



Game Coaching Practical Resource

Coaching mini rugby to primary school
aged children

September 2015



Leadership · Enjoyment · Achievement · Engagement · Respect

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Introduction to game coaching

This resource provides guidance on all aspects of game coaching for coaches, teachers, match officials and parents who are involved in the provision of mini rugby to primary school aged children (5-12 years). It will help game coaches to perform their role, by offering guidance in the following areas:

- coaching players as the game is being played;
- encouraging best practice;
- correcting poor practice;
- providing feedback;
- ensuring players respect the laws and officials;
- allowing the game to flow with fewer stoppages;
- build the confidence of players in an enjoyable and challenging environment.

Definition of game coaching - when one person (the game coach) takes on the role of a referee and coach during a game.

“During the early stages of participation, with an emphasis on playful activities, the coaches’ role is mainly to act as a ‘resource person’ who can modify the environment or supply directive feedback and instructions in order to quickly correct errors” (Ian Stafford, coaching children in sport, 2011, Routledge).

Playing rugby games and modified training games are very useful to help players to develop both their skills and game understanding. To ensure that all players at all levels are improving, coaches should ensure that they actively coach through the game rather than just managing the activity.

This means providing specific feedback on technical (e.g. tackle technique) and tactical (player and game movement) aspects of the game through praise of good practice, coaching points, checking understanding through open questioning and an accurate coaching focus (not trying to fix everything at once). Combining these methods will improve the development of the players in a fun and challenging environment.

“Children love discovering, inventing and having fun - all at the same time - in a stimulating environment. They should not, however, be allowed to work in the comfort zone as it bores them very quickly and hinders progress.” (Jeremie Spencer, Introduction of Rugby to Children In France, 2004, Rugby Football Union & Jeremie Spencer).

Using these ‘game coaching’ skills will help you create an effective learning environment which is FUN and exciting, enabling you to develop players of all levels and ability and hopefully retain your players as a result.

There should only ever be one game coach on the field at all times and no other adults on the field of play. This allows every player to make decisions for themselves based on their playing experiences as well as taking away the distraction of multiple coaches constantly sending mixed messages.



Recommended Qualifications

FUNDamentals stage (5-9 years male, 5-8 years female)		
Minimum standard	Recommended	Other
Every coach must complete the mandatory RugbyReady Practical Course on a yearly basis and IRB RugbyReady online assessment (available at www.irbrugbyready.com).	Coaching should be delivered by a suitably qualified coach / teacher with a UKCC Rugby Union Level 1 qualification.	Coaches should also complete the IRB Laws self-assessment each year - available at www.irblaws.com
Learning to play (9-12 years male, 8-11 years female)		
Minimum standard	Recommended	Other
Every coach must complete the mandatory RugbyReady Practical Course on a yearly basis and IRB RugbyReady online assessment (available at www.irbrugbyready.com).	Coaching should be delivered by a suitably qualified coach / teacher with a minimum UKCC Rugby Union Level 1 qualification as well as Scottish Rugby / UKSCA Level 1 Strength and Conditioning qualification.	Coaches should also complete the IRB Laws self-assessment each year - available at www.irblaws.com

Scottish Rugby recommends coaches to attend appropriate workshops and other seminars to keep their coaching skills up to date. Continuous development for coaches can take many forms but in order to provide the best coaching for young players, coaches should themselves aim to be the best they can be. Coaches should contact their Club Coach Co-ordinator for details of appropriate workshops.

General principles of game coaching

2

2a SAFETY

Safety is paramount to game coaching any rugby match. Nothing must be allowed to happen which is unsafe in any phase of the game. Safety must take precedence over every other aspect of game coaching. Every active coach, teacher and referee in clubs and school must attend the mandatory RugbyReady practical course each year and complete the online IRB RugbyReady online assessment.

IF IT LOOKS DANGEROUS THEN STOP IT



2b PLAYER AND GAME MANAGEMENT

Player management

Communicating effectively with players is a vital process skill for the game coach to possess. It is important the game coach uses a two way communication process with listening and reading body language being as important, if not more important, as talking and giving feedback.

When communicating with younger players it is important that a game coach understands the needs of the players that he or she is working with, developing a real identification with the children. Jeremie Spencer C.T.D., F.F.R. notes in his paper 'Introduction of Rugby to children in France' when working with children, I try to develop a real identification with the children by using the following methods:

1. Be aware of the magic space between the teacher and the child
2. Try to use their language and their humour
3. Always try to get down to their height to reassure them and attempt to de-dramatise what I am asking them to do
4. The 5 C's:
 - **Competence**: Ability to perform a task to a certain level i.e. social, cognitive, physical, technical and tactical competence
 - **Confidence**: An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficiency
 - **Connection**: Positive bonds with people and institutions resulting in successful relationships in family, school, club and community
 - **Character and Caring**: Respect for social and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviours, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity
 - **Creativity**: Finding one's own solutions.

Game Management

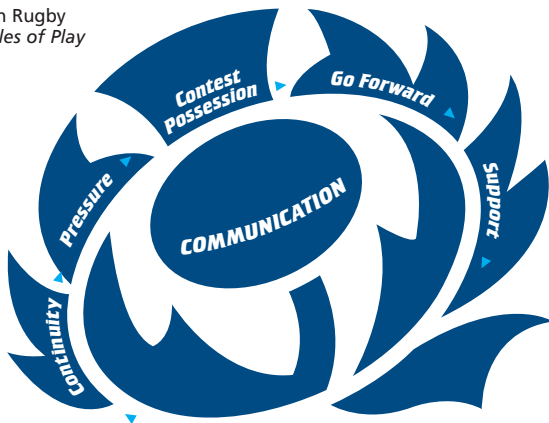
The principles around managing a game of rugby union when game coaching are directly linked to the theory of invasion and evasion games. These are team games in which the purpose is to invade the opponents' territory (without getting caught) while scoring points and keeping the opposing team's points to a minimum, and all within a certain time period. Broken down to an even simpler definition this is coaching players to attack an area of space 'where the opposition are not' and to defend areas where teams are attacking 'where the attack is'.

Looking at both of these areas in more depth, the main focus of the game coach during attack should be on encouraging players to:

- maintain possession though continuity;
- avoid defenders by passing or dodging before contact;
- create space for other players (draw and pass); and
- create space for themselves (alignment, footwork before contact, early hand catch).

Similarly, in defence, the game coach should focus on encouraging players to:

- scan to see where the opposition are and then position themselves accordingly to defend the space;
- move forward and make an effective tackle (beneath waist); and
- compete for possession once the tackle has been completed.



2c TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL INFORMATION TRANSFER

Key coaching points

Prior to the start of the game, the game coach should outline the aims of the activity as well as the key technical information that they will be working on during the game.

To maximise the learning of the players, the game coach should constantly give accurate feedback to the players during the game. This should take the form of vocal praise and correction such as:

- "well done, good early hand catch with both hands"
- "next time try to stretch with both hands and take the ball as early as you can"

This will help the players to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

Correction of consistently occurring mistakes

During the game, if mistakes occur consistently, the game coach should implement the follow procedure to help develop players' understanding and reinforce good practice.

1 Stop the game

The game coach should blow the whistle and gather all players around so they can hear clearly.

2 Highlight the mistake and openly question players

The game coach should highlight the mistake in a way that doesn't make the players feel like they have done something wrong.

When highlighting the mistake the game coach should use open questions "Why do you think we keep dropping the ball?" "Can someone tell me what we should do before we catch the ball?" etc. This will engage the players and give the game coach a chance to see if the players understand what they are being asked to do. If the mistakes occur because of a lack of effort the game coach should motivate the players in a constructive way.

3 Reinforce coaching points

The game coach should finish the process by reinforcing the discussed learning points with the players. This can be done by the use of open questioning to check for understanding.

Mini rugby should be simple. Invade the oppositions territory without getting caught (evade). Players should be coached to attack an area of space, where the opposition aren't and to defend areas where the opposition are attacking.

During games of mini rugby the tendency is for the players to forget about the space on the pitch and to gather around the ball in an attempt to either get the ball or to tackle the player with the ball. As a result very little tactical development takes place.

To help the players utilise the pitch and develop further tactical understanding, the game coach should take the players through the following steps to aid their understanding of space and how to use it correctly.

1 Stop the game

The game coach should blow the whistle to stop the game. This can be done even if there hasn't been a natural stoppage in play if the players have completely lost their shape and have gathered around the ball.

2 Communicate to the players and use open questioning

By shouting "freeze and stand where you are" the game coach can get the players to remain where they are so that more impact can be made when questioning the players on where they should be. This should be followed by highlighting where the space is and where the players should be.

With the use of effective open questions, the game coach can get the players to identify where they should be and where they should be trying to get the ball. "If all the players are here! Where is the space on the pitch?" "If the attackers are spaced out there! Where do we need to defend?"



2d FAULT CORRECTION AND PLAYER FEEDBACK

To help learning and development, the game coach should:

- Set effort goals for the teams which will focus on aspects of the game which is completely within the control of the players for instance: "Work hard to find and attack space" (this will of course imply accurate passing to move the ball to a player in space or effective footwork and acceleration for the player directly attacking the space);
- progress and stretch goals to keep challenging the players according to their accomplishment of previously set effort goals - the challenge is 'just right' when players are successful 80% of the time;
- use prompts and encouragement;
- use specific praise to highlight good practice, so all players learn from the good examples;
- use mistakes as learning points;
- provide high levels of feedback and instruction at the correct times to ensure that the game flows freely and is therefore more enjoyable for all players;
- reinforce through open questioning: "What was it that Johnny did really well to allow you to attack the space and score the try?";
- try to keep feedback to no more than two or three key points; and
- manage the game/training environment to achieve set effort goals.

2e EQUALITY

The game coach must be fair, impartial and consistent at all times to both teams. This will help to create a positive learning environment where both teams will get equal development opportunities and reinforce the values of the game.



2f APPLICATION OF LAWS

It is important that game coaches at all levels learn, understand and apply the laws in a consistent manner. Mini rugby law variations exist to provide a safe and staged progressive learning environment.

It is the responsibility of every player, coach, teacher, referee and game coach to know the laws of rugby union. Scottish Rugby encourages all involved to complete the IRB Laws assessment each year. www.irblaws.com

Scottish Rugby's age grade law variations can be downloaded from the [Are You Ready to Play Rugby?](http://www.scottishrugby.org) pages of www.scottishrugby.org.

2g KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD GAME COACH

A good game coach should be able to demonstrate the following:

- knowledge and understanding of the full laws of the game;
- knowledge, understanding and application of the Age Grade Law Variations, game coaching principles and the spirit and values of the game;
- honesty, integrity and equality to both sides at all times (in matches and training);
- an ability to educate players in the laws of the game whilst coaching the game;
- ability to teach the value of respect whilst coaching the game;
- an ability to use advantage effectively ;
- an ability to referee in accordance with player's level of experience in a firm, sympathetic not domineering manner; and
- an ability and desire to develop and build the confidence of all players within the squad, not just the talented players, ensuring enjoyment and learning for everyone involved (including the game coach).

Development areas and coaching through games

Modified games are extremely useful to help players to develop their skills and game understanding. Using modified games either prior to or between games can improve the players' technical and tactical understanding of certain areas of the game.

Use of modified games and development areas will help the players to learn more easily and take the potential need to win at all cost out of the session. This in turn will help channel focus towards the process of improving and the resulting improved ability to compete.

Game coaches should consider the following when coaching through games:

- What is the main objective / purpose for the practice?
- What skills and tactics are the focus for development within the game?
- What modifications can be made to emphasise these skills and tactics?
- What will be the main problems for the player to solve?
- What key questions can be asked to emphasise technical and tactical aspects?
- What progressions and regressions can be made to ensure learning for all?
- How can I build the confidence of all the players on the pitch?

For more information on development areas and coaching through games, game coaches should refer to [Scottish Rugby's coaching tag and mini rugby resource](#) (LTPD stages 1 & 2).



Communication and effective use of advantage

A game coach must be able to communicate effectively with players. This can be done in three ways.

1. The VOICE

This is the most important tool that a game coach can use.

- **Clear vocal communication** is vital if players are to understand what they can and cannot do. For example: "Red number two you joined the ruck in front of the hindmost player, you are offside. Penalty kick to blue. Next time make sure you come through the gate"
- The voice can be used to **help prevent offences taking place** and to effectively coach players through the game. Using phrases such as "keep two hands on the ball"; "stay onside"; "tackle below the waist" are helpful and maintain fluidity within the game
- **Praise and reinforcement of good practice** is also a vital tool for the game coach. This helps players to understand what they are doing as well as giving a feeling of worth and contribution. Coaches should try to remain specific when giving praise and reinforcement by telling the players what they are doing well and why e.g.: "well done; good pass because you followed through to your target" and avoid simply repeating "good" or "well done"
- **The tone of the voice** allows the game coach to demonstrate sympathy or control depending on the situation

By using their voice effectively a game coach should enable the game to flow with fewer stoppages and be able to prevent foul play and errors due to a lack of effort which will lead to a better learning environment for the players.

Prevention is better than the cure.

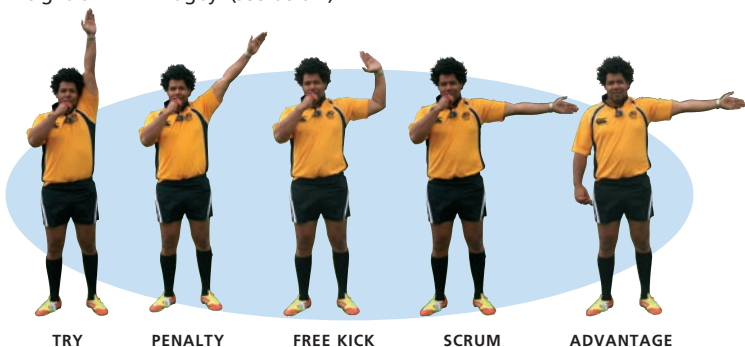
2. The WHISTLE

- Crowd noise and wind may impact on the effectiveness of your whistle. The whistle should be loud enough for all the players to hear and should only be used to stop the game when necessary
- The tone of the whistle should relate to the game coach's decision. For example, the tone of the whistle will vary between an accidental infringement (short) and a deliberate piece of foul play (long and loud).



3. BODY LANGUAGE and SIGNALS

- It is not often 'what we say' that counts but 'how we say it' that is more important
- Use of eye contact with players will help them to listen and focus on what they are being told
- Game coaches should try and smile and show the players that they are enjoying the game as well
- Be serious when dealing with dangerous and foul play
- A game coach should be aware of and use the **five** main refereeing signals in mini rugby. (see below)



Effective use of advantage (Law 8)

The purpose of the advantage law is to make phases of play more continuous with fewer stoppages for infringements. Players should be encouraged to play to the whistle despite any infringements that have occurred. The game coach should use their voice, as well as hand signals to show that they have seen the infringement and that advantage is being played.

Things to consider when playing advantage:

- Advantage should never be played if there is any chance that players are going to be put in danger
- If an offence is spotted, the game coach's first thought should be "can I play an advantage to keep the game flowing?"
- There are two types of advantage that can be played:
 1. **Tactical** - an opportunity for the team to use the ball and possibly score.
 2. **Territorial** - a gain in ground/field position
- Advantage should not be played for too long especially if the ball is trapped on the ground
- If the same offences persistently occur, the game coach should not play advantage and stop play to explain the nature of the offence
- The game coach should communicate to the players that advantage is being played. This should be done by using the advantage signal and calling "playing advantage" and should be followed by a brief description of the offence "knock on blue". If the game coach decides that there has been sufficient advantage this should be communicated by calling "advantage is over" and cancelling their signal.

Stoppages

If advantage has not occurred or dangerous play has taken place and it is necessary to stop the game, the following sequence should take place:

1. Whistle and correct signal simultaneously (style of which will depend on infringement)
2. Voice; positively explain to the players what the infringement was and the resulting action, followed by a brief description of what they should be doing in as short and clear a manner as possible.



Game coaching during open play and dealing with offside

Game coaching during open play

During open play the main role of the game coach is to facilitate positive play by reinforcing good practice as well as preventing offences / poor practice before they happen. This should be done by praising players for what they are doing well for example, "great offload, you pushed your hands free to pass".

Similarly if the game coach notices that a player is going to commit an offence they can be given vocal instruction to hopefully prevent offences before they commit them, "blue five you are offside, come back inside".

This can be supported with hand signals to help the player understand where they should be.



Key points for open play

Players should carry the ball in two hands at all times. This should help game coaches to promote the development of the following skills (evasion, passing and offloading for the ball carrier and individual tackle technique for the tackler).

By focusing on the development of these skills, the game should be free-flowing with fewer stoppages, which will make the game more fun and a better learning experience for all players.

- During open play, if a player is carrying the ball in one hand the game coach should use their voice to encourage the player to hold the ball in two hands.
- If the player consistently holds the ball in one hand (therefore limiting the opportunities to develop the skills listed above) the game coach should stop play at a suitable opportunity.

- Turn the stoppage into a learning opportunity, explaining why all players should have two hands on the ball and finally check for understanding with all players.

- If players continue to carry the ball in one hand, a tap and pass may be awarded.

- The hand-off is not permitted when playing mini rugby. This is to encourage development of the skills explained above.



Dealing with offside

In general play a player is offside if the player is in front of a team-mate who is carrying the ball, or in front of team-mate who last played the ball.

Offside stops the game flowing and should be prevented whenever possible.

During open play, when a tackle has been made, a game coach can refer to the ball as the offside line to all players. This will help to establish a visual aid for the players and will allow the game coach to manage the offside.

A game coach can effectively manage the offside situation using the following process:

- Preventative communication whilst the game is on-going.
The game coach reminds all players to stay on their own side of the ball, this will hopefully stop the players infringing and allow play to continue
- If the offside play continues the game coach should:
 1. stop the game by blowing the whistle and ask the players to stand where they are;
 2. ask the player in possession of the ball to hold it where all players can see (above their head);
 3. by using open questions ask the infringing players where they think they should be: "to get into an onside position which side of the ball do you need to be on?";
 4. prompt players to return to onside positions; and
 5. resume play when all players are onside by blowing the whistle and calling "play on".

If players continue to commit offside offences a penalty may be awarded and the game coach should ensure that all players understand why the penalty has been awarded and are aware of where they should be to remain in an onside position, especially the player who has committed the offence.

How to game coach the tap and pass 6a

What is the order?

TAP AND PASS

1 Where is the tap and pass?

- Tap and Pass restarts for all penalties should be taken from where the infringement happened.
- If a try is scored the Tap and Pass will take place in the middle of the pitch.
- The game coach should show the players where to take the Tap and Pass by creating a mark in the turf with their boot.

2 Where do the players go during the Tap and Pass?

- The team taking the Tap and Pass should start with the ball on the mark awarded by the game coach or at the middle of the pitch after a try is scored.
- The defending team should be 5m back in a defensive line.
- The game coach can help to set the distance by standing 5m from the mark on the defensive line.

3 What happens during the Tap?

- The attacking team takes the Tap. This involves moving the ball a visible distance with the player's foot (remember the tap is actually a tap kick and a kick must be performed to make the ball live).
- This can be done by placing the ball on the ground, tapping it with the foot then picking it up. Alternatively, holding the ball in their hands, the player can Tap the ball by performing a kick to themselves where the ball must leave their hands when making contact with the foot.
- If the Tap skill is not performed correctly the game coach should ask for the Tap to be re-taken.

- The game coach should encourage different players to perform the Tap each time.

4 What happens after the Tap?

- Both teams should not move until the ball has left the first player's (player performing the Tap and Pass) hands.
- After the pass has been performed both teams should be encouraged to move forward.
- The first receiver (player catching the Tap and Pass) does not need to take the ball standing still and should practice moving onto the ball after it has been passed.
- Once the first receiver has caught the ball they must pass straight away.

5 What commands should be given during the Tap and Pass?

- The game coach should signal the Tap and Pass with the correct hand signal and announce which team has been awarded the Tap and why: "free kick blue, red player offside".
- The game coach should remind all players that they are not to move until the ball has left the first player's hands.
- Both teams should be encouraged to move forward following the pass, this will help to foster an understanding of the principles of play i.e. go forward in attack and defence.



How to game coach the scrum

6b

What is the order?

SCRUM

Which age group?

1 Where is the scrum?

The scrum will be awarded at the place the stoppage or infringement happened. This will be indicated to the players by the game coach blowing the whistle, making the correct hand signal and explaining the reason why the scrum has been awarded. The game coach will make a mark in the turf with their foot; this will show the players where they are to set the scrum. The scrum must be at least 5m from the goal and touch lines.

P6 &
P7

2 Who is in the scrum?

The game coach will call the three players closest to the mark to form the scrum. This will consist of two props and a hooker. The next closest player from each team will become the scrum half.

P6

The game coach will call the nearest three players closest to the mark to form the front row, the next two players will be called in to form the second rows with the sixth player becoming the scrum half.

P7

3 Where should the game coach stand?

Initially the game coach should stand on the side of the scrum where the ball is being put in. The game coach should stand behind the scrum half, slightly to one side. This will allow observation of the scrum as well as the scrum halves throw in of the ball down the middle. The exception to this would be if there had been a problem at the opposite side in the previous scrum.

P6 &
P7

4 Coaching points and safety checks

The game coach should remind all players at every scrum that there is no pushing but both hookers are allowed to strike for the ball once it is in the scrum.

The game coach should check players for good body position both prior to and during engagement. During the engagement the game coach should look for:

1. feet shoulder width apart, weight off heels and stay on the balls of feet
2. bend at the knees and hips
3. keep head and shoulders above hips at all times
4. feet, knees, hips and shoulders are square
5. a straight flat back with spine in line with the direction of drive
6. head in a neutral position
7. firm and continuous bind to team-mate throughout
8. props must bind on the opposition props back or side, with a straight arm parallel to the ground; the game coach should correct any incorrect binding before the ball is put in. Second rows should bind on each other with their inside arm, then bind onto their props with their outside arm. Heads should be placed between the prop and hooker with shoulders making contact on the back of the leg, at the bottom of the rugby shorts.

P6 &
P7**5 Game coach commands during the engagement.**

The game coach should initiate the scrum using three commands in a calm, even tone:

"Crouch" and then "bind". The front rows crouch and using their outside arm, each prop must bind. A loosehead prop must bind on the opposing tighthead prop by placing the left arm inside the right arm of the tighthead and gripping the tighthead prop's jersey on the back or side. A tighthead prop

P6 &
P7

must bind on the opposing loosehead prop by placing the right arm outside the left upper arm of the opposing loosehead prop and gripping the loosehead prop's jersey with the right hand only on the back or side.

P6 &
P7

The props must not grip the opponent's chest, arm, sleeve or collar. Following a pause, the game coach will then call "set" when the front rows are ready. The front rows may then engage.

The "set" call is not a command but an indication that the front rows may come together when ready.

6 What happens during the scrum?

The non-offending team will have the throw in at the scrum. This will involve the scrum half throwing the ball through the middle of the scrum (directly over the mark the game coach made). The opposition scrum half should take up position beside their counterpart and remain here until the ball has been passed from the scrum. All other players not involved in the scrum must remain 5m behind the rear foot of the scrum until the ball has been passed.

P6 &
P7

7 What happens after the scrum?

Once the ball has emerged from the scrum, the scrum half must pass it. One further pass must be made before a try can be scored. Once the ball has left the scrum, the players can leave the scrum.

P6 &
P7



How to game coach the lineout

6c

What is the order?

LINEOUT

Which age group?

1 Where is the lineout?

a. The lineout is taken from where the ball crossed into touch. This can be where the ball itself crossed into touch or the player carrying the ball steps into touch. If the ball goes into touch between the goal line and 5m line the lineout will form on the 5m line.

b. When awarding the lineout the game coach should blow their whistle, make the appropriate signals and mark the middle of the lineout with their foot on the touch line where the ball went out. This is where the hooker will throw the ball from. The start of the lineout should be marked by the game coach walking into the field three steps (3m), both teams should then set straight lines 1m apart.

P7 only

(P4 - P6 tap and pass from mark)

2 Who is in the lineout?

All the forwards are in the lineout. One to throw the ball in (the hooker) with the other four forming the lineout, 3m from the touch line. The extra player on the defending team (defending hooker) stands near the front of the lineout but must give space for the thrower to throw the ball in. All the backs, excluding the scrum halves, must be back 5m.

3 Where should the game coach stand?

The game coach should stand at the front of the lineout but should ensure that they can see all aspects stated above as well as facing the defending team's backs to make sure they stay 5m back until the ball emerges.

4 Coaching point

The game coach should ensure that only the attacking team may compete for the ball. This must be done by the catching player taking the ball above their head with both hands whilst

performing a two footed jump. If this is not possible due to a poor throw or weather conditions, the game coach may play advantage or award a re-throw and bring the lineout closer to the throwing player.

5 What happens during the lineout?

The ball is thrown down the middle of the lineout by the player performing the role of the hooker.

Providing all the steps listed above have been completed the defending team may contest possession when the attacking player lands to the ground.

This may be done by performing a tackle or forming a maul.

In mini rugby, this should be the only time that a maul is formed. If the throw is inaccurate and is caught by a member of the defending team who has not contested possession, they may be allowed to take the ball and play on.

6 What happens after the lineout?

If the ball is passed to the scrum half straight away, they must pass. Similar to the scrum one more pass is required before a try can be scored. If the lineout is driven and a maul formed, the defending team may prevent the drive and contest possession in a legal fashion. When the maul has stopped and the ball has emerged, the scrum half has the choice to either run or pass. Two passes from the lineout are still required before a try can be scored.

P7 only

(P4 - P6
tap and
pass
from
mark)



How to game coach the tackle

6d

Definition

TACKLE

1 Is the tackle legal?

Tacklers must tackle below the waist and the ball must not be targeted i.e. the tackler must not grasp the ball or prevent the pass. If this occurs the game coach should be firm with the offending player and correct the technique as stated above. This will allow increased opportunity for skill development and allow the game to flow. The game coach should be firm in penalising illegal (above waist) and dangerous tackles (above the shoulder line or "spear" tackles).

If a dangerous or illegal tackle is performed, the game should be stopped and the player made aware of the reason. If the tackle is above the waist and the advantage law rule may be applied, then the game coach can use their common sense, allowing the game to flow, but reminding the player using the voice to keep the tackles below the waist.

2 What does the tackler do after the tackle?

Once a tackle has been made, the game coach should encourage the tackler to release and move away from the tackled player. This will allow the tackled player to play the ball. If this situation is managed well the game will flow better.

3 What does the tackled player do after the tackle?

When the tackled player has been taken to ground they should be encouraged to pop the ball up to a support player if possible. This will help the continuity of the game and allow play to continue. If the option of a pop pass is not possible, the game coach should encourage the tackled player to present the ball back to their own team. If this is done correctly it makes on - the - ground situations much easier to manage as the ball is quickly back into play and fewer players can interfere around the tackle area. This will allow the attacking team to gain faster ball from the ruck, allowing them to continue play.

4 What do the arriving players do?

Arriving players must approach from their own side of the tackle i.e. with their backs to their own goal line.

The game coach should watch out for arriving players not remaining on their feet and falling on top of the ruck.

If this happens, blow immediately to stop the game to avoid injury and award the penalty to the non-offending team.

If the game coach is not sure who is at fault, the scrum (P6 and P7) or tap and pass (P4 and P5) should be awarded to the team going forward.



How to game coach the ruck and maul

6e

Definition

RUCK AND MAUL

Definition of ruck

A ruck is formed when the ball is on the ground and one or more players from each team are on their feet and in physical contact, closing around the ball. A ruck can be formed by two players, one from each side.

Rucks are limited in mini rugby, since players are encouraged to pass the ball out of the tackle. They do however occur, so the game coach must be aware of when and how a ruck is formed. The purpose of a ruck or maul is to recycle the ball after a tackle has been completed.

Definition of maul

A maul is formed by one or more players from each team on their feet and in physical contact closing around a player who is in possession of the ball. A maul requires two players from the ball carrying side and one member of the opposition.

Mauls should not occur in open play if the game coach has correctly applied the tackle law. If a tackle is not completed, the game coach should encourage the ball carrier to pass the ball, and prohibit defenders blocking the pass. In mini rugby, a maul should only occur at a lineout, as players are not allowed to target the ball in a tackle.

1 Arriving players

Ensure players stay on their feet - players who go to ground in this situation are stopping the ball emerging quickly and causing a safety concern.

Arriving players must enter the ruck through the "gate" from their own team's side. This is an imaginary opening which is the width of the players who are on the ground.

2 If a maul collapses?

Maul collapsed deliberately or accidentally. If the referee can identify players who deliberately collapse a maul they should be penalised. If the maul collapses naturally without any infringement and the ball is immediately available, the game should continue.

3 Will the ball emerge?

In a ruck or maul the team in possession is responsible for continuity of play. If the ball does not emerge within five seconds the opposition is awarded a tap and pass. Before blowing the whistle, the referee should use the phrase "use it or lose it" to encourage the side in possession to play the ball. This should rarely happen as the defending team cannot target the ball.

4 Where should the game coach stand?

The game coach will gain benefit from being close to the formation of the ruck or maul but will get in the way if they remain there. Get there and then move back a metre or two towards the touchline on the side which is likely to win the ball. The game coach should position their body at 45 degrees facing the defending side so that they can observe the overall situation.

Dealing with conflict and abuse

Dealing with conflict

When dealing with foul play or player conflict the game coach should use a direct approach in a firm and calm manner and act quickly as it is a teachable moment. Where possible the game coach should caution the player/players rather than remove them from the field of play. If necessary the game coach should ask the team coach to replace the offending player giving them time to calm down and reflect on what they have done. The game coach can use their discretion to allow the offending player to return to the field of play but should always check that they understand why they were removed from the field of play in the first place and have learned from the situation.

Dealing with abuse

If game coach receives abuse from a team coach on the side-lines, the following process should be followed:

- 1 Stop the game.
2. Approach the coach.
3. Inform the coach in a calm and polite manner that if their poor behaviour is not constructive for developing our young players and the abuse continues they will be asked to leave the playing area.
4. If the abuse continues, dismiss the coach from the playing area.
5. If they refuse to leave, the game coach has no option but to abandon the game.

The process above is challenging and therefore we need to set the scene with clear behavioural guidelines for players, coaches and parents/spectators which are well communicated. The behaviour of spectators and coaches is the responsibility of the home club and guidelines can be sent to visiting clubs before the event.

If these guidelines are well communicated the above situation could be handled by simply referring to the guidelines and action accordingly.

For more information on this accreditation programme please see:
scottishrugby.org/clubs-schools/positive-coaching-scotland-programme



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