



## Coaching Cards

Under 12



England  
Rugby



# SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

## Allow players to be creative

### The child:

#### Can explore and discover for themselves ways of solving problems

- The child should be presented with challenges on which to work and encouraged to come up with their own solutions.

### Ideas

Coaches can present new challenges to the players: less/more defenders; defenders rushing up; outside channels where no defenders are allowed; weak defenders; strong defenders etc.

#### Is confident to take risks with skills (e.g. overhead passes, behind the back pass)

- The child should be encouraged to, and supported in, trying new skills in both practice and matches.

### Ideas

All games and activities are suitable: ask the players to use different ways to propel and pass/receive the ball (e.g. one handed, overhead, kicking)

#### Sees mistakes as a valuable part of learning

### Ideas

Use a variety of games to create a fear-free playing environment. Praise the child for effort. Use questioning: what did we do really well? What can we improve upon for next time? How might you do that differently and why?

# SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

## Take on different roles

### The child:

#### Plays in different positions, including play maker (scrum half, outside half)

- The coach should ensure that the opportunity is provided for the child to experience different positions in practice and competition; this includes, as first receiver, in the scrum and as kicker.

### Ideas

Rotate players in practices and even in matches; focus on the player experience rather than the outcome.

#### Leads a team/unit/practice

- Initially individually, in small groups/pairs and gradually over weeks, in larger groups, ask the child to lead a warm up, practice or skill. Even if it is part of a larger activity led by the coach, children should be provided with the opportunity to lead the session.

### Ideas

Ask players to plan a warm-up/game/skills activity and give each player the opportunity to deliver. Develop to team practice and, where appropriate, allow a player to deliver in other age groups.

# WHAT DO CHILDREN WANT?

---

## Children of this age tell us...

**We enjoy playing most when playing with their friends**

### **U12 like the best**

- Having fun
- Being part of a team
- Enjoyment of the game

# SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

## Take on different roles

### The child:

**Is used in different ways (ball carrier, support runner, decoy runner, kicker, thrower)**

- Although there may be players at this age more able to fulfil these roles, children should be provided with the opportunity to experience them. It is difficult at this age to assess the potential of the child. By demonstrating confidence in the child the coach will assist in building their confidence in addition to increasing their game understanding.

### Ideas

In coaching games and competitive matches do not stereotype players. Encourage them to be the first receiver and support them in their efforts. Remain positive when helping to improve confidence.

All small sided games are relevant for this: Rugby League type games encourage passing off the floor, receiving and carrying. Encourage all players to try kicking on the fourth tackle for example.

# PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT

## Perform with accuracy, fluency, control and consistency

### The child can:

#### Pass and then support to receive a second pass

- The child does not pass and tail off to admire their pass. They work hard to get into a position to support and be ready to receive the ball again.

### Ideas

Small sided games (3v3 and 4v4) or Bonus Point Tag

#### Run, kick and gather

- The child can kick while running and gather the ball, either their kick, or that of a teammate or opponent.

### Ideas

Aussie rules, Gaelic football, Rugby tennis, Bonus Point Tag or a conditioned game

#### Can change direction to move defenders and time a pass to a supporting player

- The child is able to carry the ball and can change direction to move the defender to create space for the support player, and then pass to the support player to exploit the available space.

### Ideas

Small sided games (small space)

# PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT

---

## Understand importance of the warm up and cool down

### The child can:

#### Explain the benefits of a warm up and cool down

- The child is able to talk to the coach/group or design a poster that explains the reasons for, and benefits of, a warm up and cool down (to include mental and physical).

### Ideas

Ask children individually or as part of a group: Why do we warm up and cool down? How do we warm up? What would your warm up look like? Ask them to design a poster, the best one or a combined version goes on the club website.

#### Can perform/lead the warm up and cool down

- The child is able to warm up/cool down on their own and as they become more confident, work with a partner and eventually lead a small group.

### Ideas

The parents or coach monitor the individual, pair and small group, and ask them what they are doing and why. The children can submit a brief plan and talk it over with parents.

# PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT

---

## Understand the benefits of physical exercise and being healthy in relation to Rugby Union

### The child:

#### Can explain benefits of being fit for rugby

- The child is able to explain to the coach or a partner or a parent why it is important to be fit and how it affects performance.

### Ideas

Discuss why we need to be fit for life and for rugby. What might the difference be? Can they design a poster/information leaflet for the website?

#### Makes efforts to establish and maintain levels of fitness

- The child works hard to get fit and stay fit, through other sports, within the coaching session and through games.

### Ideas

Simple personal fitness diaries showing self-improvement (not competition with others). Coach outlines improvement in performance (allied to their fitness levels). Include parents and reward frequency and improvements.



# GAME UNDERSTANDING

## The children can solve problems using the Principles of Play

### The child:

- **Can demonstrate all the Principles of Play in competitive situations**
- **Go forward towards opponents try line (attack) and towards opponent (defence)**
- **Support**  
Get into a position where they provide a passing option (attack) or defensive cover (defence)
- **Continuity**  
Contribute to keeping the ball available as quickly as possible (attack) or continue to harry in defence
- **Pressure**  
Maintain pressure through support and go forward (attack and defence)
- **Communication**  
Able to inform where they are and where they will be
- **Contest possession in a variety of game/practice situations**

The child is able to compete and overcome problems by using the above principles. The coach should be precise on the importance of communication and what it means. What are they communicating, how and when?

### Ideas

All small sided/conditioned games

# GAME UNDERSTANDING

## Understand why and explain and execute next steps

### The child can:

#### Recognise and suggest patterns of play that will increase chances of success

- The child is able to see patterns in attack and defence that will enable them to be successful: they begin to 'read' the game.

### Ideas

Small sided games in confined space/open space. Condition defence and ask questions on how they are defending – what does that mean? Do the same for attack. Use of questioning technique to draw out players thoughts and observational analysis.

#### Show awareness and anticipation in changing game situations

- The child is able to react to the changing environment: size and shape of pitch, numbers/positioning/pace of defenders.

### Ideas

Mismatch Tag, Broken Field Tag, and try changing the numbers of attack/defence.

Ask players to anticipate the next play – into contact or off-load, kick, pass or run.

# GAME UNDERSTANDING

## Understand why and explain and execute next steps

### The child can:

#### Evaluate and adapt actions in pressure situations

- The child is able to (on a number of occasions) adjust their actions to best suit the situation; for example, s/he doesn't off-load the ball to a teammate who is in a worse position than themselves, s/he drives over the ball when the first defender is threatening where s/he might have tried to pick up the ball.

### Ideas

Most games, condition the defence, and technical area practice – allow time for player reflection, create a fear-free environment.

#### Choose and vary skills and tactics to suit the situation in a game

- The child is able to (on a number of occasions) use skills that best suit the tactical situation: for example s/he passes overhead to avoid the defender; uses a miss-pass to exploit space; tries a cross kick to the unmarked winger.

### Ideas

Most games are suitable; use of the technical area to fine tune skills. The coach should actively encourage creativity and exploration. Praise intent and coach the skills that help the intent to be more successful.

# SKILL FOCUS

---

## The ability to support

### The child:

#### Can support team members (behind, deep, close, wide, decoy)

- The child understands Magic Diamond and the importance of supporting from behind and from depth. S/he will also be able to support wider when in space, and act as a decoy runner.

### Ideas

Broken Field Tag, Channel Game, small pitch, wide pitch, off-load touch and miss-match.

#### Works hard to support the ball carrier/tackler

- The child works hard off the ball to support their teammate/s. Once s/he has passed the ball, made a tackle, run a decoy, s/he works hard to get into a position to continue to contribute.

### Ideas

Most games and suitable: uneven numbers, Truck & Trailer, small pitch, big pitch, Fijian Touch, miss-match

# SKILL FOCUS

## Contact

### The child:

#### Can safely perform a side and rear tackle through the progressions

- Kneel – squat – standing – walking – jogging

#### Is able to tackle (side and rear)

- The child is able to demonstrate and explain the technique of tackling through the progressions: Strong position – looking up (through eyebrows) – straight back – head behind/to the side – contact with the shoulder and drive – wrap the arms and keep hold.

### Ideas

Try wrestling to build confidence. Pair practice in technical area: ask them to observe teammates tackle and feedback to each other to help create a mental picture of the tackle technique. Score them and their partner out of three and explain why: one needs a lot of work, two is almost there but there is something missing (e.g. arms not wrapped round) and three really good.

#### Often performs a (safe) tackle in a game situation

- The child is able to perform a tackle in a game situation (it is important not to highlight a child's unwillingness to tackle, it will depend on their confidence).

### Ideas

Narrow and short pitch games to ensure tackling takes place, and help to build confidence through praise and reinforcement, even where there might be a grasp tackle.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

---

**Want something different?**

**Check out the Skills Series with Eddie Jones**

([www.englandrugby.com/skillsseries](http://www.englandrugby.com/skillsseries))

**Familiarise yourself with Regulation 15**

([www.englandrugby.com/regulations](http://www.englandrugby.com/regulations))

**Age Grade Codes of Practice – Are you in?**

([www.englandrugby.com/codesofpractice](http://www.englandrugby.com/codesofpractice))

**Are you aware of what courses are available?  
Find your closest course now**

([www.englandrugby.com/olcb](http://www.englandrugby.com/olcb))