



PLAYERS in Stage 2 are focused on exploring the game, increasing their understanding of rugby and learning how to play in various playing positions. The players are young teens aged from 10-14 years approx. They are capable of problem-solving and should be encouraged to express their opinions. The player is also now more capable of skill training and has a better understanding of rules. They will follow role models and begin to pick their sports. As they mature, players are more capable of longer periods of concentration and attention. The coach may use questioning and probing when coaching the players in order to facilitate understanding. Thus the coaching emphasis is 'Teaching'.

The game at this stage is played with reduced numbers and develops from open play to a more structured format to include the development of basic unit play (e.g. scrums). The game is still fun, safe and enjoyable with ample running, passing and tackling. Players should continue to participate in all playing positions.





STAGE 2

The Player - Explores
The Coach - Teaches
The Game - Playing

Train to play

Essence of the Player

Players at this stage are focused on 'Exploring' and are between 10-14 years of age approx. They ask questions in order to increase their understanding of the game and should explore various playing positions. Players will still seek fun and enjoyment from playing sport.

Essence of the Coach

The coaching focus in this stage is to 'Teach' the players. They impart knowledge and skills to the players by questioning, to encourage answering and instruction. The coach should ensure their players are comfortable with all elements covered in Stage 1 as this will assist with their learning and progression in Stage 2. The game at this stage is roughly proportioned 90% General Movement and 10% 1st Phase play, therefore training should reflect this ratio.

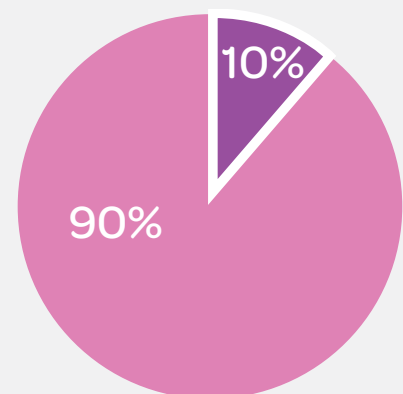
Game Development

- Teams of reduced numbers, up to 10-a-side, should be used when playing games in Stage 2.
- When watching a game at this stage, it should reflect evident structure with respect to shape in General Movement and 1st Phase.
- Players should continue to experience all playing positions in order to ensure familiarity and provide a wide range of skills development. During this time girls may start to go through significant physical development and so exploring various playing positions prepares them for change.

Stage 2 - Technical Emphasis

● General Movement

● 1st Phase



Personal Characteristics

- **Exploring:** Players like to explore many interests at this age and may be involved in many sports and activities.
- **Inquisitive:** Players in this stage will be curious, have an interest in learning and will ask questions.
- **Socially conscious:** Players become more aware of their social environment. They are developing an awareness of different cultures and communities.
- **Social skills:** Players begin to discover and explore social and communication skills that help their interaction with family, friends, team-mates, coaches and others. For example, awareness of gestures, body language, tone and personal appearance.

- **Gender awareness:** Girls are beginning to recognise the fundamental difference between male and female with regards to physical characteristics, social interaction, cultural norms and sport.

Strategic Development

- Developing and reinforcing further understanding of General Movement Principles (Support for Continuity):
 - Players can be identified into **Two groups:** 1. Players 'on and near' the ball – "Life of the Ball Group" 2. Players 'in the space' – "Early Group"
 - **Provide Support for Continuity:** Players understand the merits of continuity (keeping the ball alive and moving) and providing lateral and channel support in order for this to take place.
 - As the game progresses players should begin to develop a deeper understanding for the laws of the game.
- Develop further understanding of 1st Phase (Units) play: Players start to appreciate 1st Phase and its contribution to restarting the game.
- As the regulations change the number of players will increase (including the numbers in 1st Phase units).



Tactical Development

- Developing basic reduced and collective decision making skills (defence and attack):
 - Ball Carrier and Close Support
 - Lateral (re-alignment) attack
 - Channel Attack and Secondary Support
 - Lateral Attack and Secondary Support
 - Support in defence, effective positioning
- Further developing the Principle of Usefulness
 - i.e. understanding where players are in relation to the ball and how they can be effective.
 - Players will question themselves in order to assist with their decision making, "How can I be useful?" "Am I on the ball or in the space"?

Technical Development

(Coaching courses will introduce coaches to the key points of all skills)

- Continue to develop all skills learned in Stage 1 – FUNdamentals.
- Learning basic techniques of relevant mini unit skills (e.g. ruck and maul).
- Further development of 1st Phase skills. All players experience scrum, lineout and backline.
- General Movement Principles (Support – Continuity).
- Further develop confidence in contact.

Physical Fitness

- Continued Development of Physical Literacy as per previous Stage.
- The second Window of Trainability for Speed* is around 11-13 years of age.
- The Window of Trainability for Stamina and Strength* takes place during Stage 2. Aerobic capacity (stamina) training is recommended before/during an athlete's growth spurt, therefore coaches should ensure some time is allocated for aerobic stamina training in each session. Ideally this should occur with the ball. Exercises where players use their own body weight to provide resistance suffice for strength training. Gyms and/or free weights are not required.
- Special attention should be paid to flexibility during a player's growth spurt.
- Coaches should identify to players the benefits of basic warm-up and cool down, including stretching exercises.
- Hydration, healthy eating and positive eating habits should be encouraged.

**It is important to note that all fitness elements (Speed, Strength, Stamina, Suppleness and Skill) should continue throughout this stage. However, accelerated adaption will occur if exercise programmes are put in place during the "Window of Trainability".*

Mental Development

- **Promote focus and structure:** With maturation and greater capacity, players are capable of more intense and prolonged focus which can assist with developing greater understanding and knowledge of structure, tactical and technical aspects of the game.
- **Co-operation:** Players begin to understand the value and advantages of working together to achieve successful outcomes both in a technical context and team-building context.
- **Team work and group identity:** Players at this age enjoy being part of a team and identify themselves with the group. This in turn provides a significant source for self-esteem and self-image.
- **Self-esteem and positive self-image:** This reflects a player's overall emotional evaluation of their self-worth and how they perceive themselves. During this stage it is important to help facilitate players' self-esteem by creating a positive sporting environment where feedback should focus on the positive, always encouraging players.

