar to the Draw and Pass, the Wiggle focuses on leading the defender one way and then playing the ball the other way.

**Step 1:** Demonstrate the “wiggle” to players, indicating its use for evading defense.

- Step towards defense
- Step to the side of the defense, moving the ball to the outside
- Step back in behind the defender, bringing the ball back in front of you



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 2:** Have players pair up and practice the wiggle, switching offense and defense each time. Be sure to have them practice both directions.

**Step 3:** Add a support player to pass to after completing the wiggle.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Incorporate flags.
2. Advance players to a 3 v 2 game to practice the wiggle and other evasion techniques.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Ensure players remain in a straight running line after completing the wiggle. New players tend to drift across the field. Encourage them to keep their running lines straight up the field.
2. Ensure players move the ball away from the defense on the second step.







## --> SKILL: Uncontested Lineout

### OBJECTIVE:

To teach players the Rookie Rugby version of a lineout.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

5-10 minutes

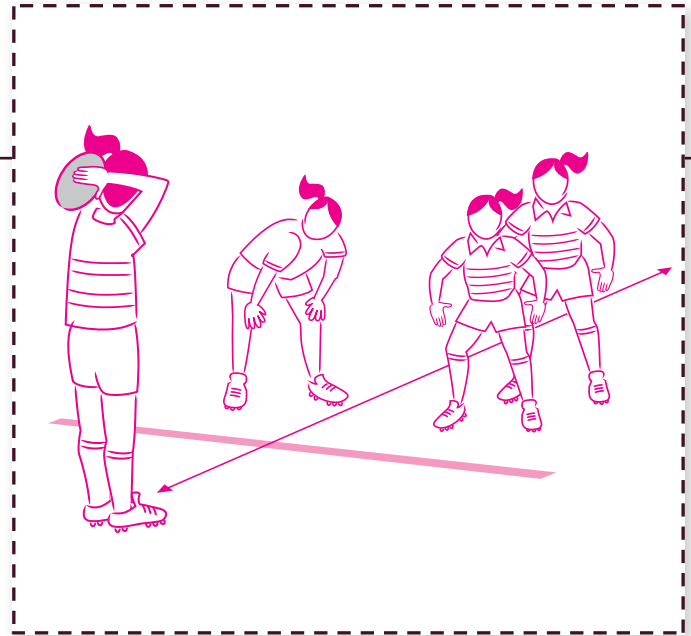
### WHAT TO COACH:

Four players from each team will make up a lineout. For the team in possession of the ball, there will be one player throwing the ball in, two players receiving the in-bound pass, and one player who will move the ball away from the lineout. The defending team will match the offensive team's four players.

Players should not lift in lineouts until they have developed the necessary skills and strength. Lineouts in Rookie Rugby start as uncontested. The team that throws the ball in must be allowed to win possession of the ball.

#### Step 1: Coach the thrower:

- Spin Pass - Start with a basic spin or underhand pass. Call out a jumper and have players try and hit their target.
- Overhead Pass - More experienced players can start advancing



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

to throwing the ball overhead. Begin with shorter distances before advancing.

**Step 2:** Coach the jumpers: Encourage players to maintain a low body position while in the lineout. Have them take one step into the tunnel, bring their far foot in to be shoulder width and then jump straight into the air when going for the ball. He should be an easy “step-step-jump” motion.

**Step 3:** Rotate all player so they have a chance to try all positions.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Once players are the appropriate age and ability they can advance to contested lineouts without lifting.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Coach the lineout effectively and safely.
2. Create a platform to launch an attack.
3. Lifting takes specific skills and strength and should not be used in Rookie Rugby games.





## --> SKILL: Uncontested Scrum

### OBJECTIVE:

To teach players the Rookie Rugby version of a scrum.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

5-10 minutes

### WHAT TO COACH:

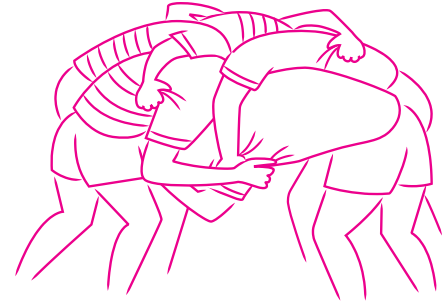
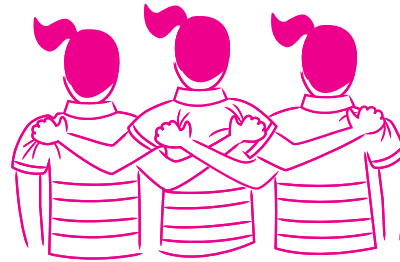
A scrum is formed from two units, one from each team made up of three players each (Front Row). In each Front Row there are two 'Props' with a 'Strike' in the middle.

Rookie Rugby scrums start as uncontested and players should not be allowed to push or drive. The team that was awarded the scrum will roll the ball into the scrum and should be allowed to win possession.

**Step 1:** Players should learn the appropriate body positing in a scrum. Players should keep their back flat, feet and body square, shoulders above hips, head neutral, and eyes forward.

**Step 2:** The essential foundation of a scrum is the binding of the front row.

- The strike stands in the middle and places their arms around both props backs. Their hands grasp the prop's jersey just below the armpits.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

- Each prop places an arm around the strike, grasping just below the opposite armpit.
- Players should hold the jersey of the person next to them tightly to keep the scrum strong and stable.

**Step 3:** Coaches and players must know the engagement sequence and cadence the referees uses. The engagement sequence will be called out by the referee: "Crouch! Bind! Set."

- Crouch - Bound front rows lower into position.
- Bind - Props will grasp the prop opposite them on their shoulder.
- Set - The two front rows come together, placing their heads to the left and under the chest of the player across from them, and form a scrum.
- The team in possession will roll the ball into the scrum. The strike from the team rolling the ball in moves the ball backwards with one foot.
- The player putting the ball in will collect it from the back of the scrum and pass to a teammate.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Once players are of the right age and ability, they can advance to contested scrums.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Develop players capable of working as a collective unit.
2. Before any engagement make sure that all players are bound together properly.
3. At any time before engagement, if a front row player is not ready for the scrum, they should inform the referee.





## --> SKILL: Kicking for Rookies

### OBJECTIVE:

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5-10 minutes

To integrate kicking into Rookie Rugby.

### WHAT TO COACH:

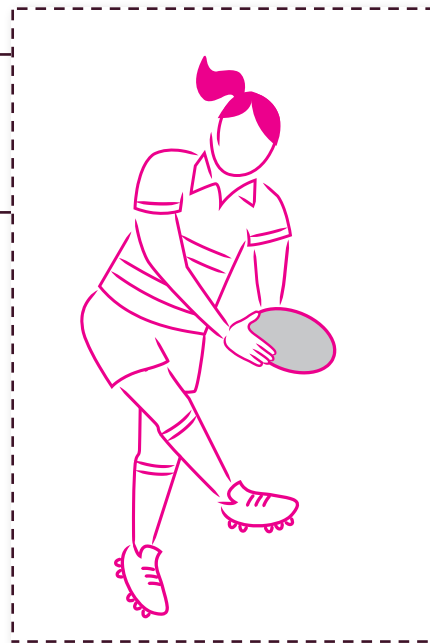
There are two main types of kicking in rugby:

**Punting** - Punting the ball is when players drop the ball and kick it before it hits the ground.

**Drop Kick** - A drop kick is a rugby-specific kick where players will allow the ball to hit the ground before kicking it.

**Step 1:** Have all players practice the skill of punting during practice. Instruct players to hold the ball up and down. Have them step forward, drop the ball, and swing through with their back leg, making contact with the ball.

**Step 2:** Have all players practice drop kicks by holding the ball up and down. Have them drop the ball, take a step, and kick through.



# SKILL CARD

## WHAT TO COACH:

**Step 1:** Starting the Game - The first time to introduce kicking in Rookie Rugby is the start of the game. This allows kicking to be introduced slowly and allows all players to have the chance to practice their skills. Drop kicks can be more difficult for children. Start kick-offs with punting until players are ready to advance to drop kick starts.

**Step 2:** Kick-offs after Scoring - Similar to the start of a game, a kick-off is used to restart play after a try is scored. After introducing kicking at the start of a game, this is the next progression for kids in Rookie Rugby. After a try is scored, the team that scored the try will then kick off to the opposing team.

## COACHING NOTES

### SKILL PROGRESSIONS

1. Add penalty kicks into games. A penalty kick in rugby is when the non-infringing team kicks the ball down the field and out of bounds in order to get a lineup.
2. Add kicking during open play into games. Players should be permitted to punt the ball at any time during the game as a strategic move. It is recommended that teams are limited to the number of kicks they can perform until they are ready to strategically make kicking decisions.

### CHECK AND CORRECT

1. Coach kicking effectively and safely.
2. Be sure that players understand when kicking should occur in games.
3. Players should not start kicking in rugby until they are fully ready.



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