SMALL SIDED GAMES
FOR COACHING RUGBY UNION

RFU
SCOTTISH RUGBY
WRU

3 UNIONS COACHING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Sharks &amp; fishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>To develop evasion / invasion skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Factors**

1) Evasion skills – side-step, change of pace, change of direction,
2) Defensive principles – move forward, ready position

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls for each player</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30m x 30m adjust to suit number of players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>Players 16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 stack</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>Time 2-5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

On the coach’s call, players must run to the line opposite without being touch-tackled by a selected defender(s). Once tackled, the player then joins the defending team. This continues until the last attacking player has not been caught. No more than one defender at a time should attempt to tackle any one player.

**Practice Progression / Regression**

The coach can select more defenders depending on the size / ability of group. The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players. Attacking players should all carry a ball if there is enough equipment. Defensive principles can also be added for defending players.

**Game Coaching Guidance**

The coach should encourage fair play from the players. Tags can be used to help the coach see who has been caught.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Tig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>To develop evasion / invasion skills and increase heart rate for the session to follow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Factors**

**Evasion Skills:**
1. Side-step – focusing on transfer of weight from one foot to the other followed by an aggressive acceleration.
2. Change of pace and change of direction – focus on lowering centre of gravity (by dropping the hips) while staying light on feet during deceleration. 3. Acceleration – focus on aggressive arm and high knee for leg drive.

**Spatial Awareness:**
1. Keeping head up at all times. 2. Quickly moving into space and scanning for the next space to move into.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Balls for each player (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>20m x 20m adjust to suit number of players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2-5 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

Players take it in turns to be the tigger, who must try to tig the evading players with two hands. Other players must attempt to move about inside grid without being tigged. Once a player has been tigged they then assume the role of tigger while the person who originally tigged them is now an evading player.

**Practice Progression / Regression**

The coach can select more ‘tiggers’ depending on the size / ability of group. The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players. Tigger carries a ball in their hands and must make tig using the ball in the hands. No ‘back-tags’ – players cannot ‘tig’ the person who just ‘tigged’ them.

**Game Coaching Guidance**

The coach should encourage players to utilise the space and keep moving.
**Activity** | Chain tig
---|---
**Objective** | Raise player heart rate for following session and to develop evasion skills
**Key Factors** | Evasion Skills:
1. Side-step – focusing on transfer of weight from one foot to the other followed by an aggressive acceleration.
2. Change of pace and change of direction – focus on lowering centre of gravity (by dropping the hips) while staying light on feet during deceleration.
3. Acceleration – focus on aggressive arm and high knee for leg drive.
Spatial Awareness:
1. Keeping head up at all times.
2. Quickly moving into space and scanning for the next space to move into.
Co-ordination:
1. Synchronise movements as a chain to improve speed and agility as a group.
**Equipment Requirements**
| Balls | Balls for each player | Bags | n/a | Area | 20m x 20m adjust to suit number of players |
| Cones | 1 stack | Suits | n/a | Players | 16-20 |
| Shields | n/a | Bibs | n/a | Time | 2-5 mins |

**Practice Description**  This is a variant of Build-up tig where the first person to be caught joins hands with ‘it’ and the two must chase the others as a pair. As more people are caught they too join hands, forming a lengthening chain. Only those at the ends of the chain are able to catch someone, as they are the only ones with a free hand. A variant has chains of four splitting in two.

**Practice Progression / Regression**  The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players.

**Game Coaching Guidance**  The coach should encourage players to utilise the space and keep moving. Tiggers should look to work together and communicate.
**Activity** Octopus tig

**Objective** Raise player heart rate for following session and to develop evasion skills

**Key Factors Evasion Skills:**
1. Side-step – focusing on transfer of weight from one foot to the other followed by an aggressive acceleration.
2. Change of pace and change of direction – focus on lowering centre of gravity (by dropping the hips) while staying light on feet during deceleration.  
3. Acceleration – focus on aggressive arm and high knee for leg drive.

**Spatial Awareness:**
1. Keeping head up at all times.  
2. Quickly moving into space and scanning for the next space to move into.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Balls for each player</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30m x 30m adjust to suit number of players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Players 16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time 2-5 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description** The tigger or octopus attempts to tag the other players. The playing field is known as the ocean. The players or fish line up along one side of the ocean and try to run to the other side without being tagged. In a variation, once the fish run to the other side without getting tagged, the game pauses until the octopus starts it again. Upon getting tagged the fish become seaweed and must freeze and remain where they were tagged, but can wave their arms around and assist the octopus in tagging other fish within their reach. The last fish to be tagged becomes the next octopus.

**Practice Progression / Regression** The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players.

**Game Coaching Guidance** The coach should encourage players to utilise the space and keep moving. Tiggers should look to work together and communicate.
**Activity** | Leap frog tig  
---|---
**Objective** | Raise player heart rate for following session and to develop evasion skills  
**Key Factors**  
Evasion Skills:  
1. Side-step – focusing on transfer of weight from one foot to the other followed by an aggressive acceleration.  
2. Change of pace and change of direction – focus on lowering centre of gravity (by dropping the hips) while staying light on feet during deceleration.  
3. Acceleration – focus on aggressive arm and high knee for leg drive.  
Spatial Awareness:  
1. Keeping head up at all times.  
2. Quickly moving into space and scanning for the next space to move into.  
Landing Mechanics:  
1. Focus on a soft landing.  
**Equipment Requirements**  
| Balls | Bags | Area |  
---|---|---|  
Balls for each player | n/a | 20m x 20m adjust to suit number of players  
Cones | 1 stack |  
Shields | n/a |  
Suit | n/a |  
Bibs | n/a |  
**Players** | 16-20  
**Time** | 2-5 mins  
**Practice Description**  
One or more players are appointed ‘it’. When a player is tigged, they freeze on the spot with their hands on their knees. Other evading players can then free the frozen player by leap-frogging them. Tigger(s) can be changed at coach’s discretion.  
**Practice Progression / Regression**  
The coach can select more tiggers depending on the size / ability of the group. The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players. Tigger carries a ball in their hands and must make tig using the ball in the hands.  
**Game Coaching Guidance**  
The coach should encourage players to utilise the space and keep moving.
## Activity

**Tunnel tig**

## Objective

Raise player heart rate for following session and to develop evasion skills

### Key Factors Evasion Skills:

1. **Side-step** – focusing on transfer of weight from one foot to the other followed by an aggressive acceleration.
2. **Change of pace and change of direction** – focus on lowering centre of gravity (by dropping the hips) while staying light on feet during deceleration. 3. **Acceleration** – focus on aggressive arm and leg drive.

### Spatial Awareness:

1. Keeping head up at all times. 2. Quickly moving into space and scanning for the next space to move into.

### Working off the ground:

1. Get off the ground as quickly as possible. 2. Hips up first when getting of the ground so you can engage your glutes.

## Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balls</strong></td>
<td>Balls for each player</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20m x 20m adjust to suit number of players</td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cones</strong></td>
<td>1 stack</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shields</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suits</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibs</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>2-5 mins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Practice Description

One or more players are appointed ‘it’. When a player is tigged - they freeze on the spot with their legs split. Other evading players can then free the frozen player by crawling through their legs. Tigger/s can be changed at coach’s discretion.

### Practice Progression / Regression

The coach can select more tiggers depending on the size / ability of group. The size of the area can also be increased or decreased to either allow more space or increase pressure on players. Tigger carries a ball in their hands and must make a tig using the ball in the hands.

### Game Coaching Guidance

The coach should encourage players to utilise the space and keep moving.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rob the nest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>To develop evasion, decision-making and ball familiarisation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Factors</td>
<td>1. Ball in two hands, 2. Head up when running, 3. Dodge fellow players, 4. Communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>12 balls (or even nos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>15m x 15m square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>if available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

Groups are split into three or four groups (of four players max) with a nest (small coned area), containing the balls, in the middle of the square. On the coach’s call, the players (one per group at a time) run out to the middle and take one ball to bring back to their nest. Once there are no balls left in the middle, the players can begin to take balls from opposing team’s nests. The winning team is either the one that has four balls in their nest or the team with the most balls after a certain time period (rules at coach’s discretion).

**Practice Progression / Regression**

The coach can increase or decrease the size of the area depending on numbers. The coach can incorporate skills for players to complete prior to returning a ball to their nest e.g. ball around the waist or through the legs twice, or players need to pass the ball into their nest etc.

**Game Coaching Guidance**

Focus on only one or two key factors at a time. Specifically observe and analyse player performance of the key factor. Feedback in a positive manner to correct faults or praise good practice. Coach should watch out for more than one player from each group running to the nest at one time.
Activity 5 pass game

Objective
Develop handling ability within an evasive, chaotic environment

Key Factors
1. Hands in the ready position, with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.
2. Catch the ball in their hands.
3. Ball remains off the shirt.
4. Follow through on pass towards target.
5. Accurate communication between attacking team players.
6. Finding space to receive the pass – movement off the ball.

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>15m x 15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description
First team to complete five passes gets a point. The team in possession must touch the ball on the ground before passing to another team mate (variations can be applied). The defending team’s aim is to stop the ball from being passed or to force an inaccurate pass. Ball carrier cannot move with the ball (variations can be applied). Players are free to move within the grid if they do not have the ball. If the ball touches the ground or is intercepted by the defending team then it is a turnover.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Ball carrier cannot pass back to the player they have just received it from (harder).
Ball carrier can take ten steps before passing (easier). Once ball carrier passes the ball, they have to run outside the grid before re-entering into the game (harder).
Increase the number of passes that have to be made (harder)

Game Coaching Guidance
Introduce, explain and demonstrate the activity then check for understanding prior to starting. Focus on one or two key points at a time. Adapt game to ensure all players are equally involved. Play advantage where possible to ensure flow. Reward effort as well as achievement.
Activity | End ball
---|---
Objective | Develop passing accuracy and strength / type of pass. Can improve spatial awareness, lines of running, communication, decision making and evasion

Key Factors
1. Hands in the ready position with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.
2. Catch the ball in their hands
3. Ball remains off the shirt.
4. Follow through on pass towards target.
5. Accurate communication between attacking team players.
6. Finding space to receive the pass – movement off the ball.
7. Evasion skills and footwork.

Equipment Requirements

| Balls | 1 |
| Bags | n/a |
| Cones | 1 stack |
| Suits | n/a |
| Shields | n/a |
| Bibs | 6 |
| Area | 30m x 20m |
| Players | 12 |
| Time | 10-15 mins |

Practice Description
Run and pass in any direction. Play until a mistake is made or turn over after five touches. Allow one second to pass after touch is made. No player can just stand in a scoring area (5 second limit). Man-to-man marking will encourage lines of run to lose defender / create space. Player must pass once a two-handed touch is made below waist height. Scoring team keep the ball and has to score at the other end of the pitch.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Progress to one touch turnover to challenge players. Players can not catch unless on the move – promotes agility / evasion on and off the ball. Introduce so that minimum 2 / 3 players must be in the scoring zone before a score can be made. Play game with Tags – player must pass ball once tag is made.

Game Coaching Guidance
With young player may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Give a clear and concise introduction to the activity, repeat demonstrations more than once.
Activity: Rats and rabbits

Objective: To develop reaction and evasion skills

Key Factors: 1. Quick feet. 2. Stay on toes. 3. Ball in two hands.

Equipment Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>1 per player if available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>15m x 15m (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description:
Players are lined up in the middle of the square, back to back (both with a ball if available). On the coach’s call, the player named either ‘rat’ or ‘rabbit’ runs to the line in front of them, trying to score a try over the line. The player whose name wasn’t called then releases their ball and attempts to two handed touch the other player before they reach their try line. Once a player has either been caught, or scored a try over the line, both players should return to the middle.

Practice Progression / Regression:
The coach can change the starting positions of the players to increase the difficulty – sitting, lying on fronts, legs crossed etc. The coach can also increase the distance players are standing from each other as they improve. This game can also be used when developing the rear tackle.

Game Coaching Guidance:
The coach should encourage all players to play fairly. Using tags can help the coach identify whether a player has been caught or not. Observe and analyse specifically on the key factors you are working on – feedback to correct faults.
Activity Breakout touch rugby

Objective Developing evasive skills with ball in hand through 1 v 1 game related activity

Key Factors 1. Ball in two hands. 2. Look for the space and accelerate. 3. Dodge defenders.

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Cones</th>
<th>Shields</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>Suits</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Players</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20m x 20m</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description
One small grid (5m x 5m) within a larger grid (20m x20m). Four attacking players (with balls) in small grid and four defenders (without balls) in larger grid. Attackers aim is to score a try over the outer grid without being touched / tackled. Defending players cannot enter the small grid. When touch is made, attacker must go back to small grid and start again. If try is scored, attacker re-enters small grid and must attack a different try line.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Play with 1 or 2 balls so that player or players have the option of passing to beat defender. Use tag belts – players must reach outside without being tagged. Increase to tackling – at later stages of FUNdamentals. Two players work with one ball to bring passing element into practice – aim is to pass the ball out of the area.

Game Coaching Guidance
With young player may need to reduce playing area. Provide feedback on players evasive skills – highlight good practice such as footwork to the group.
**Activity**  Multi direction end ball

**Objective** Develop passing accuracy and strength of pass. Can improve spatial awareness, lines of run, communication, decision making and evasion.

**Key Factors**
1. Hands in the ready position, with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.
2. Catch the ball in their hands.
3. Ball remains off the shirt.
4. Spatial awareness with and without possession.
5. Communication skills.
6. Evasion skills and footwork.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>Bags</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Cones</th>
<th>Suits</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Players</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>35m x 35m</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

Players can run and pass in any direction. Scoring team keeps the ball and has to score beyond the try line (called out by coach). Play until a mistake is made or turn over after five touches. One second to pass after touch is made. Four try lines. Only one player allowed in at any one time. Cannot score beyond same try line twice. No player can just stand over the try line (5 second limit). Man to man marking will encourage lines of run to lose defender / create space.

**Practice Progression / Regressions**

Coach to determine which try lines to be used. Coach adds in another ball so that two games are going at same time. Play one touch turnover to challenge players.

**Game Coaching Guidance**

With young players, may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Focus your coaching on the key factors – observe and analyse critically and fault correct using a questioning approach.
**Activity**
Tag thief

**Objective**
Develop evasive running in a chaotic environment and to develop understanding of basic defensive skills

**Key Factors**
1. Players to evade opponents by using skills such as the side step, spin and swerve.
2. Players to get into low position to make a tag – get foot in close to the player.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>15m x 15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**
All players wear a tag belt with one tag placed on the back of their belt. The coach shouts GO!, at which point players move around the grid and attempt to steal the opposition teams’ tags. If a tag is stolen, it gets put on thief’s tag belt. Game is played for two minutes, after which the tags are counted up. The team with the greatest number of tags is the winner.

**Practice Progression / Regressions**
Introduce more than one tag per player. Split players into more than two teams to increase difficulty. Expand or decrease playing grid to manipulate free space. Introduce the two handed tag grab to increase difficulty.

**Game Coaching Guidance**
If you have many players, split into more teams or play more than one game at once. Observe and analyse objectively – relative to key factors, correct faults both individually and as a group.
Activity | Overload touch
---|---
Objective | Develop passing accuracy and strength of pass. Can improve spatial awareness, lines of run, communication, decision making and evasion. Defensive organisation and communication

Key Factors
1. Hands in the ready position with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.
2. Catch the ball in their hands.
3. Follow through on pass towards target.
4. Time run onto the ball to ensure go-forward.
5. Recognition of space.
6. Communication skills.

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>30m x 20m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**
Start with more attackers than defenders lined up against each other. Once defender makes a two handed touch tackle on waist the ball carrier can:
1. continue and pass to a supporting player
2. form a stable base and offload to a supporting player
3. go to ground and pop to supporting player
4. go to ground and present the ball close to a supporting player.

Once a try has been scored, the attack turn around and attack the opposite scoring zone.

**Practice Progression / Regressions**
Increase width of pitch to create more space and scoring options. Introduce so that minimum of 2 / 3 players must be in the scoring zone before a score can be made. Progress to tackle, using only 1-on-1 tackles (Refer to tackle key factors LTPD stage 1 FUNdamentals). Play game with Tags – player must pass ball once tag is made.

**Game Coaching Guidance**
With young players, may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Try to play advantage as much as possible. Praise effort as well as achievement.
Activity | **4 v 2 continuous touch rugby**
--- | ---
**Objective** | Develop effective accurate passing – under pressure. Will also improve the decision making of the ball carrier and support players to recognise space.

**Key Factors** | 1. Hands in ready position. 2. Catch the ball in their hands. 3. Ball remains off shirt. 4. Eyes up so as to be aware of surroundings. 5. Follow through on pass towards target. 6. Communication skills. 7. Evasion skills and footwork to dodge / fix defenders.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
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<td>Cones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

Four players are always attacking with two players defending. The defenders need to make a two handed touch on the ball carrier to stop the attack. When the ball carrier is touched the game will restart after three seconds to allow the attack and defence to quickly reset. When a try is scored the attacker will attack in the opposite direction (change attack and defence regularly).

**Practice Progression / Regressions**

Coach to determine how active defenders are (depending on success of attack). Coach can move defenders into position e.g.. side by side or Indian file. Start ball in centre of attack or side to create different decision making options for attackers and defenders. Switch in a different ball to change the point of attack and the players decision making process.

**Game Coaching Guidance**

Providing an effective demonstration and checking for understanding is crucial. Regularly switch players between attack and defence, but maintain a good level of activity. Observe and analyse and provide resultant feedback specifically on key factors the players are working on.
Activity | Any direction touch (4 goals)
---|---
Objective | Will develop hand catch and passing accuracy. Can improve spatial awareness, communication, decision making and evasion.

Key Factors
1. Hands in the ready position with palms facing the ball and thumbs together. 2. Catch the ball in their hands. 3. Ball remains off the shirt. 4. Spatial awareness with and without possession. 5. Communication skills. 6. Evasion skills and footwork.

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
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<td>Bibs</td>
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<td>Players</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description
Run and pass in any direction. Play until a mistake is made or turn over after five touches. One second to pass after touch is made. Four scoring areas – only one player allowed in any at one time. No player can just stand in a scoring area (five second limit). Man to man marking will encourage lines of run to lose defender / create space.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Coach to determine which scoring areas to be used. Coach adds in another ball so that two games are going at same time. Expand pitch boundary to encourage increased movement and longer passing. Modify game / play one touch turnover depending on ability.

Game Coaching Guidance
With young players, may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Coach specifics – qualify comments e.g. – “good pass – because.....”
Activity | Drop down touch
--- | ---
Objective | Develop hand catch and passing accuracy. Can also develop defensive organisation and communication.

Key Factors
1. Hands in the ready position, with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.
2. Catch the ball in their hands.
3. Ball remains off the shirt.
4. Follow through on pass towards target.
5. Accurate communication between attacking team players.
6. Finding space to receive the pass – movement off the ball.
7. Defensive organisation (maintaining a flat line).

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Balls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>12 (ideally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description
Two handed touch tackle on hips. Defender drops down to one knee until a try is scored or a turnover occurs. As attacking team plays on, number of defenders will decrease, creating more space. Cross try line and ground ball to score. Attacker options: 1. continue and pass to support 2. form a stable base and offload 3. go to ground and pop to support 4. go to ground and present the ball with sound technique to support.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Player cannot catch unless on the move – promotes agility / evasion on and off the ball. Increase width of pitch to create more space and scoring options. Introduce so that minimum 2 / 3 players must be in the scoring zone before a score can be made. Play game with tags – player must pass ball once tag is made.

Game Coaching Guidance
With young player may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. If players score a try, ask them what they did well to create the score in relation to the key factors.
Coaching the tackle

A tackle is used by the defending team to stop the attacking team moving forward and is an opportunity for the defending team to contest for possession of the ball. Competence in tackling and taking a tackle is critical in developing a safer and more enjoyable game. Recent studies from Australia and the UK have shown that 58% of injuries result from tackle situations, so it’s essential that this aspect of the game must be performed, coached and refereed with due care and attention, with good technique and safe, appropriate practice paramount. This will enable players to become confident and competent in the tackle.

Tackling should be introduced at Primary 4. At Mini level ALL tackles should be made below the waist. This encourages the learning of correct technique and also encourages the ball carrier to improve their offload skills out of the tackle.

Law definition – Law 15 Tackle: Ball carrier brought to ground.
A tackle occurs when the ball carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to ground. A ball carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers.

Key points for players in every tackle situation.

Tackler – contact with opponent(s)
1. Track the movement of the ball carrier and get the feet close enough to make the tackle.
2. Prepare for contact – adopt a body position that is strong, stable and low.
3. Keeping the eyes open, position the head behind or to one side of the ball carrier – never position the head in front of the ball carrier.
4. Release the tackled player, get back to your feet immediately and contest for possession.

Ball carrier – contact with ground
1. Carry the ball in both hands.
2. Protect the ball – hold it tight to your chest with elbows in to your sides.
3. Make contact with the ground with the buttocks and then shoulder.
4. Don’t break your fall with your hand or the ball.
5. Turn towards your team and pass, place or present the ball.
6. Get back to your feet as soon as possible.
7. For specific key points, see the individual tackle types below.
Key points for players in individual tackle types.

Shoulder tackle – front-on

1. Maintain strong, stable and low body position.
2. Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier’s thighs.
3. Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier’s legs while driving with the legs.
4. Continue the leg drive to bring the ball carrier to ground.
5. Release the ball carrier.
6. Get back to feet quickly.
7. Contest for possession.

Shoulder tackle – side-on

1. Maintain strong, stable and low body position.
2. Target and make contact with the shoulder on the ball carrier’s thighs.
3. Squeeze the arms tight around the ball carrier’s legs, drive with the legs and bring the ball carrier to ground.
4. Roll to finish on top.
5. Release the ball carrier and get back to feet quickly.
6. Contest for possession.

Tap tackle

1. Chase the ball carrier until within diving distance.
2. Dive and make contact with the ball carrier’s feet / ankles with an outstretched arm.
3. Keep the head away from the ball carrier’s feet.

Note: Unless the ball carrier is held after being brought to ground, then in Law, a tackle has not been made and the referee will allow open play to continue.

Jersey tackle

1. Chase the ball carrier until within grabbing distance.
2. Grab the ball carrier’s jersey and pull towards you.
3. With head to the side, make contact with the shoulder and arms around the ball carrier’s waist.
4. Squeeze arms tight and slide down the ball carrier’s body to finish on top.
Activity: Pop off the ground touch

Objective: Develop players’ ability to offload the ball during and post tackle/touch. Activity also aids players hand catch technique and evasive skill.

Key Factors:
1. Avoid head-on tackles – try to dodge the defender first.
2. Two hands on the ball.
3. If tackled, drive the legs to keep moving before falling to ground.
4. Look for support by turning body towards team mates.
5. Pass to a support runner coming onto the ball at pace.

Equipment Requirements:
- Balls: 1
- Cones: 1 stack
- Shields: n/a
- Suits: n/a
- Bibs: 6
- Area: 30m x 20m
- Players: 12
- Time: 10-15 mins

Practice Description:
Attackers aim to score in defenders’ scoring zone. The defenders have to two-hand touch the ball carrier to stop the attack. Once touched, the ball carrier goes to ground then looks to offload to a support player who is moving forward. If the player is not able to offload within two seconds, they present the ball. Next player goes in and makes clearing pass. If team scores a try the ball is given to the opposition. Turnover also occurs for a knock-on or forward pass.

Practice Progression / Regressions:
- Introduce minimum / maximum passing distance (either when scoring or after tackle). Supporting player cannot catch ball unless on the move – promotes agility / evasion on and off the ball. Introduce so that minimum 2 / 3 players must be in the scoring zone before a score can be made. Play game with tags – player must go down and offload ball once tag is made.

Game Coaching Guidance:
With young player may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Observe and analyse objectively in relation to key factors – feedback should only be on key factor performance.
Activity | Ball presentation touch
--- | ---
Objective | Develop ball presentation understanding and technique, as well as game sense in a pressure environment.
Key Factors | 1. Avoid head-on tackles – try to dodge the defender first.
2. When touched, drive the legs to keep moving forward.
3. When on ground, extend arms, and with two hands present the ball as close to support and as far away from the opposition as possible.
4. Coach to add in further key factors relating to hand catch during open play as they deem necessary.

Equipment Requirements
| Balls | 1 |
| Cones | 1 stack |
| Shields | n/a |
| Bags | n/a |
| Suits | n/a |
| Bibs | 6 |
| Area | 35m x 35m |
| Players | 12 (ideally) |
| Time | 10-15 mins |

Practice Description
Game of touch, where once ball carrier is touched with two hands, they go to ground and present ball. Defender who makes the touch drops to one knee beside the ball carrier. Defending team must retreat 5m following every touch, to allow attacking team space. Turn-overs occur for forward passes / knock-ons and when a try is scored. Attacking team score by putting the ball down over the try line.

Practice Progression / Regressions
Introduce minimum / maximum passing distance (either when scoring or any time). Players cannot catch unless on the move – promotes agility / evasion on and off the ball. Manipulate ratio of attackers versus defenders to make it easier or harder to attack. Once touch is made, more defenders go down on one knee to increase space for attackers. Increase width of pitch to create more space and scoring options. Play game with tags – player must go to ground once tag is made.

Game Coaching Guidance
With young players, may need to reduce playing area. Ensure all players are active by manipulating the game – e.g. so that everyone must touch the ball before a score can be made. Game coach should remember to emphasise key factors of ball presentation, rewarding effort as well as achievement.
**Activity**  Group touch

**Objective**  Develop hand catch and passing through game-like situation. Also develops spatial awareness, communication and decision making.

Key Factors  
1. Hands in the ready position with palms facing the ball and thumbs together.  
2. Early reach – catch / grab the ball as early as possible.  
3. Watch the ball all the way into hands.  
4. Once caught, turn to identify the receiver.  
5. Keep ball up between waist and chest area – moving the ball quickly across the body.  
6. Follow through and fingers point to target after the ball is released.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>1 stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Description**

Attack always has two more players than the defence. When a player from the attacking team is touched, all the players from the defending team must run in and touch the ball and drop to one knee. Attacking player to present ball accurately. When scrum half plays the ball defence can move – this will force them to use a drift defence and the attack to look for an attack space. Attack has four phases to score until switch of roles.

**Practice Progression / Regressions**  
Increase or decrease the number of defenders to either challenge players or make easier. Allow defence to fan out prior to ball being passed to challenge players further. Prevent defence from moving for one or two seconds after pass to make easier for attack. Coach can introduce defensive principles and change focus of session.

**Game Coaching Guidance**  
Ensure defensive players are onside. Objectively analyse players’ performance of the key factors. Provide specific feedback to players in relation to the key factors highlighted.
**Activity**  
Number touch

**Objective**  
Recognition of the space in the defence and the players’ ability to attack through that space.

**Key Factors**  
1. Scanning to identify space on the pitch. 2. Accurate communication. 3. Catch / grab the ball as early as possible. 4. Follow through and fingers point to target after the ball is released.

**Practice Description**  
When a touch is made on an attacker, the attacker can either present the ball accurately or offload depending on the focus of the activity. Each defender is given a number and when their number is called they enter the contact area and simulate a ruck (call in more numbers to create larger gaps in the defence). The remaining defenders are then told to defend narrow or wide. The attackers then attack the appropriate space.

**Equipment Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cones</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Progression / Regressions**  
Develop on to scrag, then full contact to promote more leg drive and contact skills. Coach can change game so that players have to retreat to their own try line before getting back into the game. Decrease number of defenders to create more space.

**Game Coaching Guidance**  
Ensure defenders stay onside. The coach should use the advantage rule as much as possible to aid the flow of the game. Observe and analyse the key factors being worked on – do not try to correct other factors.
Activity | Wide touch
--- | ---
Objectives | Effectively move the ball wide and attack single defenders

Key Factors 1. Depth and width to attack. 2. Accurate passing – play what is front – eyes up. 3. Decision-making. 4. Option runners and lines of run.

Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balls</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Description

Two wide channels between the touchline and 15 metre line. One large channel in between 10 attackers v 8 defenders. Any number of touches can occur in the wide channels, however only one touch can occur in the middle at one time. This means that after a touch in the middle, the ball must be moved to the wide channel or a turnover will occur.

Practice Progression / Regressions

Increase or decrease the number of defenders to either challenge players or make easier. Increase number of touches in the middle of pitch until players are more successful. Set limit on the number of steps allowed in the wide channels before playing the ball back in play.

Game Coaching Guidance

Touches below the waist. Defending players should work together and go forward in a flat line, communicating effectively. Ensure you observe and analyse and give resultant feedback specifically around the key factors you ask the players to perform.
**Activity**  | **Ruck touch rugby**
---|---
**Objective**  | Develop ruck technique of both attack and defence. The touch game can also develop hand catch, offload and spatial awareness skills

### Key Factors

**Ball Presentation**
- Avoid head-on tackles – try to dodge the defender first.
- On engagement keep body tense and keep spine in line.
- When tackled drive the legs and keep moving forwards.
- When brought to ground, extend arms and with two hands present the ball as close to support and as far away from the opposition as possible.

**Arriving Players**
- Arrive through the tackle gate
- Maintain a strong, stable and low body position
- Chin off the chest, head up, hands up
- Sight the target
- Keep the spine in line with the direction of drive
- Start the drive from a low body position
- Make contact with defender using the shoulder and arms, not the head
- Close arms around opponent
- Drive the player away and clear the ball
- Bind with a team-mate to improve stability

### Equipment Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balls</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Bags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bibs</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Players</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10-15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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![SET UP DIAGRAM](Diagram.png)
CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

- Loss of consciousness or unresponsiveness (even temporarily)
- Seizure/convulsion (uncontrolled jerking of arms and legs)
- Poor memory of recent events
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling slowed down
- “Don’t feel right”
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering

A player does NOT have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion

IF THE PLAYER HAS ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS OR SIGNS THEY SHOULD NOT RETURN TO PLAY

- Headache, feeling dazed or “in a fog”
- “Pressure in head”
- Neck pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Balance problems
- Fatigue or low energy
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- More emotional than usual
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
IF CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED - ASK THESE QUESTIONS

1. Which ground are we at?
2. Which team are you playing?
3. Which half is it?
4. Which team is winning?
5. Which team scored last?

UNUSUAL UNCERTAINTY OR AN INCORRECT ANSWER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ABNORMAL AND THE PLAYER SHOULD NOT RETURN TO PLAY.

FOLLOWING A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION, THE PLAYER MUST BE MONITORED BY A RESPONSIBLE ADULT AND SEEN BY A DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

BALANCE TESTING

A simple balance test may also be carried out. Ask the player to:

• stand heel to toe (with their non dominant foot at the back)
• evenly distribute their weight across both feet
• place their hands on their hips
• close their eyes
• try to maintain their balance for 20 seconds

The assess or starts timing the 20 seconds when the player is set and has eyes closed. If they stumble out of position, they need to open their eyes and return to the start position and continue balancing. If the player makes more than 5 errors (such as lift their hands off their hips; open their eyes; lift their forefoot or heel; step, stumble or fall; or remain unable to set the start position for more than 5 seconds) then this may suggest concussion.
RETURN TO PLAY GUIDANCE

• A player who has been concussed must not play for a minimum of three weeks (unless over 19 and cleared to do so by an approved doctor competent in managing concussion - see web link below for detail)
• AND should not return to play or training until symptom free
• AND should only return to play or training with medical clearance
• This applies to all clubs/school sides a player belongs to and it is their/parents responsibility to advise other clubs/schools of the concussion

"WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT"

CONCUSSION ADVICE
(GIVE TO PLAYER/PARENT/GUARDIAN)
SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN FIRST 24 - 48 HOURS

Before you see your doctor or if your doctor lets you go home, you must go to hospital at once if you experience any of the following:

• Increasing drowsiness
• Worsening headache
• Confusion or strange behaviour
• Two or more bouts of vomiting
• Loss of use of part of the body
  
  For example, weakness in an arm or leg
• Dizziness, loss of balance or convulsions
• Any visual problems such as blurring of vision or double vision
• Blood, or clear fluid, leaking from the nose or ear
• Unusual breathing patterns
DO NOT

Drink alcohol, or take sleeping pills for at least 48 hours, drive a car, ride a motorbike or bike, or operate machinery until fully recovered.

Drowsiness
After a knock to the head, it is quite common for the person (especially children) to want to sleep for a short while. This is normal. However, it will appear to be a normal ‘peaceful’ sleep, and they wake up after a nap. Once they have been medically assessed, if they want to sleep, let them. Drowsiness means they cannot be roused. If you have a concern, wake them up after an hour or so. They may be grumpy about being woken up, but that is reassuring. You can then let them go back off to sleep again. You can do this a few times during the night if there is particular concern. When asleep, check to see that he or she appears to be breathing normally and is sleeping in a normal position.

Headache
It is normal after a knock to the head to have a mild headache. Sometimes there is also tenderness over bruising or mild swelling of the scalp. Some paracetamol will help (such as Calpol orDisprol for children). Do not take tablets containing aspirin. It is a headache that becomes worse and worse which is of more concern.

DON’T HESITATE. IF IN DOUBT, CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR OR NHS DIRECT

Further guidance on return to play is available at:

rfu.com/firstaid

NHS Direct
• www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
• Digital TV
• Telephone 0845 4647
Available 24 hours
AGILITY
Agility is defined as the ability of the body to change direction and stop and start quickly and accurately while maintaining balance. Agility is the movement of the body at speed when it is both balanced and coordinated.

BALANCE
Balance is defined as a state in which a body or object remains reasonably steady and stable. Balance is established when the centre of gravity is over the base of support, usually the feet.

COORDINATION
Coordination is defined as the skilful and balanced sequencing of the body and its segments to produce movement of the body and generate force.

SPEED
Speed is the rate of movement, irrespective of direction. Speed can be developed once balance, coordination and agility are all in place.
SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The core capabilities for developing social and personal skills have been identified as the 5Cs

**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
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