

U12 Training Program

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SALISBURY RUGBY CLUB UNDER 12's COACHING STRATEGY

"People will rise to a challenge if it is their challenge" Wayne Smith

Introduction

1. This coaching strategy builds on the plan from last season and is part of a long-term development programme for this group of players¹. It states the goals we will want to achieve this season. We will plan the season in training blocks which will allow us to focus our efforts. This plan is aligned with the Salisbury RFC's vision of player centred, development driven and competition supported² pathway. Head Coaches from the age groups ahead of us have been consulted to help inform elements of this plan. We will structure the coaching to focus on the individual, team and task of playing rugby³. We will help each player develop their rugby attitudes (teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship), their skills (technical and physical) and their knowledge of the game (tactics and their application in a match)⁴. Our Coaching Philosophy is covered in detail in Annex A and must be read by all the coaches. Further on in this document is a complete breakdown and analysis of skills, techniques and tactics we will coach (para 4, and Table 1 below).

2. Matches will become more physically demanding and we must prepare our players for this; we will introduce sports specific training into each session. It will be intertwined with warm ups and mini games where possible. This way we can maximise our activity to focus on skills whilst benefitting from doing fitness training within a mini game, at high intensity for short periods. Later in this document is a guide (paras 7 to 11 below) which details the type of exercises to be trained and how they will be incorporated into the sessions.

Goals and end state

3. Our goals are:

- Attitudes - maintain the enjoyment of the game and the rugby values (Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship). Our players need to arrive at every session ready to train, wanting to give their best effort and aspiring to learn and improve.
- Be inclusive and develop our team - all players will have equal opportunities to play (mixed ability teams but also A and B squads for designated Festivals as directed by the coaching team).
- Develop individual and team knowledge, skills and rugby experience.
- Develop the physical condition of each player with sports specific training (aerobic fitness, strength and speed); to ensure they are prepared for the physical demands of the game.

A successful season is not about winning, it is about ensuring our players have improved their rugby ability and they have attained their personal goal of being a better player. If they achieve that, they will feel successful, so will the team and that is the end state we wish to achieve⁵.

What to coach

4. These skills have been taken from the New Rules of Rugby for U12's⁶ which focus on:

- Run and pass accurately and consistently (attacking play).
- Track, advance on and tackle an opponent **safely** (defensive play).

¹ Coaching Strategy Plan Years 1-3 dated Aug 17.

² Salisbury RFC Coaches CPD Handbook (Mick Brown; 2017).

³ Inspiring Leadership (John Adair; 2002).

⁴ Underpinning this strategy is Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning; we are passing on rugby knowledge, skills and attitudes; helping our players to understand before applying them in a game situation. The higher-level learning of analysis, integration and evaluation are areas that we, as coaches will help our players understand by looking at their performances (individually and as a team) and then feeding back to them via the coaching process. Through this, we can unlock their potential and maximise their performances.

⁵ Sport Psychology. Stephen Bull, 2004.

⁶ <http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/regulations/>.

- Forming a defensive line, marking man to man; retreating 7 metres after an infringement when a free kick is awarded to the opposition.
- Compete for the ball once the tackled player is on the ground; and the tackler or next defender is on their feet, allowing them to rip the ball from the grounded player.
- Once the ball is ripped from another player the ball carrier can choose to run or pass.
- Nearest 5 players form a 5-man scrum (non-contested) as a prop or hooker (making the players Scrum Ready), with the remaining players being 5m back from the scrum.
- Hooker striking for the ball in a scrum.
- Act as a scrum half, feed the ball into the scrum and pass the ball away from the base of the scrum, ruck or maul.
- Form a ruck, with no limit on players involved (decision making), clearing away defenders and using feet to win the ball.
- Form a maul (or rolling maul going forward for 5 secs), with no limit on players involved (decision making to hold the opposition ball carrier up and win the ball by ripping it away, or support our ball carrier and retain the ball).
- Contest for the ball against another player (ripping the ball in the tackle or maul).
- Kicking from hand either drop kick, punt or tap by the player to themselves (kicking the ball on the ground is not allowed).
- Actions within the 22-metre line (this is a 15-metre line, but the same principles apply).
- Decision making and communication skills – understanding when to commit players to a ruck or maul; or how many. When to change tactics, and make decisions to unpick a defence or neutralise an attack.
- Ball carrier handing off an opponent below the armpits⁷.

Safety – Scrum Ready

5. The scrum is a restart for the game after a minor infringement such as a knock on, forward pass or ball not emerging from a ruck or maul. With a 5-man non-contested scrum, **safety is the prime consideration**. Players, coaches and referees have a responsibility to ensure the scrum is fair and safe. Our aim is to ensure that all players understand the correct technique for the positions, can collaborate with their opponents to stay on their feet. Players will not take part in the scrum unless the coaches are satisfied they are Scrum Ready. There will be progressive training to ensure all are trained, so they can demonstrate the correct Tower of Power position and scrum technique:

- Solo with no opposition.
- On their knees in a 1 v 1.
- On their feet 1 v 1
- On their knees then feet 3 v 3.
- On their knees then feet as a 5-man unit.
- As a 5-man unit with the hooker striking for the ball, and then against another 5-man unit (we will dedicate a whole session to this, as body positions etc need to improve - this will pay off in the longer term).

6. The Head Coach will annotate player profiles (attached at Annex B) with evidence of the necessary scrum skills at the levels above, before players can scrum in a match. Analysis of the requirement in para 4 above, is articulated in the individual and team skills we need to focus on in Table 1 below. These elements will form the basis of the coaching sessions. The Training Objective (TO) in Table 1 relates to the player profile in Annex B. This means we can track a players' learning and development so we can coach players individually based on their progress.

Table 1: What to coach

TO	Individual Skills	Team Skills	Remarks
1	Tackle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a safe tackle through the progressions (kneel, squat, stand, walk, jog). • Perform a safe tackle in a game situation (eyes on thighs, cheek to 	Defend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive Alignment. • Communication between players. • Advance as a solid line. • Line speed keeping the 	Players: understand the importance of communication.

⁷. Defined by the World Rugby Law 7.1 as; an action taken by the ball carrier to **fend off an opponent using the palm of the hand**. For this age group a hand or fend off must be below the armpits.

	cheek, ring of steel, drive the legs). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track an opponent. Advance on an opponent. Grasp an opponent to make them pass. Understand and demonstrate a correct tackle. 	alignment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusting defensive lines. Cover tackles. 2 man tackles. 	
2	Contest the ball in the tackle: If opponent not taken to ground, the tackler can rip the ball away. If attacker taken to ground then tackler must 'Release, Roll Away'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-align from defensive line to attack if possession is gained from ripping the ball. 	
3	Jump up tackler - tackler quickly onto their feet so they can rip the ball from the grounded player and help form the defensive line (on your feet to compete).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a defensive line and move forward to close down space (line speed). Id which defender will tackle which attacker 	Principles of Defence⁸: Contest Possession. Go Forward. Apply Pressure. Prevent Territory Gain. Support. Regain Possession. Counter Attack.
4	Offload prior to the tackle or pass the ball from the tackled player to another team member.	Re-align the attacking line quickly.	Continuity of attack.
5	Ball retention skills at the tackle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball in two hands, on the chest and then passed or presented quickly. Body posn is long and strong to make the Tackle Gate small. 	Securing the ball and re-align the attacking line quickly.	Ball quickly away from tackle area.
6	Run with the ball and pass in either direction (left and right): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a supporting player. Be a supporting player running and catching a pass. 	Running, passing and catching, linking supporting players to exploit space.	Principles of Attack⁹: Gain Possession of Ball. Go Forward. Provide Support. Continuity. Apply Pressure. Score points.
7	Evade a defender – Avoid contact look for space either side of the defender (space not the face). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a fend or hand off (below the armpits) to prevent a tackle. Use a shoulder charge to prevent a tackle. Get the pass away once beyond the defender. 	Find space and run into it as part of an attacking line.	Use the 'Y' tactic to attack space either side of the defender.
8	Team structure - Understanding positions and team structure, how they are aligned and how to be a supporting player.	Support running as an attacking line.	
9	Patterns - Recognise and encourage creativity from players to move a defence to create space.	Play as a team, supporting each other.	
10	Strong in the tackle - Take the tackle on your terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable and strong position (ToP). Protect the ball. Go to ground safely (legs, hip, side). Present the ball, strong and long, keeping the ball safe. 	Be prepared to support the tackled player being the 1 st at the ruck or maul to secure the ball.	
11	Scrums¹⁰ - 5 man, no contest, but hooker strikes for the ball:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 man scrums must be able to 	Do the same action at the

⁸. <http://www.irbcoaching.com/page=162>.

⁹. <http://www.irbcoaching.com/page=162>.

	<p>Props (TH and LH):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ToP. • Bind to a Hooker. • Understand and execute the Couch-Bind-Set sequence at the same time as Hooker and the other Prop. • Head to the left when engaging. • Shoulders higher than hips when engaged. • When crouching make sure you are “ear 2 ear” with the opposition Props. <p>Hooker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ToP. • Bind to both props. • Understand and execute the Couch-Bind-Set sequence at the same time as Props. • Head to the left when engaging and “ear 2 ear”. • Adjust posn to be ready to hook the ball. • Hips rotate towards SH. • Weight on left leg. • Look across the tunnel for the ball. • Signal for the ball to be fed into the scrum by Scrum Half, by tapping left hand on LH Prop. • Striking successfully for the ball with right foot. • Once ball struck and possession gained, return to ToP. • On opposition ball strike to win the ball, either by hooking or kicking through causing a problem for the opposition. • Shoulders higher than hips when engaged. <p>Locks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bind together and drop to one knee. • Bind to props round their hips, insert their heads in between the hips of the hooker and the props whilst remaining on one knee. • As props engage with opposition, the locks then extend their legs and assume the correct position to support the front row and allow the hooker a stable platform to strike for the ball. • Once the ball is struck and comes back to the locks, either one must control it with their feet to allow the SH to reach in, take possession and then pass the ball. • Scrum breaks up and must either form a defensive line or move to the next ruck or maul as part of a pattern of play. <p>Scrum Half:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed the ball into the scrum, mid way in the tunnel to allow for the ball to be struck by Hooker. • Sequence of the ball feed: SH taps the Hooker’s hand when he is ready to feed the ball in. • Hooker then taps LH Prop to signal the 	<p>execute Crouch-Bind-Set as a unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each player responsible for keeping the scrum up. • Once possession is gained, break up from the scrum safely and then re-align as players in an attacking or defensive line. • Attacking or Defensive line of players not in the scrum, they must be 5 m back from rear foot of scrum. • Players can only advance once ball is passed away from the scrum. 	<p>same time, no contest, but once bound to be ‘Straight, Square, Safe and Legal’.</p>
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	<p>SH to feed the ball in as he is ready to strike.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball fed in, hooker strikes and SH moves to the rear of the scrum to collect ball and pass to supporting player 5 m back from base of scrum. • On a defending scrum the SH can stand next to the opposition SH feeding the ball into the scrum, but cannot move beyond the mid line of the scrum until the ball is out of the scrum. 		
12	<p>Rucks - players from each team on their feet, try to win possession using their feet (no limit to numbers): Attacker taken to ground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackler 'Release, Roll Away' but can jump up and compete for the ball when he is on his feet by ripping the ball from the grounded player, he can then either pass or run with the ball. • Attacker presents ball – long and strong. • Support defenders can 'drive over' grounded attacker to secure the ball (ToP, low body posn, strong leg drive) another defender can pick up the ball and pass it away or run with it (anticipation and quick pass). • Attacker presents ball, secured by attackers driving over ball to clear away defenders. • Support player secures ball and passes away from tackle area. • Understanding of the 'Tackle Gate', the width of the tackled player, ball presentation needs to be 'long and strong', not side on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence – anticipate the tackle, nearest defenders tries to win the ball by forming a Ruck via the Tackle Gate. • Attack – anticipate the tackle, nearest attacker secures the ball by forming a Ruck via the Tackle Gate. • When clearing out from a ruck we must drive beyond the ball to allow for the support player to secure it and then pass away. • Support player passes ball away from the tackle area • Line needs to adjust and re-form for either attack or defence. • At the fringes of the ruck, guard and bodyguard assume position. • In attack use forwards to punch over the gain line and set up quick ball. 	
13	<p>Mauls – formed when ball carrier and tackler are joined by 2 players from either side (no limit to numbers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacker tackled but remains on feet. • Stable and strong position. • Protect the ball away from defender. • Supporting attacking players secure the ball from attacker and passes it away from tackle area quickly. • Defender tackles but attacker remains on feet. • Defender can rip the ball away and try to gain possession. • Support defenders can join to help rip ball and pass it away from tackle area. • Form a rolling maul as part of a team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence – anticipate the tackle, nearest defender tries to win the ball by forming a Maul from behind the feet of the tackler. • Attack – anticipate the tackle, nearest attacker tries to win the ball by forming a Maul from behind the feet of the tackler. • Support player passes ball away from the tackle area • Line needs to adjust and re-form for either attack or defence. • Form a rolling maul and move it forward, making the ball available within 5 seconds. • Defending a rolling maul or 5 seconds or longer. 	
14	<p>Attacks Patterns – understanding how to attack from different areas of the pitch, based on where a scrum, ruck or maul occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of match. • Re-start by touchline. • Scrum by touchline. • Ruck or maul by touchline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of match – attacking formation moving the ball to a wing to tie in defenders before moving the ball back to exploit space. • Re-start by touchline – attacking using runners to commit defenders before moving the ball away from the 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrum in centre of pitch. • Ruck or maul in centre of pitch. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attackers need to anticipate and communicate which way they wish to attack, or use runners around the fringes of rucks and mauls to commit defenders, or attack further away from the break down to use space. • Knowing your posn, adjusting your posn depending on the play, being ready to either carry the ball, pass or support. • Decide and then communicate with each other about which way to attack or defend. • Key decision makers must take charge and communicate the plan. 	<p>tackle area into space. Short side winger drops back, to cover the line if the fullback makes the extra man in the line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrum by touchline – Short side winger drops back, or covers the line or makes the extra man, depending on what fullback does. Line moves from deep at pace into space, moving the ball away from the scrum. • Ruck or maul by touchline – Short side winger drops back, or covers the line or makes the extra man. Line moves from deep at pace into space, moving the ball away from the ruck or maul, or uses runners around the fringes to commit defenders. • Scrum in centre of pitch – spilt line to cover both sides, but then one side needs to be reinforced to create the extra player to out match the defence. • Ruck or maul in centre of pitch – spilt line to cover both sides, but then one side needs to be reinforced to create the extra player(s) to overmatch the defence. • Use of forwards to get over the gain line and set up quick ball to get the opposition going back. 	
15	<p>Defence Patterns – understanding how to defend from different areas of the pitch, based on where a scrum, ruck or maul occurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of match. • Re-start by touchline. • Scrum by touchline. • Ruck or maul by touchline. • Scrum in centre of pitch. • Ruck or maul in centre of pitch. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing your posn relative to others and being able to communicate it. • Marking and tracking your opposite player. • Advancing as a line, closing space down and adjusting your posn relative to others. • Tackling – taking a player to ground, rolling away, competing for the ball on your feet and form a ruck; or holding the player up, forming a maul or ripping the ball away. • Making the ball available from the rear of the ruck or maul as a scrum half or link player. • Understanding which players should cover back to make cover tackles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of match – defending formation moving fwd to close down space (line speed) and identifying the ball carrier to be tackled and taken to ground or held in a maul to slow the attack and re-set the defence – communication is the key to this. • Re-start by touchline – defenders must close the space (line speed), with short side winger dropping back or covering the line or far wing in a cover defence. • Scrum by touchline – defenders must close the space (line speed) with short side winger either drops back, covers the line or far wing in a cover defence. • Ruck or maul by touchline – defenders must close the space (line speed), with short side winger dropping back or covering the line or far wing in a cover defence. • Scrum in centre of pitch – 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide and then communicate with each other about which way to attack or defend. Key decision makers must take charge and communicate the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defenders align to mirror the attack and must close the space (line speed), with scrum half covering the line or far wing in a cover defence. Ruck or maul in centre of pitch – defenders align to mirror the attack and must close the space (line speed), with scrum half covering the line or far wing in a cover defence. At the fringes of the maul, guard and bodyguard assume position. In attack use forwards to punch over the gain line and set up quick ball. 	
16	<p>Kicking – Starts and Re-starts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop kick to start (must go 7 metres) and re-start after a try has been scored. Drop kick from 15m line, after the ball has gone dead or touched down after being kicked into in-goal area. <p>Kicking from hand from a free kick (Free kick following foul play, offside, hand off, lying on the ball, preventing passing from the ground, pushing in the scrum) or in open play for tactical advantage;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From outside 15m zone, kicking for touch allowing the ball to bounce. From within the 15m zone direct into touch. Kicking, catching, calling a Mark and passing away from the point of catching. Getting back to support the catcher. Following up a kick in a line to close down attacking options. Quick throw in – knowing when to use this. Calling a Mark by catching the ball cleanly and shouting 'Mark!' in open play, anywhere on the pitch. Kicking after a Mark is given to gain tactical advantage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment for re-starts to receive the kick off, or to kick to the other team from the re-start. Alignment for drop out to receive the ball, or to kick to the other team from a drop out. Receiving a defensive kick and counter attacking, moving the ball quickly away from the catcher as the defence will move to him. Falling back to support the catcher and aligning to move the ball away to attack. Following up a kick as a coordinated defensive line to apply pressure. Quick throw in alignment to move the ball into space and attack. Team alignment when a Mark is given, either in possession or not. Guards and body guards for rucks and mauls. 	
17	<p>Fitness Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase CV conditioning and work rate to allow for extended game time. Improved muscular strength and speed, resulting in an increase in power for each player. Exercises will all be body weight (press ups, jump squats, jump lunges, abdominal exercises, partner pulls, buddy carry, wrestling, sprint repeats etc). 		

Fitness Training

7. Our players are developing physically and between the ages of 11 and 16 years they will undergo a series of growth spurts. This can throw the balance of Chronological and Biological Age out of kilter. Many boys who experience a rapid rate of growth need to re-learn motor skills as their bodies change. Evidence shows children who increased their physical strength improved their motor skill capability; in a physically combative setting there were also reductions in injury occurrence. Evidence supports re-learning fundamental movement (motor)

skills (motor skills are the actions needed to perform a physical task such as run, tackle, pass a ball); and increasing strength underpins the ability to acquire and refine sport specific skills¹¹.

8. Research states the most effective way to achieve high levels of Motor Engagement Time (MET is the amount of time spent doing a task or skill within which the body's motor system is active) is by **circuit training**. Circuits are organised by function with a different rugby related activity at each station. Players rotate round the stations in a work/rest pattern. Research shows as players get used to the organisation of the circuit their level of MET increases even further¹². In simple terms the most effective form of physical training, given the limited time the group size and the range of skills we must account for; circuit training is a high activity solution supported by body of scientific research.

Demands of the Game

9. Rugby is a multi-activity sport. Whilst there is research for professional players on the demands of the game, there is none for age group players. I have taken the general findings from the various research papers I have analysed and applied them to our situation¹³. In general terms;

- Backs spend more time sprinting (15-24m acceleration distances).
- Backs also cover more total distance jogging, cruising and sprinting.
- Forwards spend more time involved in intense physical activities (rucking, mauling, scrums etc).
- Both backs and forwards tackle with forwards tackling more.
- High intensity play is interspersed with rest periods (the ball is in play for 1-2 mins at max).

Analysis of these demands means players need the following physical areas trained to a high level:

- Anaerobic and Aerobic systems to allow for sprinting repeatedly.
- Sprinting with changes of pace and direction to evade or track an opponent to tackle.
- Recovery from the lying position to playing position.
- General body strength and power for exerting force to grip, pull, push, wrestle and tackle (core stability is vital for this).
- Speed of movement – all round agility.

10. Combining the findings of the research with the demands of the game, allows us to develop a series of activities which will challenge and improve the fitness of our players. Our aim is to increase, over the period of the season, each player's physical ability by incorporating rugby specific circuits as part of weekly each session. The intensity must be high, but the exercise periods will be short, challenging but fun (an example of a fitness session is below). To ensure we meet our aim and can monitor individual players we will need to measure their progress, by measuring the number of repetitions players do for certain exercises over a few weeks. We need to make this competitive, it helps with motivation, so week by week we will try and keep the same mixed groups for the circuits and see which group completes the most reps for each exercise.

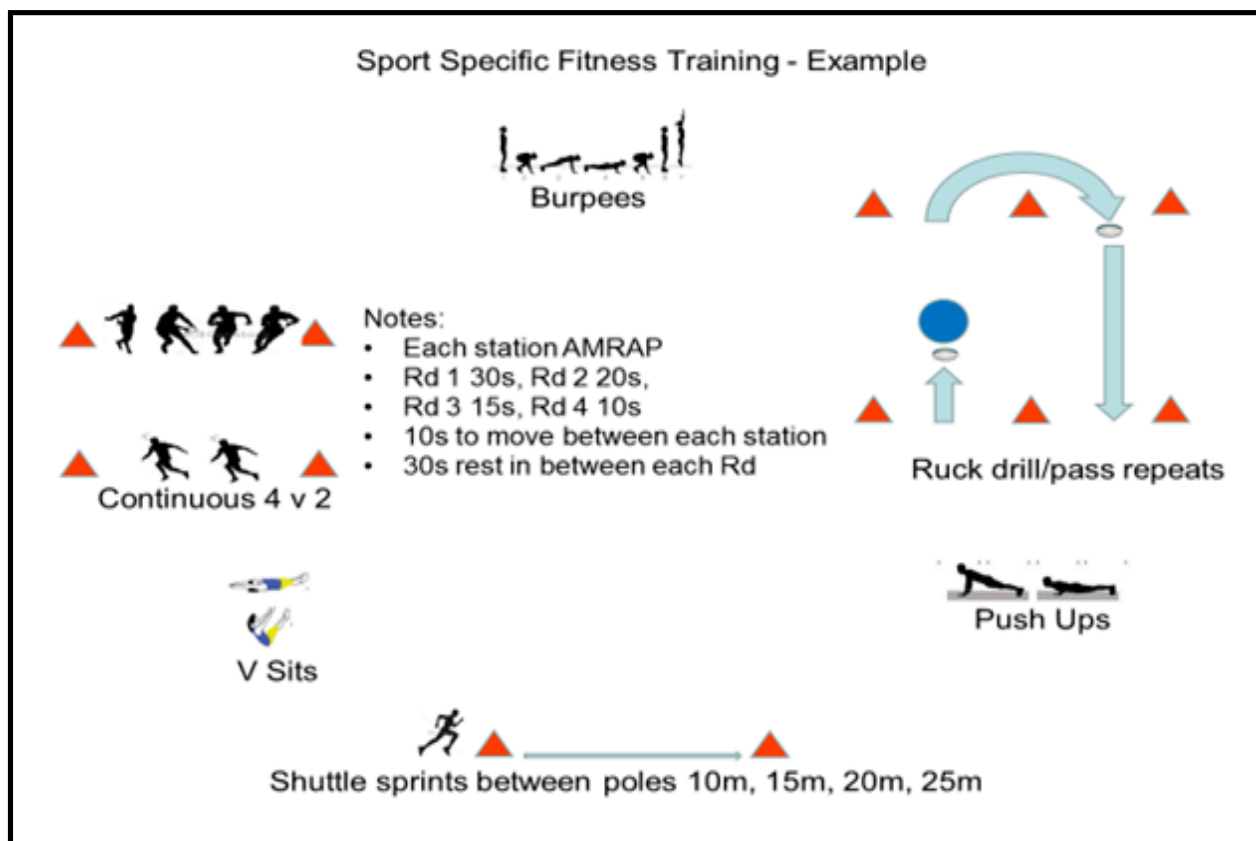
Example Fitness Circuit

11. The fitness circuit will be 4-6 stations consisting a specific exercise, skill or game at each. Players will work at each station to either complete as many repetitions as possible, or as many elements of the skill or drill as possible within the time allocated. At the end of the allocated time they will move onto another exercise within 10 secs. Work and rest times can be altered but the guiding principle would be high intensity with very short recovery periods. An example circuit is below; the aim would be to do this after the initial warm up and before we focus on skills as outlined in Annex D (Annex D shows the two types of sessions we will use). The circuit below is just one example, we will create 6-8 different sessions all with a slightly different focus which we can then integrate as part of the training session.

¹¹. World Rugby, 2011-2017.

¹². Viciano et al; 2012.

¹³. World Rugby, 2011-2017.



Building our team

12. Building a team is an attitude. We have done much to promote this in the last few seasons, but we have more to do. It starts with the individual players, who through a series of shared positive experiences align themselves with each other and our group vision for the season. The coaching team must help lead this, promote it and nurture it; the roles and behaviours we display as team members must be the same to each other as they are to the players. Critically it will help build robust confident characters who look after each other and play as a team. Players intrinsic and extrinsic motivations will come to the fore much more as our players gain more self-awareness of what really motivates them. It is up to us to help set the right positive motivational atmosphere so they enjoy playing rugby, whilst at the same time be prepared physically and mentally for an increasingly robust sport.

Integrating our Team

13. This covers how we integrate general individual rugby skills, into sub-unit skills (forwards and backs) into a functioning team. This is the first season where players will start to be either more forward or backs focused. Where they start in the team, may not be where they end up in their later rugby life or later in the season; but we need to give the players roles and team structure within which to play. This gives the players clarity on their role and what is expected of them. Initially we will start by separating the squad into forwards and backs and then look at key partnerships, such as a scrum half and fly half, front rows, back three, centre pairings and locks (who will double as a back-row pair). These will be interchangeable, so the pairings get used to playing with other players. By doing this, we will establish close bonds within sub-units and then form the units into our teams. An initial breakdown of the squad is below in Table 2. Some players are mentioned in more than one category, this is because they could play in a few positions. But as we refine how we are going to play we can then try and place them as best we can. Remember this will alter throughout the season as players develop, but this does not undermine the need for the core skills to be trained as detailed in Table 1 above (we are developing rugby players with a set of skills, not props, locks etc).

Table 2: Initial Squad breakdown

Ser	Positions by group	Players	Remarks
1	Front Rows	Robbins, George, Witt, Morgan, Greasley, Dixon, Waldron, Peiris, Saunby, Thomlinson, McLeod-Jones, Greasley, Grant, Duell, Kemp	Hookers: George and Greasley currently
2	Locks/Back Rows	Waldron, Peiris, Saunby, Thomlinson, McLeod-Jones, Greasley, Grant, Packer	

3	Scrum Half's	White, Kemp, Wilson, Duell, Florence	
4	Fly Half's	Yarwood, Latter, Packer, McLeod-Jones, Thomlinson	
5	Centres	Latter, Packer, Kolikoli, Cillers, Grant, McLeod-Jones, Thomlinson, Saunby, Yarwood, White, Kemp, Florence	
6	Wings and Full Backs	Yarwood, Knight, Thomas, Florence, Williams, Taylor, Lockwood, Jones, Kinge, Grant, Kolikoli, Duell, Latter, Packer	

Playing Philosophy

14. Based on our current squad our playing philosophy will emerge as the season progresses. But it is clear we have genuine speed and evasion skills when attacking; we also have displayed some real physical presence going forward. All players can tackle, ruck and maul to varying degrees of success and the defence is generally effective although could be more so. Our playing philosophy should focus on our strengths and mitigate the areas we need to develop. As a start point we should seek to build teams capable of going forward; keeping the ball alive but when in contact; recycling the ball as fast as possible; then moving the ball away from the contact area to exploit our speed. In defence, we must be aggressive, based on good alignment, fast line speed and ferocious tackling. For rucks and mauls we must improve our decision making as to the numbers we commit and what players do when attacking or defending at breakdowns. All of this is team focused, everyone must understand where they fit into the team and what role they are playing. This way we can get the most out of the players and allow them to develop. Clearly players will end up moving positions as the season progresses; we should entirely comfortable with that, if anything we should always seek to experiment with players and where they fit.

Game Management Learning and Refereeing

15. As part of our playing philosophy the key decision makers in the team (hooker, scrum-half, fly half, inside centre and full back), need to be able to make decisions based on the information in front of them during a game (heads up rugby); and can communicate to the other players so they understand what move or play is going to happen. During the games at the end of the sessions we will spend some time helping the players learn how to make decisions and tell other players (what decision they take is up to them, we will help them with the decision making process-how to think, not what to think). My plan is for Paul and I to work with each teams' half back pairing and full backs etc to ensure they learn this skill. If necessary we can step in and show them how to manage the game (as we will do in the very early part of the season). This will require other coaches to referee more. It is valuable experience for the coaches to referee, and it shows we are expanding our skills and learning just like our players. Subconsciously it helps align us as a team. I have attached the U12 Laws at Annex C, and we should all be conversant with them prior to the season starting.

16. The initial coaching sessions for next season are listed in Table 3 below; although as experience has shown, we needed to repeat sessions to ensure all the players developed at similar rates. The key requirement is the teams that travel to play at the first matches or festivals must be proficient in their ability to tackle, form scrums, hook for the ball, form rucks and mauls safely as well as the other elements of play. We can make a judgement on the training progression and then alter the sessions as necessary. The training will look very much like the current sessions that we run from 1000 -1200 hrs on a Sunday. But an area that we will continue to exploit will be small sided games; where the players are put into a conditioned game situation, with the aim of increasing learning through experience.

Table 3: Initial coaching programme

Date	Activity	Remarks
3 Sep 17	Registration and training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration & New Rules Brief. Game: Touch rugby – passing, catching, running and looking for space with introduction to physical conditioning. Skill: Tackle – Revision (kneeling, stand, walk and jog). Skill: 5 man scrums. Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	Ground conditions need to be considered when playing contact at this stage.
10 Sep 17	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game: Pop Touch rugby – looking for space and support running with Bleep Test tbc. Skill: Scrum Ready Skills - hooking. 	Pop Touch: once touched attacker and defender both lie down, sp player ball away.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill: Rucks and Mauls. Game play with tackling, scrums, rucks and mauls (focus: safe tackles and scrums). 	
17 Sep 17	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game: Egg Ball and Ruck Touch rugby – closing space by line speed (defending) with physical conditioning. Skill: Kicking and actions in the 15m zone. Game situation play with tackling, scrums, rucks and mauls, linking the phases together (focus: safe tackles and scrums). 	Egg Ball focuses on the present of the ball. Ruck Touch: BC and defender lie down once touched, long and strong present, sp players ruck, ball away.
24 Sep 17	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game: Touch rugby – closing space down (defending) with physical conditioning. Skill: Continuity, moving the ball away from the tackle area from rucks and mauls, phases (attack). Game rehearsals – attack and defence. Contact Game play (focus: safe tackles and scrums). 	
1 Oct 17	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game: Touch rugby – defending & attacking with physical conditioning. Skill: Creating patterns to move a defence Contact Game play (focus: safe tackles and scrums). 	

Our roles and action plan

17. As coaches, we will continue to model the values of rugby. When coaches demonstrate a skill, or drill to show 'what good looks like' it needs to be rehearsed so that players can use it as a model to aid understanding. Sessions will be emailed out the week before training. I will confirm the exact training at the start of the session, prior to briefing the players. Coaches will need make mental notes on the skills players display and record it on player profile post session. Post session the coaching team will reflect on the training to aid planning / development of future coaching (Plan, Do, Review).

Summary

18. As stated earlier this is a living document that will change as we progress. We want the players to enjoy the game and be safe. This plan gives us a base on which to build a group of players that are committed to playing and having fun.

Regards

Annexes:

- A. Coaching Philosophy.
- B. Player Profile Sheet.
- C. Example Session Structure.

U12's Coaching Philosophy

Introduction

1. We will continue to promote the coaching philosophy we have used over the last 3-4 years. As coaches, we must continue to refine our understanding and execution of it. Our philosophy is to create a positive coaching culture which promotes individual and team learning and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes for playing rugby. We will:

- Help develop player character aligned to the Rugby Core Values.
- Help develop player self-awareness, generate responsibility to increase performance utilising Effective Questions (see para 7 below)¹⁴.
- Promote team work.
- Motivate our players by positive reinforcement.
- Give them every opportunity to learn, experiment, acquire and retain skills.

In order to create a squad of players, bonded together through shared positive experiences, who play for each other and whose beliefs and behaviours are aligned to the Rugby Core Values.

A Blended Approach

2. Our approach will build on our current coaching delivery method which we have found works well with this group of players. The evidence is clear to see, all players have developed their skills and tactical ability. Primarily we will use Teaching Games for Understanding¹⁵ balanced with skill explanation, demonstration, imitation and practise (EDIP). The balance is important to aid learning.

3. As an example, when introducing skill for the first time we need to explain what it is, we need to show the players what the skill looks like to give them a mental model as a reference, the players imitate the skill and then practise it; whilst gaining feedback from the coaches or each other. Once they have acquired the skill at a basic level (Cognitive level), we will then put that skill into a game situation to allow the players to execute and experiment with the skill in variable conditions. Our role as coaches is vital throughout this process as we provide the external feedback whilst players are learning skills during the Cognitive stage¹⁶. Demonstrating the correct picture of how a skill or task is to be completed is an integral coaching/teaching tool within this phase¹⁷. The time for which a player stays in the Cognitive Stage is dependent upon many factors. Some may simply never progress from it. But when a player displays a skill without conscious mechanical thought they are moving onto the Associative Stage of learning.

4. During the Associative Stage, the focus is on practise. The skill needs to be repeated to allow for the synchronisation of mind and muscles. Each time the brain completes a skill an impulse is sent between brain and body part executing the movement. The more often this is done, the more efficient and quicker the impulse is sent increasing the accuracy of the action and decreasing the time taken¹⁸. Skill execution can still be error strewn, but less frequent. Skills must be practised with purpose, effort and attention to improve performance.

This can best be achieved through variable practises in game like situations. Again, coach feedback and the game situation are key to improving skill acquisition¹⁹.

5. The final stage is the Autonomous Stage. For a skill to be autonomous players must combine the skill movement in a sport specific situation in a fluent manner. The skill execution is relegated to the

¹⁴. Woodhouse, M. 2000. Attitude Change Technology.

¹⁵. Thorpe, R. (1990). New directions in games teaching.

¹⁶. Magill, 1998, Schempp, McCullick and Mason, 2006.

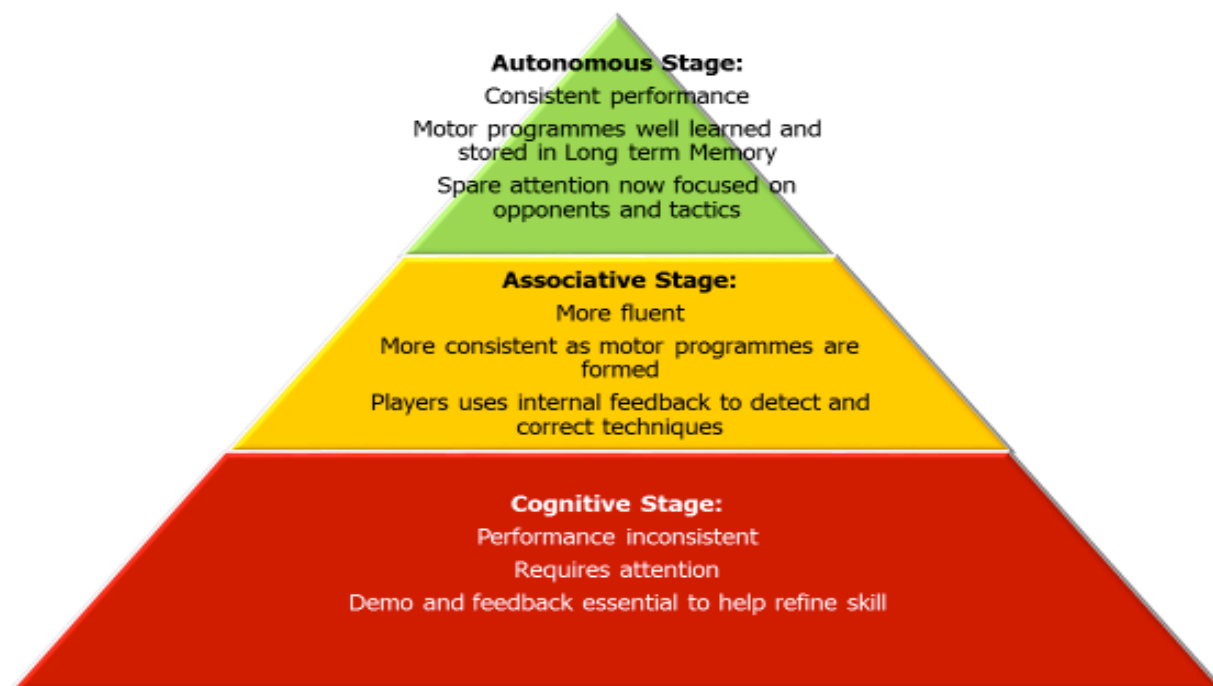
¹⁷. Bailey, 2001, Stafford, 2011.

¹⁸. Coyle, 2009.

¹⁹. Shields, T (2015). Skill Acquisition in Sport – The Journey to Expertise.

subconscious mind, allowing the player to use their spare attention to focus on opponents and tactics. For a player's skill set to remain in the autonomous stage they must be challenged by the coaches so they function at the edge of their ability and decision making (making mistakes make us smarter)²⁰.

Stages of Motor Skill Learning



6. Our role is to help move our players through the stages using our blended approach. We must challenge the players to help them learn. The vehicle we will use for this is the Situational Coaching Model (below) which we have been using for the last 3 years, it utilises Effective Questions²¹.



7. Effective Questions are open-ended, not “why” but rather “what” or “how”. As an example, following the execution of skill or movement pose a question to the player based on your analysis of the practise. Do not give them the answer. For this example, let's use the fact a player has passed the ball but the pass failed to reach its target as they were too close to the defender.

²⁰. Coyle, 2009.

²¹. Hersey and Blanchard, 1982.

- Coach: The question is “Did that work out how you wanted it too?”
- Player: The short answer will be “No”, hopefully they will expand on this, but now the player thinking about what happened.
- Coach: “So what happened?”. Allow them to replay the event and describe it, they are matching the actual event with a mental model from early practises to work out what occurred.
- Coach: “So where were you when you tried to pass?”
- Player: “I was running at a defender”
- Coach: “Okay, so when you let the pass go where were you in relation to the defender?”
- Player: “I was probably too close”
- Coach: “Okay, what makes do you think that?”
- Player: “I ran too close to him and thought the defender was going to get the ball, I rushed the pass so it didn’t get to the next player.”
- Coach: “How you going to are you going to solve that problem in future?”
- Player: “I’ll make sure I pass the ball further away from the defender”.
- Coach: “What other things could you do to help you?”
- Player: “I could try and run at the outside shoulder of the defender to see if that gave me more room for the pass if I got too close”.
- Coach: “Ok, so to do that, what would you have to do?”
- Player: “I would need to change my run, so I would have to use footwork to get into a good position to get the pass away.”
- Coach: “Okay, let’s try that and see what happens.”

Summary

8. We have been doing this type of coaching for a while, but we can all get better at it. We should shift even more ownership of the performance to the players and then help them understand, learn and adapt. We have done well so far, but we can all improve in this area, as coaches, this is the role we play.

PLAYER PROFILE RECORD SRFC U12's

Player's Name:.....

Element	TO	Standard ²²	Standard Achieved ²³ and Remarks
Attack	7	Go forward and can evade a tackler (side step, fend or drop the shoulder) with the ball in two hands and looks for support	
	6, 14	Can run a support line to a ball carrier as part of an attack pattern	
	6	Can pass left and right to another moving player	
	4	Can commit a defender to a tackle and pass the ball away	
	7	Can drive beyond the tackler and get a pass away	
	5	When tackled and he goes to ground, he can present the ball in a long and strong position with 2 hands on the ball	
	13	When tackled and remains on his feet, he can turn his body and get the ball back to his team	
	12,13	Can take part in a ruck or maul as a support player displaying the right body position in a dynamic manner	
	10	Can take a tackle on his terms and retain the ball (strong in the tackle)	
	16	Can kick the ball (punt or drop kick) to gain an advantage	
Defence	1	Go forward to make an effective, aggressive tackle which brings the ball carrier to ground	
	2,3	Can rip the ball from another player and then either run or pass (jackal as part of a ruck, rip the ball in a maul or in open play)	
	15	Can align himself as part of a defensive line and hold his position relative to other players	
	15	Can go forward at speed as part of a line and track a player	
	12,13	Can take part in a ruck or maul as a support player displaying the right body position in a dynamic manner	
	16	Can kick from defence (punt)	
	16	Can follow up a kick quickly and as part of a line to apply pressure to the opposition	
General play	8	Understands his positional role and how it fits with the rest of the team	
	11	Can play a role as a forward or back	
	9	Supports other players when they have the ball	
	17	Seeks to work hard for the good of the team (high work rate)	

²². Standard: defined as 'agreed level of attainment', in these cases coaches expect to see the skill performed at the standard which the player was taught (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>, 2014).

²³. Competent: defined as 'having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully'. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>, 2014).

Example Session Structure 1

Annex C

Time	Activity	Remarks
Pre-1000 hrs	Passing games as players arrive	Ad hoc but it allows the players to start to focus.
0955-1000 hrs	Players and Coaches Briefing	
1000-1015 hrs	Warm up example: Touch Rugby developing into Touch Ruck game, competing at rucks with 3-5 players, or moving from touch to tackles	Focus warming up. Conditioned touch all the players involved – starts the session with a 'whole' game. Parents on the side lines to encourage.
1015-1020 hrs	Water Break	
1020-1040 hrs	Sports Specific Circuits: Focus physical and mental conditioning.	As per example in coaching strategy. Parents on the side lines to encourage.
1040-1045 hrs	Water Break	
1045-1115 hrs	Small sided games in grids as a round robin: rucking game, tackling game etc. Focus on learning skills.	Groups move from game to game depending on squad size, what skills we want to cover – develops skills in a 'part'. Parents on the side lines to observe only – we need to coach this bit.
1115-1120 hrs	Water Break	
1120-1150 hrs	Game play, Game situations and game management play. Focus: Pulling the skills together in a 'whole' game again to allow the players to execute their skills in the game context.	A conditioned whole game, focussed on the skills they have learnt in the skills 'part' of the session. If necessary, we will have a breakout grid, if players are still struggling to apply a skill and need extra coaching. Parents on the side lines to encourage.
1150-1200 hrs	Warm down	Co-located with the parents so we can do the admin brief at the same time

Example Session Structure 2

Time	Activity	Remarks
Pre-1000 hrs	Passing games as players arrive	Ad hoc but it allows the players to start to focus.
0955-1000 hrs	Players and Coaches Briefing	
1000-1015 hrs	Warm up example: Touch Rugby developing into Touch Ruck game, competing at rucks with 3-5 players, or moving from touch to tackles	Focus warming up. Conditioned touch all the players involved – starts the session with a 'whole' game. Parents on the side lines to encourage.
1015-1020 hrs	Water Break	
1020-1040 hrs	Sports Specific Circuits: Focus physical and mental conditioning.	As per example in coaching strategy. Parents on the side lines to encourage.
1040-1045 hrs	Water Break	
1045-1115 hrs	Game play with a skills breakout grid/game to focus on a skill or a couple of related skills.	Groups move from game to skills game/grid depending on squad size, what skills we want to cover – develops skills in a 'part'. Parents on the side lines to observe only – we need to coach this bit.
1115-1120 hrs	Water Break	
1120-1150 hrs	<p>Game play with a skills breakout grid/game to focus on a skill or a couple of related skills.</p> <p>Game situations and game management play, final part of the game will pull all the skills together in a 'whole' game again to allow the players to execute their skills in the game context.</p>	<p>Groups move from game to skills game/grid depending on squad size, what skills we want to cover – develops skills in a 'part'. Parents on the side lines to observe only – we need to coach this bit.</p> <p>A conditioned whole game, focussed on the skills they have learnt in the skills 'part' of the session. Parents on the side lines to encourage.</p>
1150-1200 hrs	Warm down	Co-located with the parents so we can do the admin brief at the same time

