RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

RUGBY SKILLS AWARD

• RUNNING • HANDLING
• CONTACT • KICKING •

COMMUNITY RUGBY

RUGBY FOOTBALL FOUNDATION
RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Introduction

The Rugby Union Proficiency Awards are designed to be a useful tool for teachers and coaches to motivate and assess the ability of their players (both boys and girls).

The players themselves should also find them to be an enjoyable and, above all, positive experience. It should give them an idea of what they are already able to achieve, and also what skills they need to develop.

Teachers and coaches are encouraged to set specific standards for the players using their knowledge of the experience and abilities of those involved.

However, these tests should be supported by regular practice; they are not designed to introduce skills, they are a way of assessing and encouraging a player’s improvement.

In the 1v1 and 2v1 tests, care should be taken when grouping individuals together. The success rate of individuals will, to some extent, depend on the ability of the other players in their group.

These tests are not only for the most skilful players. They are for all players and should be used to encourage and motivate the least able as well as the most able. Every club needs its fourth team props of the future! A player that improves his/her score for a test from one point to two should be congratulated as much as the player who improves from five points to the maximum of six.

It is important that all players are given the chance to demonstrate their skills in a game situation, even if it is a simple 1v1 or 2v1.

Above all, the practices are designed to be great fun.

Safety

It is the first requirement of teachers and coaches to make sure that players are safe.

Check: • The players’ clothing  
• The playing area  
• The equipment, e.g. no hard plastic cones  
• The first aid back up  
• That players are grouped appropriately (based on size, strength, speed, agility and aptitude)

The players should always be warmed up appropriately for the activities they are to do in any session.

Organisation

Do not expect any players to wait too long to be tested. Initially, try and have one testing grid for each group of 4 players, and an assessor/player ratio of not more than 1:8, if possible. Therefore, one assessor checks no more than 4 players at any one time.

With younger players, leaving a gap between each testing area can be useful, but this will require more cones and a larger area.

During individual tests, one player is tested whilst the other one counts, and an assessor can watch and check.

Give a clear and accurate demonstration of each test.

Control each test by initiating the start of each attempt, e.g. “No. 1, ready, go”. The players then attempt the test, remember their score, and position themselves for the next attempt. Then “No. 2, ready, go”. The same player takes his/her second attempt, and so on.

In this way, it can be checked that the players are starting from the correct positions each time, that the tests are being done correctly, and also some encouragement and feedback can be given.

The tests do not have to be completed in one session.

Positioning

Stand where you can see all the players, and the players can see you!
For ease of organisation, the grid shown, or multiples of it, may be used for all the practices

Key

- **A** Player
- **Ball**
- **Tackle shield**

- **Run**
- **Pass or kick**
- **Rolling ball / grubber**
- **Marker / cone**
Rugby Skills Award 1

SLIDE, PICK UP AND SCORE

AIM: To test the ability to slide and collect a moving ball, stand up and score.

METHOD: Player A stands on the line between Cones A and 1 with feet wide apart. Player B rolls the ball through Player A's legs towards, but not past, the line between Cones C and 3. Player A immediately runs after the ball and dives and slides on his/her side to collect the ball.

When on the ground, Player A's back should be towards Player B and at 90 degrees across the grid. Player A immediately gets to his/her feet with the ball and sprints back to the line between Cones A and 1 to score.

Repeat, falling 3 times on each side of the body.

TO SCORE: • 6 attempts (3 times on each side) to slide and pick up the moving ball. • No fumbled or dropped balls. • Each successful attempt scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS: • Slide on your side to pick up the ball. • Body at 90 degrees across the grid. • Get back on your feet straightaway.
RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Rugby Skills Awards 2 and 3

ONE V ONE

**AIM 2 (ATTACK):**
To test the ability to sidestep or swerve past a defender and score a try.

**AIM 3 (DEFENCE):**
To test the ability to make a tag tackle (or 2 handed touch, if appropriate).

**METHOD:**
Player A runs from the line between Cones A and 1 and tries to score over the line between Cones C and 3. Player B moves forward from the line between Cones C and 3 and tries to stop Player A scoring by making a tag tackle. Return to opposite ends of the grid each time.

**TO SCORE:**
• 6 attempts to score or make a tackle.
• Each successful attempt score/tackle scores 1 point.

**TACTICS:**
**Attacker**
• sidestep
• Swerve
• Spin
• Change of pace

**Defender**
• ‘Shepherd’ the attacker towards one touch line

**SAFETY:**
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).
RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Rugby Skills Award 4

PASS OFF THE FLOOR

AIM:  
To test the ability to pass the ball accurately off the floor to a moving target.

METHOD:  
Player A, who is being tested, stands sideways on to Player B with both feet outside the grid. Player B runs in a straight line beyond Cone B2 and makes a target with both hands towards the passer. Player A sweeps the ball off the floor in one movement to Player B’s target. Player B should then catch the ball and run to score over the line between Cones B and C. Player A then repeats the test facing in the opposite direction.

TO SCORE:  
• 6 consecutive passes. 3 facing in each direction so that 3 passes are made with the left hand and 3 with the right. Both feet must stay outside the grid. Ball must be passed in one movement and must not be passed forward.  
• Ball must arrive at Player B’s hands at chest height (target) and at the appropriate speed. Player B must not have to adjust his/her running speed or line. Each accurate and effective pass scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:  
• Sweep the ball in one movement off the floor.  
• Follow through with the hands towards the target.  
• Pass for the receiver should be made so that he/she can run onto the ball.
Rugby Skills Award 5

CATCH, PASS AND LOOP

AIM:
To test the ability to receive a pass, draw a defender, give a pass, loop behind the support player to receive and give another pass.

METHOD:
Player A is being tested. Player A runs and receives a pass from Player C and moves into the tackle zone. Player D starts at Cone B2 and attempts to tackle Player A (full contact), but must not move outside the tackle zone.

Player A draws Player D towards him/her and gives a lateral pass to Player B who accelerates to sprint onto the ball. Player A avoids the tackle and loops behind Player B, moves onto a straight running line, receives a pass back from Player B and passes to Player E.

Both Player A and B then realign between Cones C and 3 and return, starting with a pass from Player E. Player D starts from Cone A1.

When Player A has run 3 times, Players C and E change positions to the opposite side of the grid. Player A is again tested three times, catching and passing from right to left.

TO SCORE:
• 6 consecutive runs.
• No dropped, fumbled or forward passes.
• Each successful run scores 1 point.

SAFETY:
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).

• Loop and then run straight to receive return pass.
• No forward passes.

KEY POINTS:
• Make a target, call for the ball.
• Draw the defender, time the pass.
• Pass before looping.
• Player B accelerates onto the ball.
**RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS**

**Rugby Skills Award 6**

**SWITCH PASS**

**AIM:**
To test the ability to move a defender and make an accurate switch pass.

**METHOD:**
Player A is being tested. Player C gives a short pass to Player A, who runs straight and then changes his/her line of running as shown. Player B should follow Player A into the tackle zone.

Player D, who starts from beside Cone B2, moves forward as the ball carrier enters the tackle zone but must only try and tackle (full contact) Player A.

Player B changes his/her running line to run behind Player A and receives a pop pass to score at the line between Cones C and 3. Players A and B then realign on the line between Cones C and 3. Player C moves to beside Cone C and Player D starts from beside Cone A1.

**TO SCORE:**
- 6 attempts to make an effective run and an accurate, well-timed pass.
- No forward passes.
- Each successful switch pass scores 1 point.

**KEY POINTS:**
- Start straight and then change running line.
- Communicate - call the switch. Turn towards the support player.
- Sympathetic pop pass.
- Player D defends only against Player A.

**SAFETY:**
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).
Rugby Skills Award 7

REAR, SIDE AND FRONT TACKLE

AIM:
To test the ability to make a safe and effective rear, side and front tackle around the legs of the ball carrier.

METHOD:
Player A is being tested. Player B runs from the line between Cones A and 1 and tries to score at the line between Cones C and 3 without moving out of the tackle zone, dodging or handing off. Player A moves from Cone 1 into the tackle zone and tackles Player B from the rear using the right shoulder.

Player A then goes to Cone 2. Player B again runs from the line between Cones A and 1. Player A again moves into the tackle zone and tackles Player B from the side using the right shoulder.

Player A then moves to Cone 3 and Player B returns to between Cones A and 1. The test is repeated with Player A tackling Player B using a front tackle with the right shoulder.

The three tackles (front, side and rear) should then be completed, in turn, from Cones C, B and A using the left shoulder.

TO SCORE:
• 6 correct and consecutive tackles.
• The ball carrier must be tackled to the floor.
• Each successful tackle scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:
• Eyes on the target - the thighs.
• Shrug the shoulders.
• Head behind the thighs.
• Shoulder into thighs and then grip tightly with the arms until the tackle is completed.
• Drive the player to the floor with the legs.

SAFETY:
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).
Rugby Skills Award 8

TACKLE, POP PASS OR PLACE

AIM:
To test the ability to keep the ball available when being tackled to the floor.

METHOD:
Player A, who is being tested, runs into the tackle zone from the line between Cones A and 1 and is followed by Players B and C. Player D starts from Cone 3 and jogs into the tackle zone to make an orthodox (passive) front tackle on Player A using the right shoulder.

Player A must take the tackle, but should sidestep or swerve to the left, to take a weaker tackle. Player A must then use his/her momentum to ride the tackle, get his/her body and the ball around the back of the tackler and immediately pop pass the ball to either Player B or C. Player B or C should run quickly onto the ball, catch it and score at the line between Cones C and 3.

If Players B and C are too far away, or the tackle is so vigorous that the pass may be inaccurate, then Player A should take the tackle, go to ground and immediately place the ball at arm’s length back towards either B or C.

B or C must then step sideways on to the side of the ball, pick it up and run and score at the line between Cones C and 3.

To repeat, Player A again starts with the ball and is supported by B and C from the line between Cones C and 3. Player D starts from Cone 1 and makes the next front tackle with the left shoulder.

TO SCORE:
• 6 accurate passes and/or correct and controlled placements of the ball, 3 whilst lying on the left side and 3 whilst lying on the right.
• Each successful pass or placement scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:
• Sidestep or swerve to take a weaker tackle.
• Use momentum to get past the tackle.
• Take your body and the ball around the back of the tackler.
• Pop pass the ball, if possible.
• Fall on your side in the sequence - knee, hip, shoulder - placing the ball under control last, if necessary.
• Body on the floor at 90 degrees to the touchline.

SAFETY:
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).
RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Rugby Skills Award 9

**BUMP AND PASS**

**AIM:**
To test the ability to keep the ball available when in contact.

**METHOD:**
Player A is being tested. Player D has a tackle shield, starts from Cone B2 and can move anywhere in the tackle zone to intercept Player A only. Player A runs into the tackle zone, changes his/her line of running so that D is moved to the side of the area, takes a big final step and squats to make contact sideways on with the shield (i.e. with the shoulder and hips).

Player A should be in a strong, balanced position with the ball held on the hip furthest from the shield. Players B and C run in support of Player A and call for the ball. They both run into the larger space made by Player A, who has moved the defender.

Player A uses two hands to make a pop pass to either B or C as they run past to score at the line between Cones C and 3. Player A follows on, retrieves the ball and repeats the test to score at the line between Cones A and 1, making contact with the other shoulder and hip. Player D starts from Cone A1 for the return run.

**TO SCORE:**
- 6 correct and consecutive contacts and accurate passes.
- Each successful pass out of contact scores 1 point.

**SAFETY:**
- Where a shield is not available, a conditioned defender may be used.
- Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).

**KEY POINTS:**
- Move the defender to the side of tackle zone.
- Feet wide apart on contact.
- Sideways on to the shield.
- Balanced and strong position.
- Sympathetic pop pass using two hands.
Rugby Skills Awards 10 and 11

**TWO V ONE**

**AIM 10 (ATTACK):**
To test the ability to move a defender out of the way and give an accurate and well timed pass (or run) to score.

**AIM 11 (DEFENCE):**
To test the ability to defend against two attackers.

**METHOD 10:**
Player A is being tested. Players A and B run quickly from Cone B around Cone C into the grid. Player A runs at the inside shoulder of the defender, moving him/her away from the direction of the intended pass, and passes to B who scores over the line between Cones A and 1.

**OR**
Player A continues to run and scores over the line. If either A or B is tackled whilst carrying the ball, then the attempt is finished and the players return to the start.

**METHOD 11:**
Player C, who is being tested, starts from Cone B and runs around Cone A. Player C tries to stop A or B scoring by making a tackle on the ball carrier. Player C scores a point for tackling the ball carrier to the floor and preventing him/her from scoring.

**TO SCORE:**
- Player A makes 6 attempts to score, either by timing an accurate pass while moving the defender, or by running and scoring. Player A may make the pass whilst being tackled. However, if the ball and player go to the floor, the attempt is finished.
- Player C makes 6 attempts to prevent A or B from scoring by tackling the ball carrier to the floor.
- Each successful attempt scores 1 point.

**KEY POINTS:**
- Move the defender away (fixing) from and create space for the support runner by changing the line of running.
- Accurate pass to support runner, who is running into the undefended space.
- Time the pass appropriately.
- Use a dummy pass and/or sidestep, if appropriate.
- Keep running forward.
- Remember - (for the attackers) this is a running and handling test, not a contact, rucking or mauling test.

**SAFETY:**
Group players appropriately (based on size, speed, agility, experience and aptitude).
Rugby Skills Award 12

CHIP KICK AND CATCH

AIM:
To test the ability to accurately chip kick whilst running and then catch the ball.

METHOD:
Player A runs into the kicking zone and chip kicks the ball. Whilst the ball is in the air, he/she runs forward and must catch the ball in the catching zone. Player A then runs on to score at the line between Cones D and 4.

TO SCORE:
• 6 attempts to run, kick and catch in the appropriate zones. 3 with the left foot and 3 with the right foot.
• No fumbled or dropped balls.
• Each successful kick and catch in the appropriate zones scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:
• Kick with the top of the foot.
• Head down.
• Watch the ball in the air.
• Hands high to catch.
• Jump, if appropriate.
• Time the run so that the ball is caught whilst moving forward.
Rugby Skills Award 13

PUNT

AIM:
To test the ability of a player to accurately punt a ball.

METHOD:
Player A punts the ball from the kicking zone to the target zone. The ball must land within the target zone to score.

TO SCORE:
• 6 consecutive attempts to score, 3 with the left foot and 3 with the right foot.
• Each accurate kick scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:
• Head down and follow through with the foot.
• Release the ball onto the top of the kicking foot.
• Right foot - angle the ball towards 10 o’clock.
• Left foot - angle the ball towards 2 o’clock.
AIM:
To test the ability to receive a pass, draw a defender and grubber kick into a target area.

METHOD:
Player A is being tested. Player A runs, receives a pass from Player C (standing opposite Cone A1), draws the defenders (Players D and E) and grubber kicks into target zone 2 using the right foot.

When Player A receives the pass, Players D and E run forward from Cones B2 and F2. Player D tackles A (full contact) if he/she still has the ball.

Player E runs forward, staying in the line with D, but does not try to intercept the ball, which should pass between D and E.

Player B runs and collects the ball in target zone 2 and scores over the line between Cones H and 8.

After 3 attempts, Player C moves to a position on the other side of the area opposite Cone E5, and Player D moves to Cone F6. The test is then repeated kicking with the left foot into target zone 1.

TO SCORE:
- 6 consecutive attempts to hit the target zone and score - 3 with each foot.
- The ball must be gathered in the target zone.
- The ball should not go above waist height after being kicked before it bounces.
- Each accurate and successful kick and score scores 1 point.

KEY POINTS:
- Point the ball at an angle towards the ground.
- Kick the top half of the ball with the top or side of the foot - the ball should roll end over end.
- Kick the ball along the ground, not into the air.
- Head and knee over the ball at contact.
- Point the toes of the kicking foot.
A maximum of 6 points can be attained per test. **GOLD** = 77 points or more.  **SILVER** = 56 - 76 points.  **BRONZE** = 0 - 55 points.  Please photocopy.

An order form for the Rugby Skills Award certificate can be downloaded from [www.rfu.com/proficiencyawards](http://www.rfu.com/proficiencyawards) or requested by emailing proficiencyawards@therfu.com

### RUGBY SKILLS AWARD - SCORE SHEET

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**G** = Gold  **S** = Silver  **B** = Bronze
RUGBY UNION PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Dry-wipe coaching grid
Dry-wipe pitch plan