



AGE GRADE TO ADULT RUGBY TRANSITION

ON-FIELD GUIDANCE

WHO FOR?

- U18 Coaches
- 2/3rd team captain
- Senior club coaches
- Club coach coordinators
- Club Chairperson
- Parent(s)/Guardian

WHAT?

A document to support those assessing the ability and readiness for Age Grade players to transition into adult rugby. This involves any player 17 or 18 that is looking to play adult rugby.

WHY?

To provide volunteers with the necessary guidance to ensure players safety, mental and physically preparation is supported on their journey to adult rugby. It also shows how the process should and can be player centred.

HOW?

LOOK TO CREATE AGE GRADE TRANSITION ON FIELD TOOLBOX TO SUPPORT ESTABLISHED PLAYER READINESS



INDIVIDUALISE & PERSONALISE ANY FEEDBACK

- One to one interactions.
- Use of names.
- Understand the players wants & needs.



LOOK TO CREATE POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

- Friendly environment.
- Welcoming players.
- Buddy system.



USE OF VARIOUS ON THE GO COACHING TOOLS

- Freeze frame.
- Player challenges.
- Player led huddles.
- Free play.



SUPPORT ANY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Use of positivity to encourage and motivate players.
- Ask questions about HOW to achieve goals/outcomes.
- Build on & stretch any player strengths.



USE OF LANGUAGE, JARGON AND TERMINOLOGY

- Is it needed?
- Do you need to break it down?
- Will a demonstration help?



BUILD & MANAGE GAME ZONE ACTIVITIES

- Use of two touch games as starting point such as Ready4Rugby.
- Use of points, rules and player/team challenges to support the purpose of the game.
- Layer incremental problems throughout the games.
- Multiple skills or actions challenged and developed.



APPROPRIATELY GROUPING PLAYERS

- Age, size and experience.
- Work with a familiar/friendly face.

FLOWCHART TRANSITION CHART FOR AGE GRADE PLAYERS

Why are you looking to transition this player into adult rugby?

CLUB DRIVEN – Because you are struggling for numbers in your senior team and to fulfil a competitive fixture.

PLAYER DRIVEN – They approached the club and feel they are physically, socially and mentally ready? Check out this player wants and needs guidance

What is the risk of this?

- Injuries.
- Players leaving the sport early.
- Loss of connection to the player.
- Not sustainable.
- Short term only.
- Lack of player first culture may discourage others.

Can you play the fixture under the **Game On principle?**

Is there a possibility for them to play in a younger adult team, accumulated by U18/U19/U20/U21 players?

Check out more information on combined AG guidance [HERE](#)

Have you involved their parents/guardian? (Parental support)

What other commitments does the player have? Are they playing at school or another environment?

Have you considered the training age and mental preparation of the player?

IS THE PLAYER READY FOR ADULT RUGBY?

- Is the player able to pass the competency checklist? (Page 6)
- How does their transition connect with elements of the interconnected components? (Page 3)
- **Check out this playlist** of games to aid their development and transition.

Have you also considered:

- Has there been a discussion around what commitment and personal life looks like at point of transition?
- Do they have a connection to any players in the senior environment?
- What does confidence look like?

Playing an age grade player in senior rugby without the player being ready for the transition, has proven to result in the loss of players and this has a domino effect on the club. Read more about why players leave the game here.

Incorporate the movement skills and decision-making demands of senior rugby into their Age Grade training sessions to enhance readiness to play.

This playlist of videos may be helpful.

Consider off-season non-contact formats to socially embed players – such as; R4R // O₂ Touch

If the player is 17 – Take a look at the process for playing adult rugby [HERE](#)

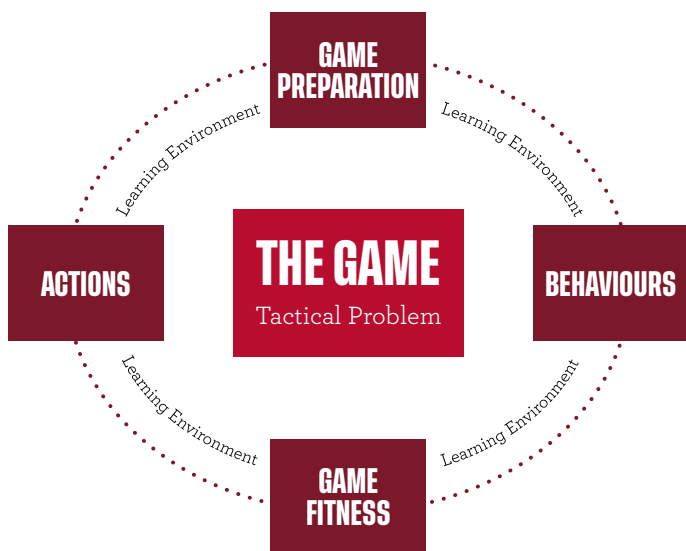
- Have they been assessed?
- Is the paperwork complete?
- Is the club ready and able?
- Are they able to pass the assessment playlist? (Page 6)

HAVING CONSIDERED ALL OF THE ABOVE -

THIS WILL ENHANCE THE RETENTION OF PLAYERS AT THE CLUB, KEEP THEM PLAYING THE GAME FOR LONGER AND KEEPING IT AS ENJOYABLE AS POSSIBLE. THE MAIN PURPOSE IS TO PREPARE PLAYERS FOR ADULT RUGBY IN CLUBS THROUGH THE GAME BEING PLAYER CENTRED, DEVELOPMENT DRIVEN AND COMPETITION SUPPORTED.

INTERCONNECTED COMPONENTS

Interconnected components are a framework that coaches can use to build their learning environment around and to maximise the development and performance of their players, whilst ensuring player welfare and safety are maintained throughout.



GAME PREP

Players readiness to play the game

Tackle technique: Front, Side, Contact with the floor, Steal the sock, Tag the Tail, Tag-Steal Combo.

GAME FITNESS

Players physical attributes to play the game such as; mobility, fitness and strength.

Activate

What core movements do the players need to play the game? How are they supported to be able to practise and develop them in training?

BEHAVIOURS

Psycho Social approached to task or people

Ready for Rugby

Advice for Senior team captains (LINK AB doc)

ACTIONS

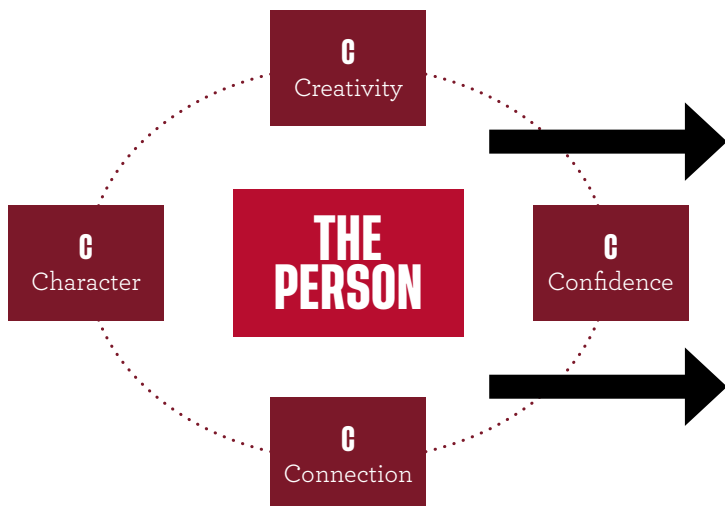
The skills needed to perform within a game

Building their actions; ability to perform them and perform them under pressure and in different scenarios.

Breakdown master class

THE C-MODEL

THE C-MODEL below suggests that we should put the player at the center of any decision making and consider the social-psychological factors detailed within it. These considerations should be applied to those 18 and over too. Just because they are old enough, this does not guarantee their state of readiness to play adult rugby. All of the elements shown in the model will have a relationship with technical competence too.



HOW TO APPLY THE C-MODEL:

CONFIDENCE - Developing players confidence will encourage players decision making and create greater levels of enjoyment through a sense of achievement. This can be aided by clear instruction and explanation, demonstrations, positive feedback and praise and using game-based activity to enhance exploration.

CONNECTION - Do they have any friends in the senior environment?

What style do you coach in - Tell, Ask, Sell, Delegate? - Coaching through a delegate approach can empower players by giving them an opportunity to input and make decisions. Do players get an opportunity to peer to peer feedback and make decisions in games?

CHARACTER - Generation Z - are they empowered with decision making and options within the senior environment? Additionally, character is developed through experiences and decisions we make, you can support your players in this area through highlighting positive behaviours such as being honest, respectful, sticking to the laws of the game and role modelling the behaviours as a coach.

CREATIVITY - Do you allow players the opportunity to try new things without the fear of failure? Do you use a delegate and questioning approach? Do you incentives games through a points-based system?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

EMPOWERING - Coaches should be prepared to differentiate within sessions by adapting activities and delivery styles to suit everyone.

ENGAGING - Do the communication mediums used for information sharing match the players wants, needs and interests?

SUPPORTIVE - Does the environment you are creating allow for the following elements - Role of the coach - welcoming players

NO FEAR - How do you manage failure?
How do you behave as a coach when they fail - do you consider it a learning opportunity rather than a failure?

FUN - Creating a positive environment that players enjoy will make them want to be involved in the game for longer.

APRIL 2021 - JANUARY 2022

PREPARE PLAYERS FOR ADULT RUGBY IN CLUBS THROUGH THE GAME BEING PLAYER CENTRED, DEVELOPMENT DRIVEN AND COMPETITION SUPPORTED.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Include 17 YOs in any non-contact senior training or matches.
- Coaching ideas and tools for game readiness.
- Transition games - creating opportunities for 17YOs to play with some senior players in a non-contact environment.
- Buddy system - provide potential players transitioning with a Senior player buddy to support them in coming into the adult environment.
- Play 17 and 18 YOs in contact and non-contact training and fixtures.

WHAT ARE YOU NOT ALLOWED TO DO?

- Allow a 17 YO to play senior rugby before they have been assessed and signed off.
- Include 17 YOs in any senior contact training or matches before Jan 2022.
- Not discussing playing Senior Rugby without involving the players parents/guardians.



AGE GRADE TO ADULT RUGBY TRANSITION JOURNEY

JUNE - SEPTEMBER



READY4RUGBY



- Mixed age groups Ready4Rugby variations.
- Own age group only contact sessions.
- Activate programme.
- Own age group contact XRugby7s & 10s.
- Non-contact mixed age groups 7s/10s formats.
- Varied formats.

SEPTEMBER - JANUARY



READY4RUGBY



**WE PLAY
RUGBY**

- Mixed age groups Ready4Rugby variations.
- Own age group only contact sessions.
- Activate programme.
- Transition non-contact mixed age group festivals/fixtures.

JANUARY - MAY

READY4RUGBY



- Own age group contact and non-contact sessions.
- Transition training with seniors in progressive contact and non-contact forms.*
- Contact fixtures with own age group or senior (except for front row).*
- Mixed age group Ready4Rugby variations.
- Activate programme.

*If they have followed and passed the playing adult rugby assessment and wish to transition into adult rugby. (Page 2/6)



PLAYER COMPETENCE CHECKLIST

CAN THE PLAYER:

Safely manage themselves making contact with the floor?	Green	Yellow	Red
Safely perform a side on tackle and a head on tackle?	Green	Yellow	Red
Manage their body in decision-making activities related to the tackle? https://youtu.be/te6oqAOFgac https://youtu.be/aZWTOpocuAA https://youtu.be/LqOh1ocMKi4	Green	Yellow	Red
Competently take the ball into contact, secure the ball as a support player and contest the ball as a defender at the breakdown in a safe way? What does this look like?	Green	Yellow	Red
Competently complete all Adult Match Day Activate exercises?	Green	Yellow	Red

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT/SKILL LEVEL AND ABILITY:

The player should usually be one of the top performers in their age group – not just in their playing position. A coach should have observed them in training and match situations and be comfortable in their ability to manage the contact situation in particular.	Green	Yellow	Red
How does their weight and height compare to others in the similar positions in the team. This should compare to a player of a similar position in the adult team. For example a 60kg, 5'10" player applying to play second row would not normally be appropriate.	Green	Yellow	Red

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED:

The players personal and social needs on and off the field?	Green	Yellow	Red
The players confidence and competence to play adult rugby?	Green	Yellow	Red
How you will integrate them into your learning environment?	Green	Yellow	Red
Players want to play with their friends – what is the impact of removing them from a friendship group in the club?	Green	Yellow	Red
The players leadership roles in the club or school (captain, young leader, prefect) as well as their current interactions with adults in club. Players who demonstrate resilience, emotional intelligence and who will be able to cope with adult setting may be more appropriate.	Green	Yellow	Red