



# INTRODUCING RUGBY

**BEGINNERS, NON-CONTACT, ALL AGES**



This is a minimum 1 day plan with options for expansion and future development and progressions. The target audience is any new player interested in learning about rugby. It is a gentle, fun and safe introduction to our sport!

The below plan calls for around 60-70 minutes. It is very flexible and can be adjusted as needed. It can be modified to offer multiple days of 30-40 minutes, to suite your needs. Additional material and assistance can be provided to help build your program.

## Suggestions:

- Set up the first game with cones and rugby balls upon arrival. Tried to use same size grid for the games but where a different size is needed for next game, those not participating in current drill, set up the next. Let it be fluid, from one to the next.
- Keep a rugby ball in your hand for the introduction.

### Introduction to Rugby [5 minutes]

Bring the students together and introduce the history of rugby for no longer than 3 minutes. Keep a rugby ball in your hand for the introduction. Get the students engaged by asking questions:

- *'Rugby is an old sport, anyone know which country invented rugby?' – Answer: England*
- *'Rugby was invented when a boy playing soccer, picked up the ball and began to run with it. A player from the other team did not think that was fair and tackled him. That is when rugby was invented'*
- *'Rugby came over to America in the early 1800's. It was played on college campuses all across America. In the early 1900's they started to change the rules. After a bunch of rule changes, football was the new sport'*
- Recap:
  - What country invented rugby?
  - What sport did rugby come from?
  - What sport came from rugby?

## Some Rugby basics [6 minutes]

- Introduce the Rugby Ball. “It is fatter than a football and more pointy than a soccer ball. Everyone gets a chance to carry it and pass, catch and score in rugby”.
- Introduce Catching, Passing and Running with the Ball **(RICH CESTERO)**
  - *Introduce the catch* – “Catching the rugby ball is a fun challenge. Everyone hold your hands up in front of your chest, with your thumbs and **fingers forming a ‘W’**, and fingers in the air. This means you are ready to catch the ball. We also do not want to pass the ball to any players that do not have their hands up, ready to catch.” **See “Receiving the Pass” Skill Card here:**  
<http://www.greatfallsrugby.com/coaching/ReceivingThePass.pdf>
  - *Introduce the pass*. Get a volunteer to help you – “In rugby we do not pass like football (demonstrate), we do not pass like basketball (demonstrate), we pass like rugby (demonstrate). This pass is called a scoop or shovel pass, and you make the motion like you are digging a hole with a shovel.” *Demonstrate and get kids to pass amongst themselves. Quickly and loosely in groups of around three. Get them to pass correctly.*  
**See “Passing Basics” Skill Card here:**  
<http://www.greatfallsrugby.com/coaching/PassingBasics.pdf>
  - *Introduce running with the ball:* - simply show the kids how to hold the ball while running. We will develop this further during the games later.
    - Fingers are spread on each side of the ball
    - Ball is carried at chest
    - Elbows are tucked in**See “Running With the Ball” Skill Card here:**  
<http://www.greatfallsrugby.com/coaching/RunningWithTheBall.pdf>

## Introductory games and skills

Develop passing/catching/running basics further with the games below. *Call for the ball! Pass backwards! Use the skills learnt earlier!*

### Passing basics and other relays (15 minutes)

Rugby Relays are a great way to get the kids familiar with rugby terms and also comfortable holding a ball. Lead them in a few quick relay races while teaching them important aspects

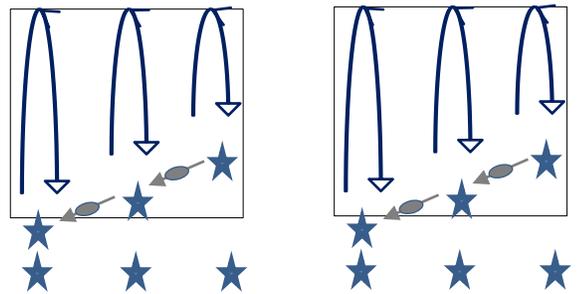
of the game such as how to hold a ball, what a try is, how to pass and catch a ball, and other fun things they can do.

- **BASIC PASSING GAME: (KATE SANDUSKY).** In a coned grid 15yd/15yd. Players pass the ball between themselves *in a line* while running slowly from one end to the other.

Introduction & Focus: Introduce this game as an introduction to running, passing and catching the ball. This is where it all starts. The kids were previously shown these basics: reinforce the following:

- Pass rugby-style: ‘shovel or scoop pass,
- Catch hands in front of chest/fingers ‘W’ (stretch out to one side to receive ball)
- Hold ball with both hands, transfer to other side and shovel pass to next person,
- Players must position themselves (after passing) to receive the ball back. Slow down, position behind the person they just passed to.

Example, with our presentation, and only (12) players, let’s do **TWO** GRIDS (see diagram to right) side by side. This allows a race. Each team would have their own grid, the 2 grids next to each other, and 2 groups of 3 in each grid. Teams start with 1<sup>st</sup> group, they run *passing in lines* to the other end of the grid **turn and run back**, hand off to 2<sup>nd</sup> group who does same, and so forth. First try maybe not a race, get the hang of it. Then progress to a race between the 2 teams, at a faster pace. Declare winner.

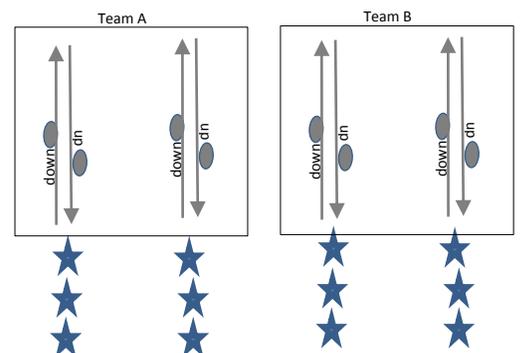


- **BASIC RUNNING W/BALL & PICKING UP BALL GAME: (BAHA).** In a coned grid 15yd/15yd. Players learn to control the ball, and to pick it up while running at pace.

Introduction & Focus: Continuing introduction to running and controlling the ball. It is very important to be able to pick a ball up while running at pace. Reinforce the following:

- When placing ball use control to place it, don’t throw or drop it. Ball should not move.
- For place and pick, bend knees.
- For pick: use one hand to scoop (under ball) other to control on top.

Example: with our group: use both grids same as previous game. Again; same two teams, this time each team is divided in 2 groups of 3. Each 2 groups of 3 lines up (single file), at one end of each grid, first player with ball in hand. On command first player of each team runs out 10 yds (hold ball correctly, per



prior demo), places the ball on the ground (don't let ball roll; bend knees and PLACE on ground), then continue running without the ball to the end line, they must bend and touch the line then return to pick the ball up with two hands, bend knees (scoop the ball), run and give a "gut pass" to the next player in line. Continue until complete – winning team is the one that finishes BOTH groups first. Announce how many times to do this. Declare winner.

*These kinds of games can be developed as progression is made with many similar games ....*

- **CIRCLE PASSING:** (BEN BJORGE). Players form a large circle with about 2 yards between each. Pressure passing.

*Introduction & Focus:* A simple passing game, we introduce pressure situations to test the players. Reinforce the following:

- Build towards increasing speed of pass
- Maintain form and technique of previous games

*Example:* With our numbers, form two equal teams (circles) so that they can compete. Start by having players attempt to complete passes around the entire circle without dropping the ball. First facing inwards, then outwards. Pass left, pass right. Maybe change during game. See which group can do it quickest. Once complete: *progression to:* "runner vs passer" game: one player in the circle with ball, he passes left to closest, then sprints around the outside of the circle while other players pass the ball around the circle. Passer aims to beat the passers.

*This circle passing drill can also be developed with additional games ....*

### Simply fun games (12 minutes)

- **BULLDOG (SHARKS & MINNOWS):** (RICH CESTERO). Old school Bulldog: the whole group participates in a grid of approximately 20/20 yards.

*Introduction & Focus:* We will use this game to promote running, vision, evasion, and pressure passing (at *progression*). Reinforce the following:

- Focus here is mostly evasion. Keep eyes on 'bulldogs' and choose moment to dart though to other side.
- 'Bulldogs': focus on one player at a time. Follow & keep in front of him/her.
- Progression (with balls and passing): look to offload, correctly and with form discussed, prior to 'contact' with 'bulldogs';

Example: select 2x 'bulldogs' to stand in the middle of the play grid. All remaining players stand at one end of the grid. The aim of the game is to run from one end of the grid to the other, without being 2-hand tagged around the waist by the bulldogs. When a player is caught, they become a bulldog themselves. The winner is the last player 'free'.

Progression: start again as above; but introduce a few balls to the runners; and Bulldogs *can only tag a ball-carrier*. This encourages PASSING.

View sample here: our game is based on this but without the rugby balls:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzM1gUmeGQE&feature=share&list=PL38C9469639AABD89>

- **RATS & RABBITS: (KATE SANDUSKY)**. All kids participate at the same time, in pairs, reaction game!

Introduction & Focus: Kids will have a great time switching from offense to defense in this game of quick reactions. This will better equip the students for game-like, pressure situations.

Reinforce the following:

- Don't cheat! Move only when instructed.
- Prepare your body for explosive movement

Example: All kids at same time, two long equal lines, in pairs facing each other, 2 yards apart. Behind each line of kids is a 'home base' about 15 yards away. Coach calls 'Rabbits' or 'Rats' and that whole line turns and sprints to 'home base'. Object is for other line to catch opposite player before they reach the base. Progression: kids sit back to back, lie on stomach, back, etc.

View image here: [http://www.irishrugby.ie/playrugby/rats\\_and\\_rabbits.php](http://www.irishrugby.ie/playrugby/rats_and_rabbits.php)

### Building skill and awareness (10 minutes)

- **SMALL SIDE TAG GAMES: 1VS1, 2VS1 ETC.** Starting to put it all together.

Introduction & Focus: Putting their skills to the test one on one and then working together in small teams will help prepare kids for an actual rugby game. We are starting to build skills, awareness and vision. Reinforce the following:

- Make sure they are using passing, catching and running form from 1<sup>st</sup> lesson!
  - Running: Fingers are spread on each side of the ball, Ball is carried at chest, Elbows are tucked in
  - Pass: rugby-style: 'shovel or scoop pass
  - Catch: hands in front of chest/fingers 'W' (stretch out to one side to receive ball)

**Note:** with our numbers, we should do two stations at the same time, to allow quick recycling through the games. Video: this is standard stuff but this link shows an example of 1vs1 and 2vs2: <http://vimeo.com/18094933>

**SIMPLE 1vs1: (RICH CESTERO).** *coned grid 10yd/10yd.* Start with a simple 1vs1: ball-carrier attacks defender, tries to evade, and score a try at the end-line. Defender: must do 2 handed tag around waist. One chance each.

**Focus on:**

- Ball-carrier approach defender on small steps, feint, left-right, ball in 2 hands.
- Defender, also on small steps, ready to follow feint.

**PROGRESS TO 2vs1, DRAW & PASS: (RICH CESTERO).** *Same 10/10yd grid.* Two ball-carriers vs. 1 defender. First do demonstration, walk through the game yourself or use one of the ball-carriers. The goal here is to: hold ball in two hands, run at defender and move to left or right in order to force them to defend you (and follow you). This opens up space for your team-mate; look at team-mate, pass at chest height in front of him. Then follow and continue support of person you passed the ball to. See here for the 'draw & pass':

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQtu9jZG7Ds&feature=share&list=PL38C9469639AABD89>

**These games can be further developed with additional games - increase attackers and/or defenders (2vs2, 4vs 2, (many options)**

Putting it all together (15 minutes)

**SCRIMMAGE (SIMPLE TOUCH RUGBY): (KATE & RICH C).** Kids apply the skills they learned earlier in class. Simple 2-hand touch around the waist. Tagged player must pass within 3-count, he must not over-run the tag spot (3 steps maximum then pass!). Tagger and defenders, after tag retreat to your side and allow continuity. Unlimited tags until infringement.

Review and wrap

**(EVERYONE PLEASE ADD ANYTHING YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT).** As time and circumstances allow: quick review/questions - everything that you went over throughout the training and emphasize some of the following: what a try is and how many points it is worth, the name of the USA National Teams, and anything else that you may have covered, etc. Or anything you think is relevant.