

SMALL BLACKS U13 PLANNING



PLAYING RUGBY U12-U13

This age group usually has long-term behaviors already set in concrete, but they also adapt and change quickly. Many of them are used to new teachers and they mix more with adults at this age, so when a new coach comes along, these behaviours you don't like can be changed quite quickly.

Techniques used in lower grades may seem a little tired by the time you get to this age group, but most of them still work. Give them all structure to work in. Before their mouths open, give them your 10 commandments. Boys in particular need good guidelines around them. You only have them for an hour so keep them busy and they will be happy. Being happy and the fun element is the product of good skill development. It is not a separate drill. Giving your team fun games is not the answer because your job is to develop their rugby skills and not just be the fun coach.

You must treat them like 12-year-olds, not little All Blacks. Become familiar with what's in and what's not. Make sure you are not what's not! Kid's language changes, so it is important that you pick up on the slang as quickly as possible. Believe me; you don't want to be a coach who is out of touch. What do they like to watch on TV? You need to become familiar, although not an expert, with what happens in their lives.

At this age you must give them an understanding of the game. Let them know their roles and responsibilities. This is the time to begin explaining why. Begin to box your players - body type, experience and skill levels starts to determine the team's look and feel. This doesn't necessarily mean once a wing, always a wing. It comes back to being clear in setting the players' roles and responsibilities on the field.

Be honest - give short reasons for your decisions.

Praise carefully here and avoid artificial praise and awards. These are very see-through. Praise should simply come from them trying their best, not for when it's good and definitely not all the time. There is nothing worse for this grade or their parents, to see the "whose turn is it for the player of the day award?"

I am beginning to develop 'pre-control': vision and decision-making before the ball arrives.

I can attack and defend with a high level of complexity.

I can defend with power and aggression.

I can kick the ball with a wide range of techniques.

I am generally pre-pubescent, but some size and weight differences related to growth are very evident.

I can control and change the rhythm of play.

I am beginning to understand the concept of space.

PLANNING AND ORGANISING A PRACTICE

“Failing to plan is planning to fail”

Planning

By maintaining a coach’s diary over the season, you can make notes on individual coaching sessions, record performance, highlight areas for further coaching, and note any injuries. The coach’s diary can be invaluable as a future reference for planning.

Once you have a structure, and have identified your objectives and content for your coaching session, you are then ready to complete the fine points of your session plan. Keep in mind that some of your objectives will be attainable in one coaching session, while others may take a number of sessions or even an entire season to attain.

Remember... you want to:

- Catch Them - kids need to be motivated and a simple game or activity will help.
- Coach Them - Select one key skill at a time. Introduce technique.
- Practice Them - you need to give ample opportunity for players to learn the skill.

Organisation

Before a rugby practice can start the coach needs to plan the session. Just turning up with a bag of balls isn’t good enough.

How Many Players Do You Have?

Depending on your grade and availability of children, this will vary.

The important things to remember is that you need enough equipment and enough room to carry out your practice.

What Equipment Do You Need?

There is a large array of rugby gear to use nowadays, but this can sometimes cloud what you are trying to achieve at your practice.

Essential Equipment List

- A Whistle - A whistle is always a good indicator for children to STOP or START an exercise, simulate game situations and a vital tool for keeping control of your practices. It can also be a good way to save your voice for getting the attention of the players.
- Balls - Make sure you have enough balls (absolute minimum is four balls). The more times a player has a ball in their hands during practices, the more opportunity there is for skill development. Make sure that the balls are the recommended size for your players.
- Cones - These are really handy in marking out an area, grids, relays and line formations. They clearly define the playing areas for your games and activities. Great for setting boundaries. The more the better!

- Hit Shields & Tackle Bags - Although handy for contact situations, these aren't a necessity for junior rugby practices. If you are going to use them make sure they are the appropriate size.
- Flags - Good for evasion skills, ie. side-step, swerve, etc.
- Bibs - Essential for modified games and team runs.
- Mouthguards - Needed in all contact situations and practices.

Major Considerations

The Conditions - You need some ground to practise on and depending on your personal situation this may vary, but you can get away with a very small area e.g. 20m x 20m if needed. Half a field is a good rule of thumb.

Make sure you define your boundaries. You also need to consider the weather. Do you have a plan if it rains?

Check the safety of your training area. Make sure bikes, pot holes, scrum machines, glass or other obstructions/ hazards aren't near this area.

The Time - Most teams can only fit one practice in for the week; therefore time is crucial in the development of the players. Practices going over an hour may exceed the attention span of this age group.

**JUST BECAUSE YOU SAW THE ALL BLACKS
PERFORMING AN ACTIVITY DOESN'T MAKE IT A GOOD
ACTIVITY FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS!**

My Teams Capabilities

- What are the capabilities of your team?
- Who has played before and who hasn't?
- How old are they?
- What skills do they have and which ones need development the most?

Too often we see coaches performing skills and activities that aren't appropriate to the level of the players capabilities.

Timing Additions

Practice should be a fast paced environment, where you can stop to explain or reinforce a skill, but generally keep things moving. Kid's attention spans increase as they get older - by one minute per year. At practice, keep kids busy doing something, not waiting in lines or standing around. Simple warm-up passing, catching and running in small groups is better than relay lines or running around the field. It's best if you work on 10-15 minute segments. Any longer and the group will lose interest.

Practice Plan Form

Session No: _____ Date: _____

Primary Objective(s)

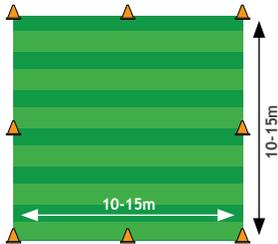
- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

Equipment: _____

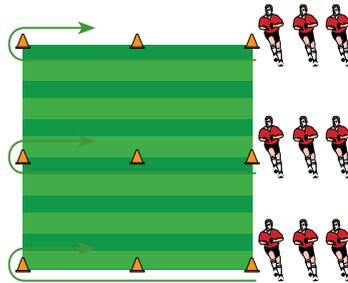
Activity	Time	Coaching Points	Learning Outcomes
Warm-up			
Individual Skills			
Unit Skills And Team Development			
Cool-Down			

Simple Practice Layouts

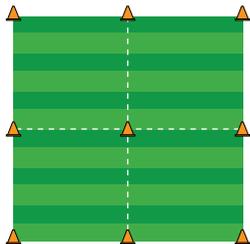
You don't have to use a large area or change every activity. This sequence of practice layouts may be helpful.



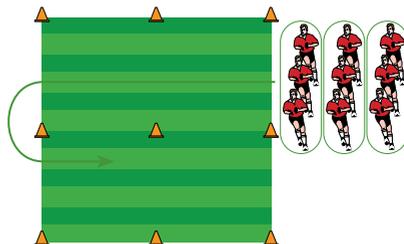
Large Square
(Use eight cones)
eg. Shadow Run



Relays
(Same number of cones
but players line up)
eg. Multi Action Relays



Small Squares
(Add centre cone)
eg. Ball Familiarisation



Channels/Waves
(Players in waves two or three)
eg. Passing Waves



Structure of Your Practices

A good way to structure your training is to think of **PEAS!**

An effective practice will include these elements:

Purposeful - make sure there is a goal.

Enjoyable - the practice should be fun and diverse.

Active - all children involved at all times.

Safe - correct technique is always taught and equipment used as intended.

Let the players know what you have planned for the session. This will help the players understand why they are performing the activities and they will feel more involved and committed to the practice.

A Warm-up will:

- Reduce the chance of injury.
- Prepare the mind and body for the activities that are to follow.
- Last about 10-15 minutes.
- Move from a low intensity to a high intensity.
- Focus on ball familiarisation and handling.

Take an appropriate activity from www.coachingtoolbox.co.nz.

What Individual Skills Will I Emphasise?

You should concentrate on the appropriate skills for your age group.

*Go online to www.coachingtoolbox.co.nz.

SMALL BLACKS WARM UP

NZ Rugby has developed a warm up for Small Blacks rugby players and this new approach will gamify, randomise and make the activities fun.

The competition will bring up the intensity; kids will make decisions under pressure and want to warm up more!

Coaches will be able to pick from the 40+ activities and have their team warmed up in just 16 minutes. All of these NEW activities can be found on www.smallblacks.com.

	START YOUR ENGINES (ST)	ROCK N ROLL (RO)	FUN AND GAMES (FU)	READY TO RUMBLE (RE)
	Pick 3 from A	Pick 3 from A	Pick 1 from A	Pick 1 from A
	Pick 1 from B	Pick 1 from B	Pick 1 from B	Pick 1 from B
	Pick 2 from A	Pick 2 from A		
	Pick 1 from B	Pick 1 from B		
	Pick 2 from A	Pick 2 from A		
Duration	4 minutes	4 minutes	6 minutes	2 minutes

TIME	DRILL CODE	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4
0min	STA	Butt Kicks	Jump and Land	High Knees	Butt Kicks
	STA	High Knees	Hop and Land	Fast Feet +	Jump and Land
	STA	Fast Feet +	Skip Jumps (High Ball)	Lunge Push	Fast Feet +
	STB	Knee Boxing	Alphabet Game	Red and Yellow	Turtles and Targets
	STA	Lunge Push	Butt Kicks	Hop and Land	Lunge Push
	STA	Jump and Land	High Knees	Skip Jumps (High Ball)	High Knees
	STB	Dog and Bone	Numbers Game	Red and Yellow	Turtles and Targets
	STA	Hop & Land	Fast Feet +	Butt Kicks	Hop and Land
4min	STA	Skip Jumps (High Ball)	Lunge Push	Jump and Land	Skip Jumps (High Ball)
	ROA	Log / Big	Mountain Climber	Army Army	Mountain Climber
	ROA	Rock n Roll	Crocodile Crawls	Bear Crawls	Crocodile Crawls
	ROA	Army Army	Skiers	Duck Walks	Skiers
	ROB	Grab It (on your feet)	Here-There-Where	SRP	Noughts and Crosses
	ROA	Bear Crawls	Log / Big	Log / Big	Army Army
	ROA	Duck Walks	Rock n Roll	Rock n Roll	Bear Crawls
	ROB	Here-There-Where	Locks-Props-Backs	Heads Shoulders Knees & Goes	SRP
8min	ROA	Monkey Run	Army Army	Monkey Run	Log / Big
	ROA	Mountain Climber	Bear Crawls	Mountain Climber	Rock n Roll
	FUA	Bench Ball	2 Ball Touch	Turbo Touch	Ups and Downs
14min	FUB	Kick to King	Vision T	Gotcha Name	Flinch
	REA	Cheek to Cheek	Knee Tackles	Cheek to Cheek	Knee Tackles
16min	REB	Shoulder Bumps	Back to Back	Prone Arm Wrestle	Quick Starts / Hands

Unit Skills and Team Development

At this level, play the appropriate non-contact game or a modified game. Use every opportunity to coach correct skill execution including scrums, lineouts, defence, continuity and attack.

The intensity and content of these will be determined by the age group you are coaching.

Please refer back to the Small Blacks Development Model.

What Do I Do For A Cool-Down?

Finish your practice with a low intensity activity.

It is also a good time to reinforce your practice objectives.

Modified Games

One of the best ways to learn how to play the game safely and effectively is to play modified forms of the game that reinforce the Principles of Play, e.g. Any game where players use evasive and ball handling skills to create space:

- Order Ball
- Corner Ball

It's best to begin with small side team games (e.g. up to eight players in each team) in a smaller playing area, as each player gets to be more active by being closer to the ball and being more actively involved than in a regular game on a full-size field.

The game should involve as much handling as possible as this will give all the players the opportunity to run and pass the ball.

The size of the playing field should be adjusted according to the number of players on each team.

Movement

Standing still at trainings helps no one. Take different positions when coaching. Don't stand in the same place. By moving around you will get a different perspective of the practice. If you find effective and ideal angles to view during activities you will be a better coach and your analysis will be more accurate. You can also motivate your kids while walking around. You can work wonders for every kid on your team if, during each practice session, you walk around to each player, address them by their first name, and say something positive to them with a smile.

COACHING RUGBY SKILLS

For players to perform well at any level of rugby they must acquire a number of skills. Skill learning begins with mastery of the basic skills and techniques and progresses to applying those skills in increasingly competitive situations.

It is one of the coach's primary responsibilities to provide each player with opportunities to learn and practise skills in a positive and constructive environment. Appropriate skill learning, especially at the junior level, can set the platform for future potential elite performance.

1. Choose the best position for the demonstration, ie. consider wind, sun, group size, sound effects, echo, etc. Have the children sit or kneel and have no distractions. Use simple language, not too many words and ask questions regularly to ensure clear understanding.
2. Show the whole skill, then break it down in parts (these are the KEY FACTORS), and then link the parts up to form the whole skill again.
3. Reinforce with a demonstration by creating an 'image of the skill' in the mind of the child. Don't demonstrate what not to do.
4. Select the appropriate practice form with the use of grids, circuits or line formations.
5. Provide feedback during practice, but be specific, constructive and immediate.

KEY FACTOR EXAMPLES

Making A Basic Pass

- Run straight.
- Hold the ball in two hands.
- Look at receiver.
- Swing the arms.
- Follow through.
- Pass at chest height in front of the receiver.

Receiving The Ball - Catching A Pass

- Chin up, eyes open.
- Move onto the ball in straight line.
- Extend the hands towards the ball.
- Watch the ball into the hands.

Before and After Practice

Comments sink in best immediately before or after practice. Use this critical time wisely. What you say at these times will usually be remembered, for example, suggest that each player could go home and come up with an activity of his or her own for a skill that was just taught. This reinforces what you have been doing. Kids love to be empowered and engaged in the learning process, so include them. Kids may be asked what they did at practice. Use after practice time to tell the kids and they might remember at dinner time.

Skill Analysis

One of the most important roles of the coach is skill analysis - the ability to look at a player, evaluate what is seen, and know what to do next. Skill analysis can be divided into three parts:

1. Observing the player performing a skill.
2. Analysing the effectiveness of the performance.
3. Detecting and correcting errors to improve the player's future performance.

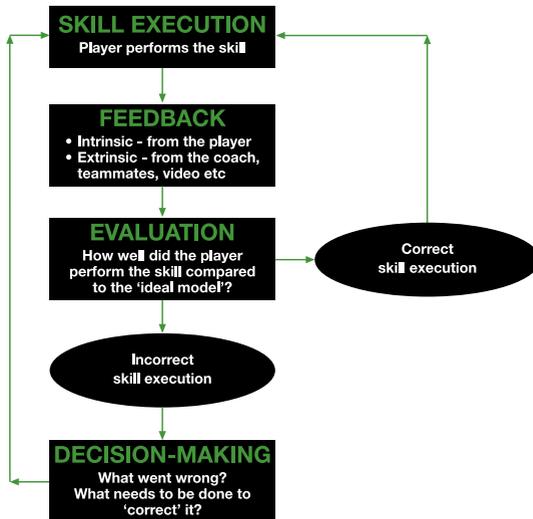
The focus at this level is on observing how the player actually performs the skill (skill observation).

In order to effectively analyse a player's performance the coach needs to plan what to observe and how to observe it.

Feedback

The skill/feedback loop demonstrates how feedback is processed when learning a skill. The model shown below is a simplified version of how each player uses feedback to assess whether or not they have responded correctly and, if not, how they should respond correctly.





KEY FACTORS

Key factors are the important individual actions within a skill performance that influence the final outcome. Key factors should always be stated in terms of specific body movements and they must be observable by the coach.

The coach is just like a teacher. A teacher critiques their students, a coach critiques their players.

To critique a player's skills you break the skill into key factors and the same applies to your coaching techniques.

- Walk kids through one skill (key factors).
- Demonstrate skills correctly. Are you competent enough? Should you use a player to demonstrate good technique? Remember that children are likely to copy other children so make sure it is done correctly as children will copy mistakes too.
- Use terms and keep them consistent eg Hands up... make a W.
- Don't break up the skill too much. You may lose them.
- Put them through an activity so you can critique your players. Again, walk your players through.
- Progress this activity to a stage where there is some form of opposition if appropriate. This can be a game situation.
- Repeat key messages and skill activity to make them clear and understood. Practise, practise, practise!
- Don't get tuned out by the children. This will happen if you are constantly critiquing them. They will change channels. Combine critiquing with your satisfaction in what they are doing (critique with success).

CULTURAL AWARENESS

New Zealand is a society made up of many different cultures, and as a coach you should be aware of the cultural differences between players, such as differences in behaviour and beliefs and the social structures that belong to different cultures.

Why be Aware of Different Cultures?

- To help you gain a better understanding of your players and their family
- To enable you to create coping strategies for yourself, your players and your team
- To help foster understanding within your team
- To gain support from your players, their families and the wider community

Cultural Issues of Which a Coach Should Be Aware

- In all cultures family has high importance and to gain the players support the coach should also seek the support of the whole family.
- Religion has a huge influence in many cultures and prayer (karakia) may be appropriate. The use of inappropriate language should be avoided.
- Many cultures believe making direct eye contact or speaking out of turn is inappropriate, and yet looking down and not talking can be interpreted by the coach as evidence a player is inattentive and is unwilling to interact.



- 
- Questioning and confronting players in front of the whole team can be interpreted by a player as belittling and may be better done privately.
 - As a coach, your standing in the eyes of your players will be enhanced if you take time to learn a little about their culture, are able to pronounce their names correctly, and learn some basic forms of communication, such as greeting and farewell.
 - Most cultures have spiritual aspects and rituals to consider. The spirit of the group and individual should be treated with respect.

Basic Tips To Be Aware Of For Coaching Maori Players

- Treat all elders with respect.
- The most sacred part of the body is the head, so do not tap another person on the head or pass food over someone's head.
- Do not put your hat or hair implements near food - don't sit on tables or other surfaces where food is prepared.
- Separate personal clothing from clothes used for cooking or washing dishes.
- Do not step over a person lying down.
- Treat your visitors well by serving them first and providing plenty of food.
- If you are meeting someone bring a koha (donation) such as a packet of biscuits.
- Everyone pitches in to help, so offer your services before you're asked - you will be told if you don't need to lend a hand.
- Take shoes off when entering a home or meeting house.

If you are unsure how to react or communicate with a player from a different culture, then ask someone for advice, otherwise a sincere honest and friendly approach will always be appreciated.

SMALL BLACKS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Small Blacks Development Model has been developed to ensure that there is a consistency of play, coaching and player welfare at all levels throughout the country, and is a great way of getting kids involved in a team sport.

School Year Age Grade	Y7 U12	Y8 U13	Rip Rugby	Comments
Numbers on Field	15		7	15-a-side. Numbers are maximum. If a team doesn't have enough players to start a game, it should then be played with equal numbers.
Field Size	Full		½	For 15's must be full field
Try	5pts		Same	If score blow-outs are occurring (ie 35+ at halftime), both coaches MUST meet and come to an agreement as to how they can generate a more even contest.
Conversion	2		None	Conversions are not to be taken further out than the 15m line.
Tackle	Yes		Rip	Tackle must be below the nipple. No fending to the head, face or neck regions.
Subs	¼ ½ ¾		Same	All players must play a minimum of half a game (this is to include at least two full quarters). Rolling substitutions are not permitted. Substitutions may be made at half time or approximately half way through each half when the referee will allow and signal a Substitution Break. This applies to representative games.
Scrum	8 person		3 person - win own ball	Contest and pushing only at U12 and U13. The push is limited to half a metre maximum. Safety is paramount.
Lineout	8 person		3 person	Lineouts are contested. There are to be no lineout lifting at any level.
Kick-off	Normal		Same	There wil be no lifting from kick-starts.
Penalty	Normal		Same	
Kicking (general play)	Yes		Same	
Referee	Yes		Nominated	If no Playing Rugby referee, no tackling and no contested scrums.
Ball Size	4	4	4	
Length of Game	2 x 30		Same	These are maximums

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

The Principles of Play are the “GOLDEN RULES” upon which rugby is based - they are generalisations that cover most situations.

The Principles of Play provide simple guidelines upon which your team should base its play.

They also provide a checklist for coaches to analyse their team’s performance.

For simplicity, the Principles of Play can be subdivided into the Principles of Attack and the Principles of Defence.

PRINCIPLES OF ATTACK

Gain Possession

Through competent individual, mini-unit and unit skills, i.e. scrums, lineouts, kick starts, tackle, loose ball.

Go Forward

Once possession gained, must attack by going forward, thus ensuring the opposition are:

- on the back foot
- will need to regroup to stop movement forward, thus creating space in other areas

Support

The attack is continued by supporting teammates who position themselves with depth and communicate the best options to ball carrier and provide continuity.

- Skills in contact need to be developed so that options other than just going to ground are created.

Continuity

If the defence prevents the attack from continuing it will be necessary to:

- engage the opposition with the aid of your support
- retain possession going forward
- utilise the space that is created

The development of ruck and maul creates an offside line that allows the attack even more time and space.

Pressure

Pressure occurs when the attacking team is able to:

- gain possession going forward
- maintain possession through effective support, until you score

Pressure can be exerted from anywhere on the field.

COMMUNICATION LINKS ALL THESE PRINCIPLES TOGETHER

PRINCIPLES OF DEFENCE

Go Forward

- Reduces opposition's time and space, and therefore the options available

Support

- Players must understand and communicate their role within the team's defensive pattern

Pressure

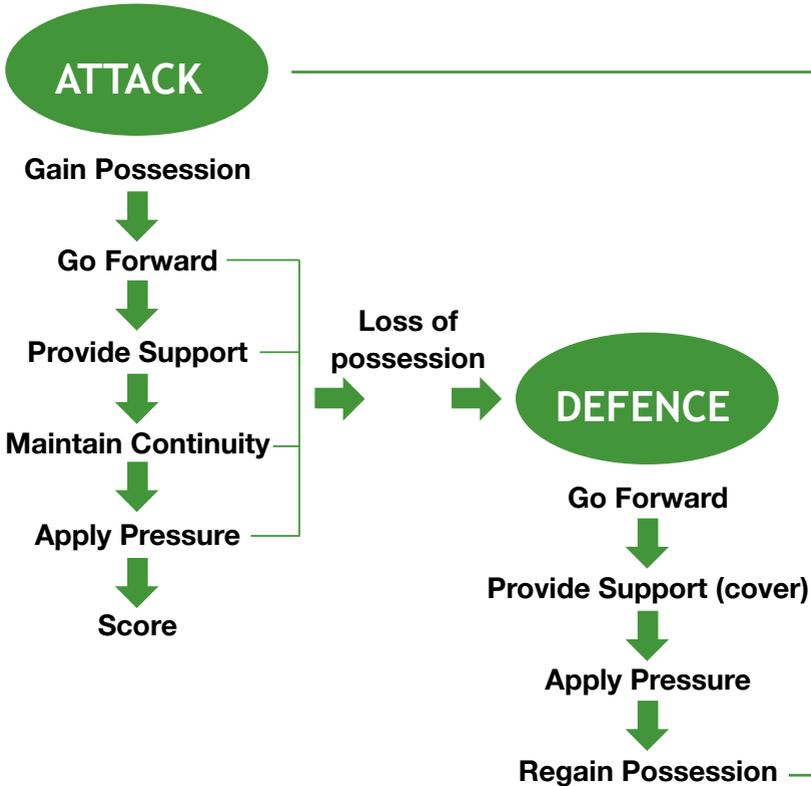
- Pressure occurs when a team goes forward with support making effective tackles

Regain Possession

- By making effective tackles
- By support players regathering or tying up ball off the ground

COMMUNICATION AND EFFECTIVE TACKLING ARE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF DEFENCE

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY: FLOW CHART



U13

The competent 11 and 12-year-old player is comfortable with the ball and can demonstrate a number of skilful solutions to evading pressure. Their maturing body control and coordination provides the agility to change speed and direction quickly.

Rugby practices should include significant periods of technical repetition and opposed activity to reinforce and refine this technical base.

For some players, early adolescence can often mess with agility, coordination and balance. These skills may regress for a period of time until rapid maturation has passed. These physical changes can also take an emotional toll as insecure players struggle to overcome the frustration of moderate performance and social status concerns.