

Rookie Rugby101

Introducing Rugby to Students

Middle School Two Day Plan

Before the Training :

Before leading your Rookie Rugby class for any age, prepare with the following:

- Familiarize yourself with the Rookie Rugby Games and Activities that you will be teaching that day. Bringing a cheat sheet will help keep your session moving and make sure you hit all the key points.
- Make sure to have enough rugby balls to successfully teach the number of students in each class. One ball per five kids is suggested.
- Size 3 or 4 rugby balls are preferred for this age group.
- Class length and number of students will dictate your program.
- If you have rugby gear, be sure to wear it.
- Print out information for the kids to take home on how they can participate in rugby.

Class Session:

Introduction of the history of rugby:

- Bring the students together and introduce the history of rugby for no longer than 3 minutes. Keep a rugby ball in your hand for the introduction. Engage by asking questions.
 1. "Does anyone know which country invented rugby?" - England
 2. "Rugby was invented when a boy playing soccer, picked up the ball and began to run with it. A player from the other team decided to tackle him. That is how rugby was invented."
 3. "Rugby came over to America in the early 1800's. It was played on college campuses all across America. In the early 1900's they started to change the rules. After a bunch of rule changes football was the new sport."
 4. Recap: "What country invented rugby?", "What sport did rugby come from?". "What sport came from rugby?"

Introduce the game:

- First introduce the ball - "It is fatter than a football and more pointy than a soccer ball. Everyone gets a chance to carry it, pass, catch and score in rugby."
- Introduce the catch - "Catching the rugby ball is a fun challenge. Everyone hold your hands up in front of your chest, with your thumbs together and fingers spread wide, forming a 'W'. This means you are ready to catch the ball. We only want to pass to players with their W's up, ready to catch the ball."
- Introduce the pass and have a volunteer help you - "In rugby we pass across our bodies. This pass is an underhand pass similar to scooping or shoveling (demonstrate). Football passes (demonstrate) and basketball passes (demonstrate) are not allowed in rugby."

Get them moving:

- Immediately get them up and moving with your relay races.
- Progress through games and make sure to ask core questions to the group.
- Focus on keeping them moving.



For more information visit us online at: www.rookierugby.com
or email us at youth@usarugby.org



Teaching the Class - middle school two day plan

SET UP

Before class starts:

- Set up the first game with cones and rugby balls.
- Keep a rugby ball in your hand for the introduction.

CLASS TIME - Adjust times to reflect total class time

Day 1

3-5 Minutes: Introducing Rugby

- Introduce the history of rugby
- introduce the rugby ball
- introduce [passing and catching](#)

7-10 Minutes: [Rugby Relays](#)

5 Minutes: [Circle Passing](#)

5 Minutes: [Rugby Freeze Tag](#)

5 Minutes: [USA Eagles](#)

10-15 Minutes: [Ultimate Rugby](#)

5 Minutes: Review and Wrap Up

Day 2

3-5 Minutes: Introduction and Review of Previous Day

7-10 Minutes: Introductory Games from Day 1 for Review and Warm Up

7 Minutes: [Stars and Stripes](#)

5 Minutes: [Hot and Cold Potato](#)

10 Minutes: [Just Score](#)

10 Minutes: [Flag Rugby](#)

5 Minutes: Review and Wrap Up

REVIEW AND WRAP UP

Review everything that you went over throughout the training and check for understanding:

What a score called? - A Try!

How many points is a try worth? - 5

What is the name of the USA National Teams? - The Eagles

- Make sure they had fun!

- Be sure to pass out fliers or other relevant information.



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or email us at youth@usarugby.org





presented by: **AIG**

★ SKILL CARD

--> SKILL: Receiving the Pass

OBJECTIVE:

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION: 5–10 minutes

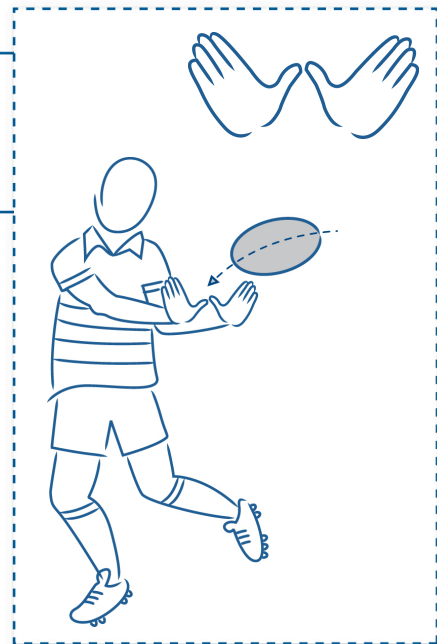
To have players maintain the continuity of play by receiving a pass from their teammate and continuing forward.

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.



more on back...

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.





presented by: **AIG**

★ SKILL CARD

--> SKILL: Basic Pass



OBJECTIVE:

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

SUGGESTED TIME

ALLOCATION:

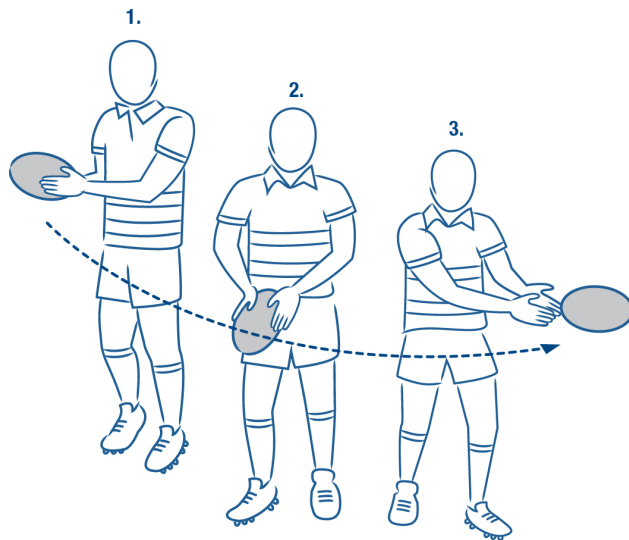
5–10 minutes

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



more on back...

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.





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★ GAME CARD

→ GAME: Relay Races



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 10 x 25 yard grid
- 10 cones and 5 rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

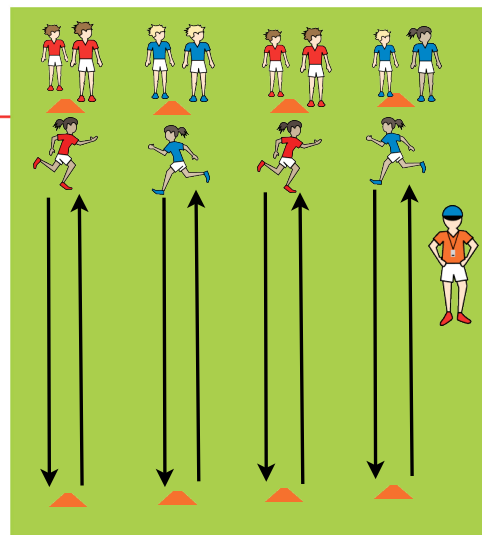
5-10 minutes or four different relays

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Start by separating players into equal relay teams of two or more and have them stand in line behind a cone.
2. Make the first race a simple down and back with a rugby ball in hand, passing to the next player in line on the way back. Be sure to instruct on proper passing and catching techniques prior.
3. Next, have players ground the ball and yell "Try!" when they get to the far cone. Have them run back and pass to the next player in line.
4. The next race should have two players from a team race down and back,



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

completing three passes in between each cone, scoring at each end.

5. Last, let players have fun by celebrating a “try dance” at the furthest cone before running back to pass to their teammate.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Make the cones further apart each race.
2. Add defenders in the middle that players must evade to complete their turn in the race.
3. Award the first team to finish a point and make it a competition for teams.
4. Incorporate various skills including tossing the ball, kick and chase, low positioning, etc.

KEY SKILLS

- Passing
- Moving Forward
- Grounding
- Ball Familiarization

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Players should work on mastering each skill they perform while playing.
2. Make sure players are encouraging each other as they race.





presented by: **AIG**

★ GAME CARD

→ GAME : Circle Passing



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 10 x 10 yard grid
- 1 cone and 1-2 rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

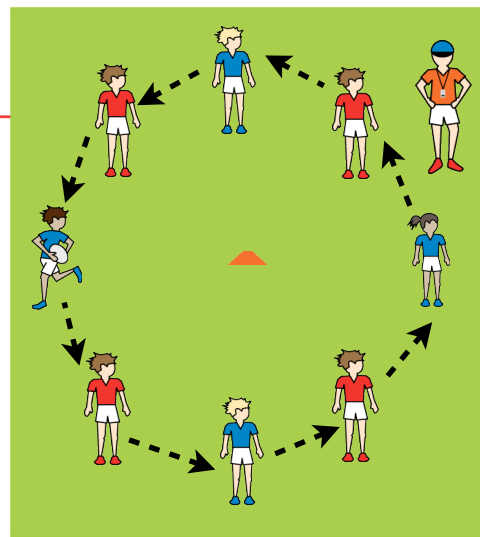
5-10 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have players form a circle with about 2 yards in between each other.
2. Start by having players attempt to complete passes around the entire circle without dropping the ball.
3. Once players can get around the circle, make the game harder by adding a time limit.
4. After the time limit, play a game of standing “Duck, Duck, Goose” with the circle. Instead of the tagger running away from the “Goose”, have



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

- the two players switch places and have the “Goose” race a ball being passed around the circle.
- Choose a tagger to walk around the circle clockwise with a rugby ball playing “Duck, Duck, Goose”. Once the tagger chooses a “Goose”, the “Goose” will start running around the circle while the other players work to pass the ball around the circle. The goal is for the “Goose” to beat the ball around the circle. Have each player take turns.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Create two circles and have them compete against each other for time.
2. Use two balls in one circle.
3. Have players use different passing techniques such as a pop pass, a spiral pass or pass backwards.
4. Incorporate fitness including jumping jack feet, shuffling, etc.
5. Pass across circle and replace.

KEY SKILLS

- Passing
- Receiving

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Emphasize the “W” formation with their hands when receiving the ball.
2. Work with players to improve their passing skills.





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★ GAME CARD

--> GAME: Rugby Freeze Tag



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 20 x 20 yard grid
- 4 cones and 8 rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

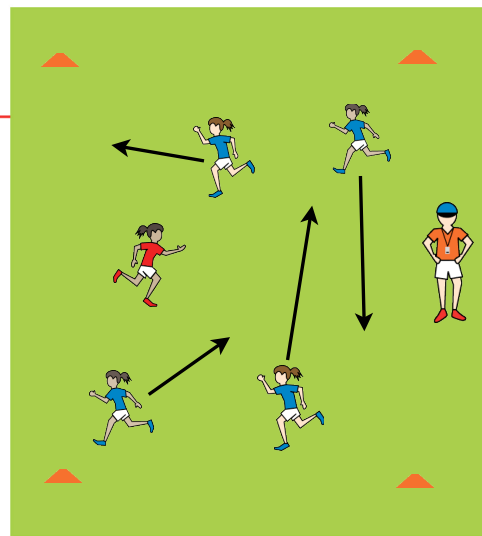
10-15 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. 1-3 players are picked as taggers. Taggers are given a ball to use for tagging or use two hand touch when necessary.
2. All non-taggers evade any taggers by moving into space within the grid.
3. When a player is tagged with the rugby ball they must remain stationary or “frozen.”
4. “Frozen” players can be released when their teammates perform a set skill. We suggest giving a high five to un-freeze a player. The game can



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

either run for a set time or until all evading players are “frozen.”

5. Players crossing over the boundary lines and stepping outside the grid become automatically frozen.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Crawl between the legs of a “frozen” player to unfreeze them.
2. Incorporate passing so that “frozen” players can only become un-frozen by receiving a pass.
3. Roll a ball between the legs of a “frozen” player.
4. Incorporate flags.

KEY SKILLS

- Evading
- Moving to Space
- Ball Familiarization
- Tagging

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Make sure players are focused on teamwork to keep their teammates un-frozen.
2. Have the taggers call their tags, by yelling “tag!”
3. Emphasize communication by having players call for help when they are frozen.





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★ GAME CARD

--> GAME : USA Eagles



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 10 x 20 yard grid
- 4 cones

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

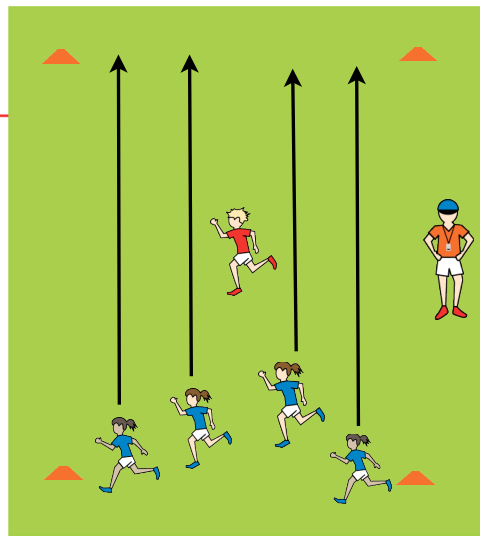
10-15 minutes or 3 rounds

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. This game is similar to the classic *Sharks and Minnows*. One player starts in the middle, facing the remaining players lined up along one edge of the grid.
2. Players must attempt to run from one side of the grid to the other without being tagged. When they arrive at other side, they stop and wait for a restart.
3. To start the game, have the defensive player shout, “USA!!!” and then the offensive players lined up will respond with, “EAGLES!!!” After



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

shouting, “EAGLES!!!”, the offensive players will attempt to run to the other side of the grid without getting tagged. Players must remain within the boundaries of the grid during the game.

4. If tagged, the tagged player joins in with the center tagging group and attempts to tag others on the next round.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Call on one player to cross at a time. If caught, they join the middle.
2. Incorporate a rugby ball and have players pass the ball while avoiding the tag.
3. Players leave in waves; include a ball.
4. Incorporate flag belts.

KEY SKILLS

- Flat Line Defense
- Evasion
- Swerve and Side Step

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Work together on defense to hold back the runners.
2. The offense should look for holes in the defense to run through.
3. Flat line defense.





presented by: **AIG**

★ GAME CARD

→ GAME : Stars and Stripes



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 30 x 15 yard grid
- 6 cones

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

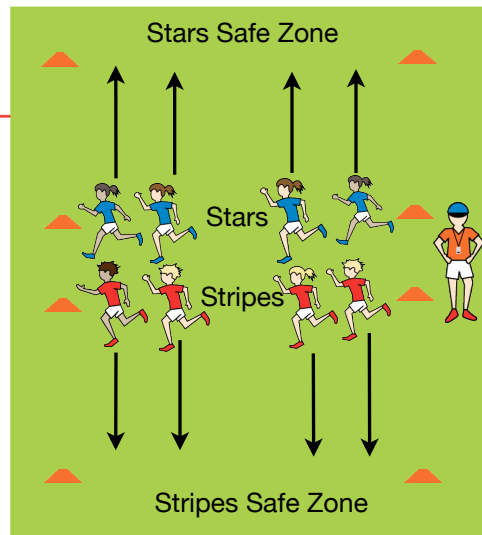
10-15 minutes or 10 rounds

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Each player finds one partner and together they designate one partner “stars” and one partner “stripes”.
2. One team (stars) lines up along the center line, facing the “star’s safe zone”. The other team (stripes) lines up next to their partner, arms length apart, facing the “stripe’s safe zone”.
3. The instructor calls either “Stars!” or “Stripes!” The team being called tries to get to their safe zone before getting tagged by the other team.



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

4. The team that is not called reacts to become taggers. They attempt to tag the opposition before they cross into their respective “safe zone”.
5. Repeat various rounds, allowing players to quickly switch from offense to defense with quick reactions.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Give points every time a tag is made. Have players compete to get the most points.
2. Vary the starting position of the players: sitting down, kneeling, or lying down.
3. Incorporate fitness activities such as jumping jacks, jump squats, etc. before calling a team.
4. Incorporate flags.

KEY SKILLS

- Evading
- Tagging

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Remind players to go through the proper steps when making a tag.
2. Players should work on their offensive moves to avoid getting tagged.
3. Quick reaction—switching from offense to defense.





presented by: 

★ **GAME CARD**

→ **GAME :Cold and Hot Potato**



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 40 x 40 yard grid
- 2 rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

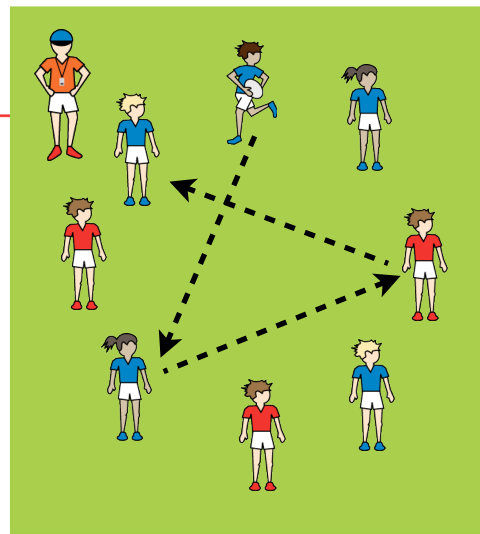
10-15 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have players form a circle with one player starting with the rugby ball.
2. Players will start with a “cold potato” rugby ball where they take time to learn a passing skill that the coach chooses by passing the ball around the circle to whoever they choose. Examples include:
 - Pop Pass
 - Spin Pass
 - One Handed Pass
3. The instructor will then change the ball to a “hot potato” and players



more on back...



GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

should work on quickly passing the ball using the technique showed by coach with the “cold potato”. Incorporate a time limit where players must pass within two seconds in order to increase the speed of the game.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Have groups of players compete to get the most amount of complete passes in a certain time limit.
2. Incorporate more rugby balls.
3. Have players replace the person they pass to.

KEY SKILLS

- Passing
- Receiving

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Make sure players continue to use their W's when receiving the ball.
2. Help players work to always be in a position to receive a pass.
3. Encourage players to count loudly and together every time a successful pass is made.





presented by: 

★ GAME CARD

--> GAME: Just Score



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 20 x 10 yard grid
- 4 cones and a rugby ball

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

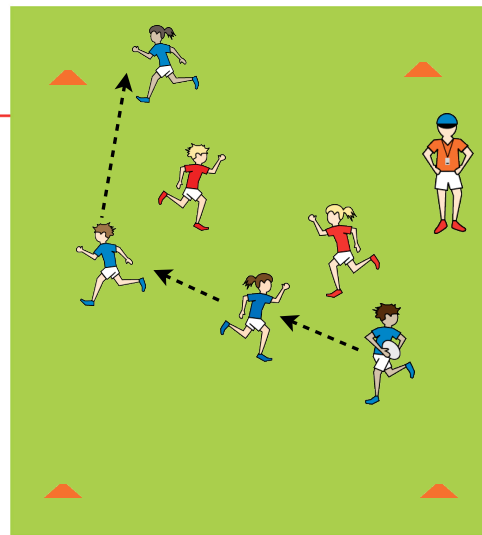
10-15 minutes or 5 full rounds

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- ✓ Apply Pressure
- ✓ Score Points
- ✓ Contest Possession
- ✓ Go Forward
- ✓ Provide Support
- ✓ Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. One team of four players start behind the try line. Two defenders start in the middle of the grid.
2. The object is for the offense to get the ball from one end of the grid to the other to score as many try's as possible.
3. The defensive players can only gain possession by intercepting the ball.
4. Running the ball is not allowed, and support players should be encouraged to look for space to be in a position to receive the ball. The ball can be passed in any direction.



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GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

5. The offense reverses the direction of attack after a try is scored.
6. A drop ball results in a re-start at the try line.
7. Defensive players change with offense players to allow everyone a turn.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Passes can only be lateral or backwards.
2. Adjust the ratio of offense/defense, grid size and time limits.

KEY SKILLS

- Scoring a Try
- Evading
- Passing
- Receiving
- Creating Space

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Encourage players to work together on offense to create space.
2. Encourage defenders to communicate and call out who they are defending.
3. Encourage players to keep moving forward, always attempting to score.





presented by: 

★ GAME CARD

--> GAME : Ultimate Rugby



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 20 x 30 yard grid
- 4 cones and rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

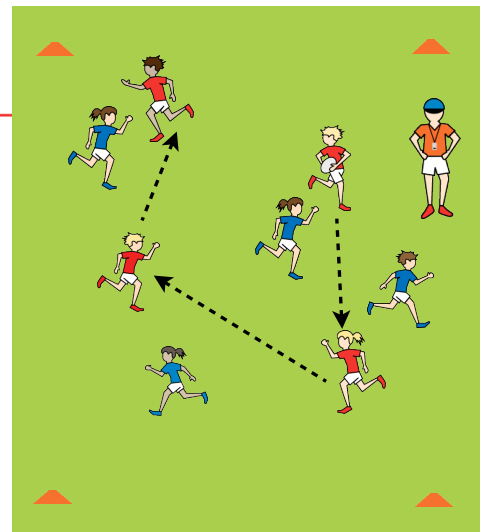
10-20 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- Apply Pressure
- Score Points
- Contest Possession
- Go Forward
- Provide Support
- Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Split players into two equal teams, lining up on opposite ends of the field.
2. One team begins with the ball and starts the game with a free pass.
3. Players advance the ball by passing in any direction.
4. Players cannot run with the ball and may only advance it by passing.



more on back...



GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

5. If a pass is dropped, a turnover occurs.
6. Players score by grounding the ball in their try zone.
7. Defensive players cannot strip the ball from offensive players and must remain arms-length distance when defending.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Incorporate three steps—players can take three steps after receiving a pass.
2. Players only have three seconds to pass.
3. Only rugby passes are allowed, no overhead or overhand passes.

KEY SKILLS

- Offensive Support
- Communication
- Moving the Ball Forward

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Encourage players to look for space when possessing the ball.
2. Help players to be prepared to pass the ball quickly.
3. Encourage players to be in a position to receive the ball from their teammate.





presented by: **AIG**

★ GAME CARD

--> **GAME :** Transitioning from Ultimate to Flag



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 20 x 30 yard grid
- 8 cones and rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

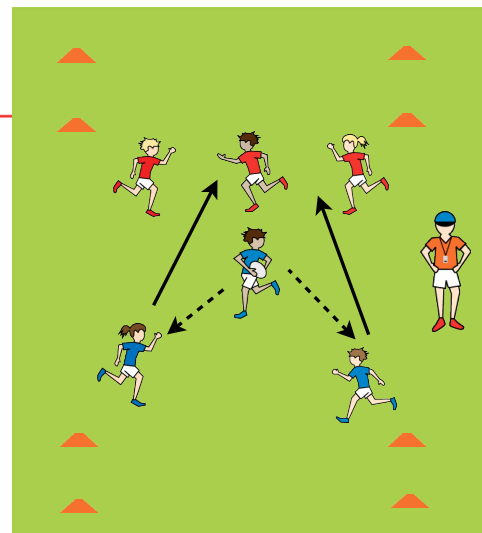
10-30 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- ✓ Apply Pressure
- ✓ Score Points
- ✓ Contest Possession
- ✓ Go Forward
- ✓ Provide Support
- ✓ Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Split players into two equal teams and begin on opposite sides of the field.
2. Have players prepare by wearing flag belts and two flags.
3. Start from Ultimate Rugby II and follow these progressions:
 - Pass in any direction—3 steps/3 seconds
 - Run with the ball—incorporate flag pulling and pass in any direction



more on back...



GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

- Run with the ball– incorporate one lateral/backwards pass after flag pull. Open play will allow passes in any direction
- Incorporate two lateral/backwards passing with flag pulls.
- Advance to all lateral/backwards passing with flag pulls.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Incorporate rules to challenge players. For example, all players must receive a pass before scoring.
2. Incorporate different rugby skills like offensive shape to help players be successful.

KEY SKILLS

- Incorporating all skills into the game.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Make sure players are mastering skills and game concepts before advancing.





presented by: **AIG**

★ GAME CARD

--> GAME: Flag Rugby



EQUIPMENT AND SPACE NEEDED:

- 20 x 30 yard grid
- 8 cones and rugby balls

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION:

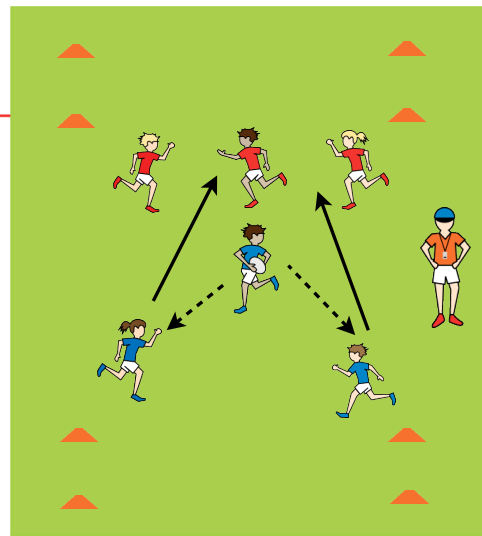
10-30 minutes

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:

- ✓ Apply Pressure
- ✓ Score Points
- ✓ Contest Possession
- ✓ Go Forward
- ✓ Provide Support
- ✓ Create Continuity

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Split players into two equal teams and begin on opposite sides of the field.
2. Have players prepare by wearing flag belts and two flags.
3. Incorporate all lateral/backwards passing.
4. All stoppage in play restarts with a free pass, laterally or backwards.



more on back...



GAME CARD

HOW TO PLAY:

5. Have players work on all concepts such as offense and defense.

COACHING NOTES

GAME PROGRESSIONS

1. Add scrums.
2. Add lineouts.
3. Add kicking.

KEY SKILLS

- Incorporate all skills into the game

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Make sure players are mastering skills and game concepts before advancing.

