



England  
Rugby

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# ENGLAND RUGBY

# DEVELOPMENT

# FRAMEWORK

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**THE FUTURE ENGLAND PLAYER**

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# INTRODUCTION

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**ENGLAND RUGBY HAS SET OUT TO DEFINE KEY CRITERIA THAT ARE CRITICAL TO THE LONG TERM SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SENIOR ENGLAND TEAMS WHICH CONSISTENTLY WIN MATCHES.**

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This document has been written for the players, coaches, parents, guardians and anyone with an interest in England Rugby's talent pathway. It is intended to be accessible and accessed by as many stakeholders as possible in order to ensure a broad

understanding of the intent and direction for England Rugby's pathways.

We are often asked what a player needs in order to represent England at the highest level. The answer is complex and does not

have a right or wrong response. To play and succeed in a England Senior Team, a player will require years of experience and development, as well as a mix of successes and failures.

**IN THIS FRAMEWORK, WE WILL ARTICULATE THE RUGBY REQUIREMENTS AND SOME OF THE OFF PITCH CONSIDERATIONS WE LOOK AT WHEN CONSIDERING HOW WE DEVELOP TALENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**WE MUST TAKE THE WORD 'TALENT' LOOSELY HERE. WE RECOGNISE THAT WHILST SOME ASPECTS WILL COME MORE EASILY TO SOME THAN OTHERS; ALL CAN BE DEVELOPED AND PROGRESSED.**

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# PURPOSE

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It is our belief that this framework will ensure an oversupply of talent for our England International teams by creating highly adaptable players with the skill set required to thrive in different environments.

This framework is designed to ensure a focus on the individual (as part of one or many teams) and what is needed in order for them to maximise their time in the game; whether at the top level or as a continuing participant at other levels.

As players grow through the player pathway, we hope they will continue to learn about themselves as a player, person, and member of the rugby family.



# EVERY JOURNEY IS UNIQUE

**WE RECOGNISE THAT EVERY JOURNEY IS UNIQUE AS NO TWO PLAYERS ARE THE SAME, THEREFORE THIS FRAMEWORK IS DESIGNED TO BE JUST THAT; A FRAMEWORK. THE EXPERIENCES AND INPUT REQUIRED FOR EACH PERSON WILL VARY. NEVERTHELESS, WE EXPECT THAT THIS FRAMEWORK HIGHLIGHTS THE CENTRAL PILLARS FOR CONSIDERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION BY THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED.**

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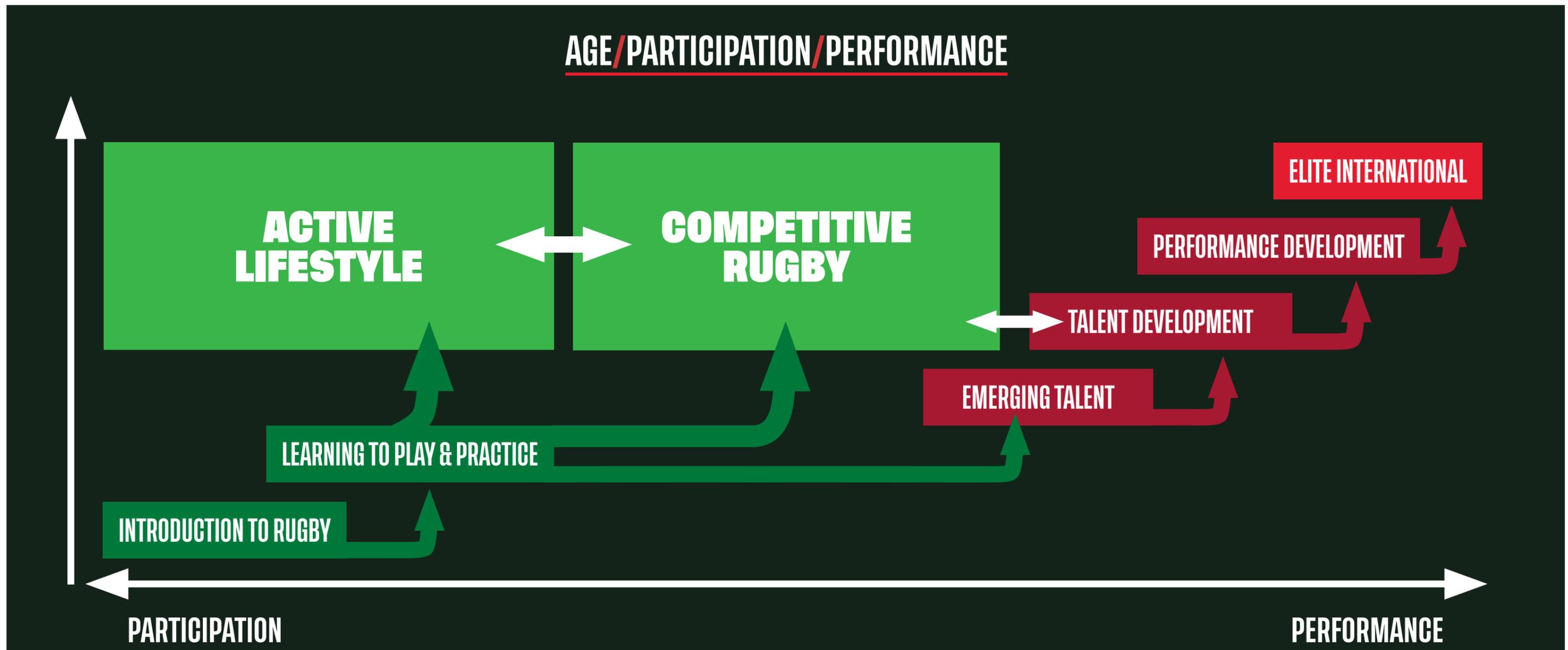


# THE PLAYER

- The player is at the centre of this framework.
- By player, we refer to their bio-psycho-social development. This is formed from their physiological, social, psychological, emotional, technical and tactical capabilities.
- All of these are important for a developing player.



The picture below shows the different stages of a rugby journey:



# THE PATHWAY

- The Player Pathway is in place to provide a coherent, challenging and nurturing journey for the individual regardless of their eventual playing context.

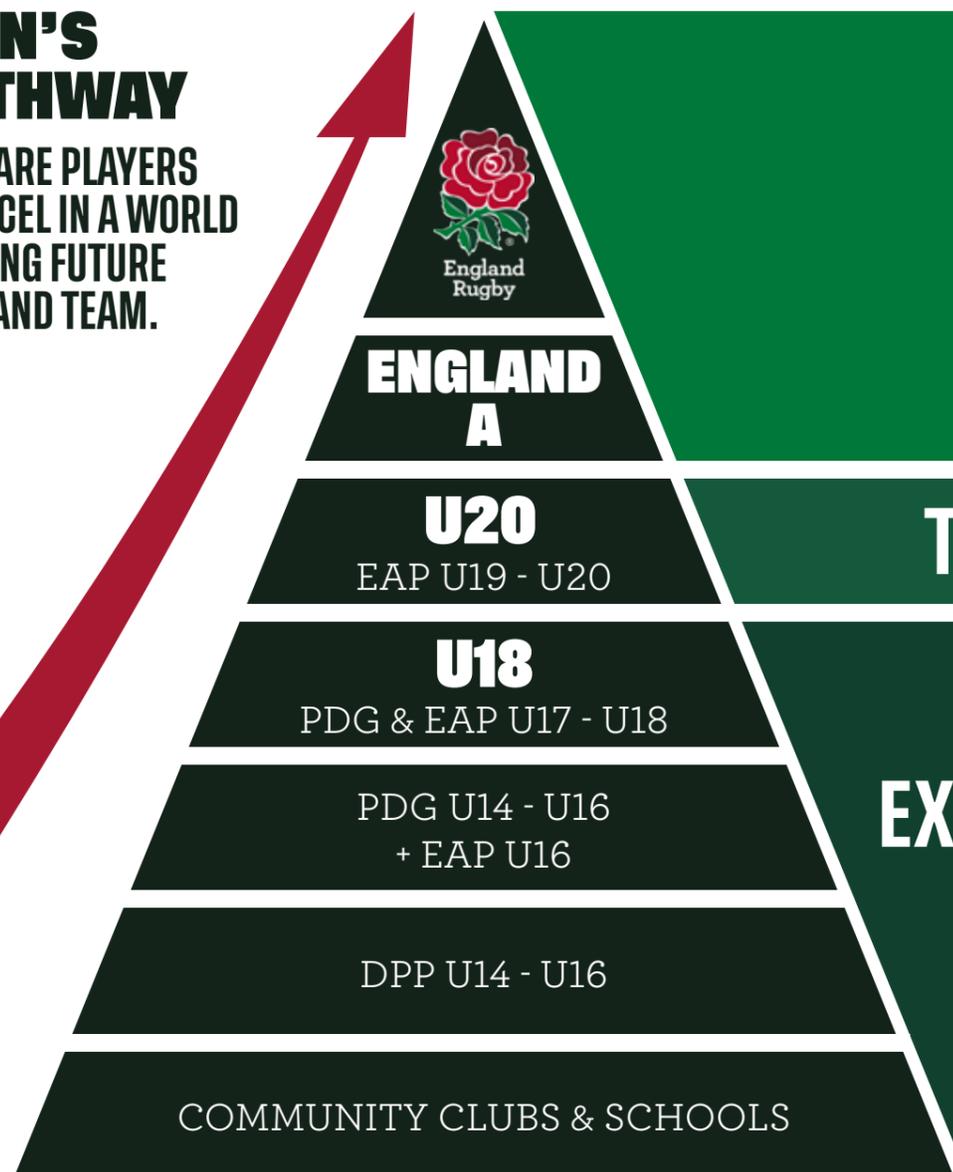
- As each step progresses, the expectations in terms of time commitment, training intensity and off-field commitment increase. We recognise that this journey is not for everyone.

- Involvement in the pathway should add value to every individual. There will be challenges at all stages. However, correctly framed and supported, these challenges can help develop and shape individuals to their benefit.

These are simplified diagrams, showing the various possible entry and development points. Players enter at different times in their journey; this should not be a barrier to progression.

## MEN'S PATHWAY

PREPARE PLAYERS TO EXCEL IN A WORLD LEADING FUTURE ENGLAND TEAM.



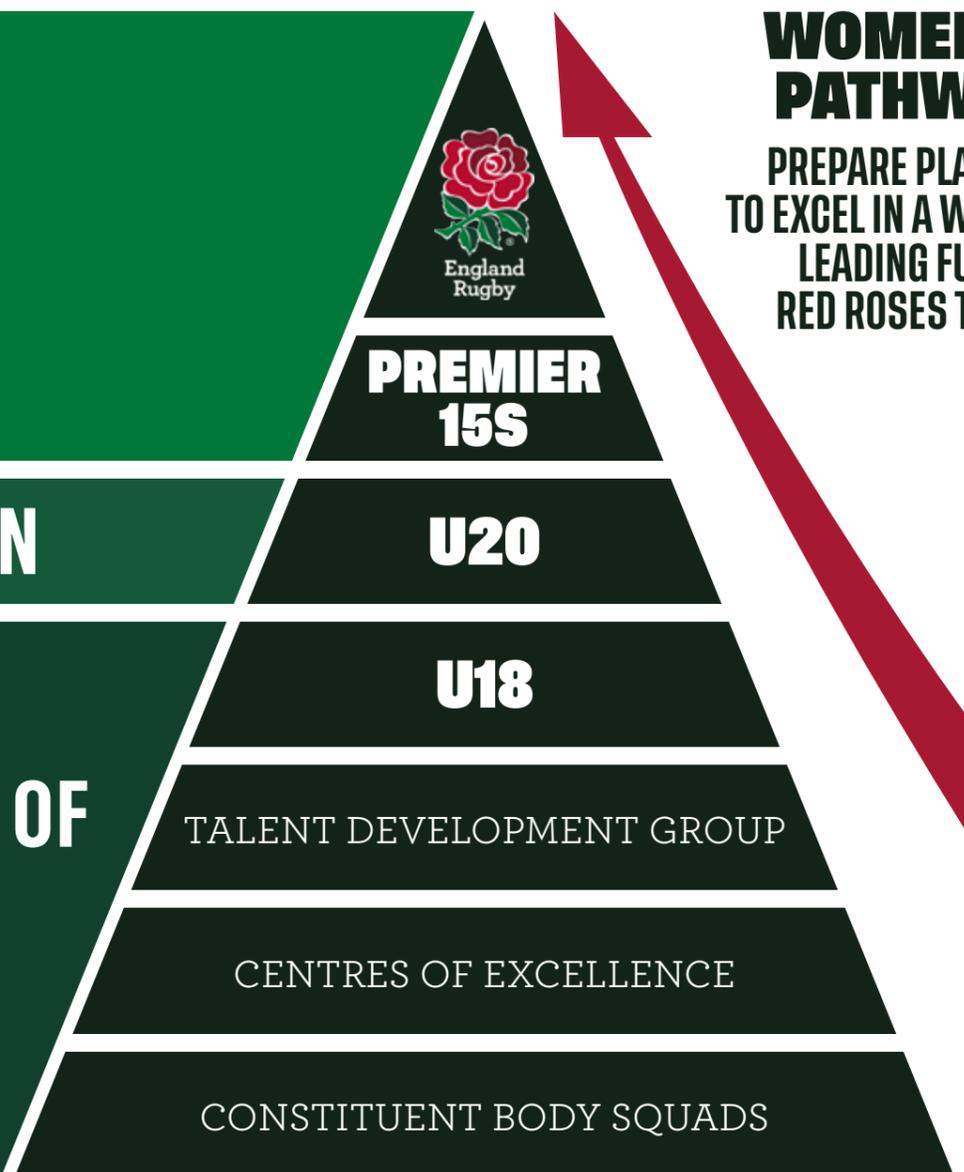
WIN

TACTICALLY ADAPT TO WIN

EXPLORE THE BOUNDARIES OF PLAYERS' CAPABILITIES

## WOMEN'S PATHWAY

PREPARE PLAYERS TO EXCEL IN A WORLD LEADING FUTURE RED ROSES TEAM.



# TALENT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT

# THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT

This type of environment is everywhere, and everything. It is made up of physical, social, organisational and cultural aspects. We must always be aware that we influence people whether directly or indirectly. Each environment is unique and must be constantly evaluated and evolved.

**We have worked with experts, both within rugby and from other environments, to set the following principles that help shape what we do:**

- **Long-term** - We have the end in mind. Decisions are based on long-term and appropriate development goals rather than early success.
- **Alignment** - We have a shared understanding and access to a common framework and knowledge, with space to explore; a clear, accessible pathway of opportunities.
- **Communication** - Clear, open communication on what is required, that ensures the athlete is an engaged and an active participant, is crucial.
- **Holistic quality prep** - Highly individualised, evidence based support where we develop a player's psycho-social competencies alongside their rugby competencies in order to reach potential.
- **Support network** - Access to support that is responsive to a player's specific needs and requirements is key.

- Players should be encouraged to not specialise in rugby until late adolescence on development of the necessary physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills.
- Programmes will be broad and selection will be delayed until late adolescence when players have developed the necessary physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills.

# PLAYER PATHWAY PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## PLAYER PATHWAY PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no one type of person who will succeed on the world stage. **Every player who enters and progresses through the talent pathway is unique.** They have, for instance, different personalities, past experiences, social support, and backgrounds, which combine to influence who they are and how they progress. Consequently, the psychosocial qualities and associated behaviours each player displays in various rugby and non-rugby related situations, and at different stages of their career, will likely differ.

It is apparent that certain psychosocial characteristics and behaviours may be particularly important in facilitating progression and success.\* Within this pathway we are recommending that support be provided to facilitate the development of 15 characteristics and behaviours to facilitate progression and success.

It is important to note, however, that on entry to the pathway, **some players will display more of these characteristics or behaviours than other players.**

Some players will have been encouraged or supported to develop these from an early age, whereas others may never have considered them. Similarly, **some characteristics may develop more easily for certain players than for others** meaning each player will display a different profile of these characteristics, and this profile may change over time.

Given such differences, understanding each player's starting point is key. Subsequently, working with them

to identify areas for improvement and implementing strategies to develop these characteristics and behaviours is necessary to support their progression throughout the talent pathway. **All these characteristics can be developed so evidence, or lack thereof, should not be used as a tool to select or deselect players from the pathway.** They are simply another area for development and consideration alongside players' physical, technical, and tactical skills.



\* Collins et al (2018); Knight (2019); Knight & Barrell (2019); Turner et al. (2018, 2019).

# PLAYER PATHWAY

## PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS



CONSIDERATIONS / BEHAVIOURS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE 1 (Earlier in the pathway/starting from a less developed point)	EXAMPLE 2 (Later in the pathway/starting in a more developed point)
HIGHLY SELF-AWARE	Knows self well and engages in continual self-reflection. Understands typical responses in different situations.	Is familiar with and understands the feelings they experience before and during a match as well as in training.	Is able to understand and differentiate between different feelings AND/OR understands what helps them train and play at their best.
EXCEPTIONALLY COMMITTED	Demonstrates a continual, exceptional desire to train and compete.	When attending training is ready to give 100% effort to all directed tasks and activities and fulfil session objectives.	Attends training sessions, matches, and meetings with a clear focus and/or goal they wish to achieve.  Completes all directed, as well as additional activities, required to accomplish goals with 100% effort.
HAS HIGH PERSONAL STANDARDS	Holds high expectations for oneself in relation to all aspects of rugby training and performance.	Takes necessary steps to demonstrate excellent engagement with all aspects of their rugby-related life (e.g., nutritional, physical, and psychological preparation).	Actively and continually explores all avenues for “marginal gains” and executes an individualised approach (based on agreements with key others) to raise the bar and display excellence.
DETAIL AND PROCESS-ORIENTATED	Approaches practice and training in a systematic way. Focuses on achieving tasks and activities that are controllable and related to bigger outcomes.	Attempts to ensure that all required rugby-related tasks are completed on-time, accurately, effectively, and appropriately. Understands the importance of attending to every small detail to optimise success and development.	Ensures that all details, no matter how small, are effectively addressed and implemented as required in different situations. Focuses on controllable issues, especially in challenging situations and key moments of a game (e.g., a kicker sticking to their pre kick routine despite the kick being from a difficult yet reachable position that might win a game/tournament).

# PLAYER PATHWAY

## PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS



<b>CONSIDERATIONS / BEHAVIOURS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE 1</b> (Earlier in the pathway/starting from a less developed point)	<b>EXAMPLE 2</b> (Later in the pathway/starting in a more developed point)
<b>FOCUSED ON MASTERY AND PERFORMANCE</b>	Has a consistent focus and desire for self-improvement and performance success.	Goes into every match wanting to win and achieve coach/team/personal goals but also with a desire to demonstrate an improved performance based on skills and tactics covered in training sessions.	Places equal importance on winning matches, succeeding on the international stage, and becoming the very best player they can be.
<b>ABLE TO CAPITALISE ON OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Recognises and seizes critical moments and key opportunities within career/stage of development.	Understands the increased importance of certain matches/competitions and steps up to produce a strong personal performance.	Takes chances when they are presented and executes the highest performance.  Embraces an opportunity to captain the team when asked, displaying outstanding leadership and teamwork, while steering the team to an outstanding performance.
<b>SEEKS CHALLENGES</b>	Actively engages with and embraces difficult/challenging situations rather than withdrawing from them.	Enjoys having the chance to train in a different position despite this being outside their comfort zone and something that worries them.  Desires opportunities to play against stronger opposition despite potential discomfort as this provides an opportunity to learn and develop.	Positively embraces situations in which they may fail within a match and experience negative feelings to enable positive personal or team improvement/outcomes.  Engages with coaching staff to identify opportunities to challenge and push self within team/against teammates.
<b>HIGHLY ADAPTABLE</b>	Willing to try new things and cope with change. Able to adapt and be flexible in the face of unexpected challenges, expectations, or demands.	Tries new tactics or technique in training and/or matches when presented with the option in order to improve.  Understands that last minute changes to schedules, line-ups etc may happen and be out of their control but has strategies to help them adapt or cope.	Able to adapt game/playing style in matches in light of situational changes (e.g., change in points difference, losing players to injury or different opposition game plan to what was expected).  Prepares for the unexpected but recognises that there are inherent unknowns within elite sport. Effectively and efficiently manages and responds to unexpected demands or changes.

# PLAYER PATHWAY

## PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS



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<b>ENGAGED IN OWN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p>Takes an active interest in what is happening and why it is happening.</p>	<p>Ask questions of the coaching staff to understand the purpose behind a drill.</p> <p>Requests meetings/reviews with coaching staff to identify areas for personal development/improvement.</p>	<p>Asks questions of coaching staff to understand the purpose behind a practice and subsequently uses this information to enhance own performance and transfer this into different situations.</p> <p>Reflects on performance and development and subsequently works with coaching staff to develop effective coaching sessions/drills that address self-identified areas for improvement and development.</p>
<b>EFFECTIVELY MANAGES OR CONTROLS EMOTIONS</b>	<p>Appropriately manages and/or embraces emotions in different situations, such as training and matches as well as during important conversations or social situations.</p>	<p>Keeps emotions in check sufficiently to prevent them from impacting on personal or team performance during a game.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And/or</p> <p>Draws on the emotions that arise during a match to enhance quality of play and help to deliver a positive personal/team performance.</p>	<p>Compartmentalises emotions arising in relation to aspects outside of rugby that may distract from/impact upon a match performance.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And/or</p> <p>Able to harness and manipulate emotions experience in training and competition to continually drive performance.</p>
<b>SELF-FOCUSED BUT ALSO AN EFFECTIVE TEAM PLAYER</b>	<p>Take personal responsibility for optimising own performance while also making sacrifices for the good of the team and embracing the unique personalities and contributions of each team member.</p>	<p>Spends time getting to know teammates so that they can work with each other to get the best out of the team while also attending to individual needs to optimise personal performance.</p>	<p>Fully aware of their own role on and off the pitch and executes these roles effectively and efficiently to deliver the strongest performance. While, at the same time, also supporting others during difficult situations on and off the pitch and recognising that everyone on a team has a role to play regardless of how different/similar they are (and that these differences might be what make people successful).</p>

# PLAYER PATHWAY

## PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS



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<b>DEDICATED TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p>Understands the value of being committed to developing all areas of their life. Appreciates the importance of having balance in life and has a desire to improve and succeed both on and off the pitch.</p>	<p>Recognises the sacrifices that need to be made to attend rugby fixtures and training while also making time for schoolwork/career development, socialising and considering a possible path outside of rugby (if required).</p>	<p>Engages with RFU/RPA Development Managers and actively pursues opportunities to for career development off the pitch.</p>
<b>EFFECTIVELY UTILISES REST AND RECOVERY</b>	<p>Reads and responds to body and guidance from others regarding time to rest and recover, especially when injured or experiencing declines in wellbeing/mental health.</p>	<p>Follows appropriate injury recovery and rest strategies and guidance as provided by coaches and/or medical/S&amp;C staff.</p>	<p>Understands and listens to own body and recognises when physically or mentally things are not feeling right. Rapidly seeks out appropriate support in such instances.</p> <p>Engages in the development and implementation of personalised recovery plans.</p>
<b>RECOGNISES AND USES SOCIAL SUPPORT</b>	<p>Seeks out social support from people around them and understands the importance of fostering close working relationships with coaches and other players.</p>	<p>Actively seeks advice and guidance early when worries about rugby or encountering personal concerns/issues.</p> <p>Proactively works on relationships with parents, coaches, and support staff to ensure that they maximise available support.</p>	<p>Knows who is best to approach to receive the best/necessary support in different situations.</p> <p>Fully embraces the support that is available to them (if/when useful), recognising that you cannot and will not succeed alone.</p>
<b>MANAGES EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS</b>	<p>Stays grounded and focused on own goals and development, doesn't get caught up in hype from other people such as friends, family, media, and agents.</p>	<p>Able to focus on the present and what they are currently achieving, understanding that chances of succeeding as a professional/on an international stage are slim.</p>	<p>Minimises engagement with social/media stories about (good or bad) performances. Knows who provides more and less helpful feedback and does not spend time with people who provide less than useful feedback.</p>

# SOCIAL SUPPORT



# SOCIAL SUPPORT

Throughout their career, **players will encounter a range of different challenges and situations within and outside rugby.** Some of these situations are relatively predictable and anticipated whereas others are unexpected, unpredictable, and often involuntary.

**Players have identified a range of situations that may influence their progression and involvement in rugby, as well as their enjoyment and performance. These include, among others:**

- Changing clubs
- Moving age groups/increasing competition standard
- Being selected/deselected from teams
- Encountering issues with teammates/coaches
- Experiencing/attempting physical changes (e.g., “bulking up”)
- Leading into and during important matches or competition
- When injured
- Periods of lowered wellbeing
- During performance slumps
- Periods when lacking confidence and/or feeling excessive pressure to perform
- Changing family circumstances (e.g., divorce, bereavement)
- Changing schools
- Exam periods
- Attempting to make decisions around priorities and/or the future.

**Such situations can provide valuable opportunities for players to work on the psychosocial characteristics and behaviours already described and may stimulate positive growth and development. However, to help players effectively navigate these situations, increase the likelihood of positive outcomes, and also decrease possible detrimental consequences, they will need and benefit from social support.**

Support can come in various forms (e.g., tangible, informational, emotional) and from various people (e.g., parents, guardians, family members, coaches, teammates, medical and support staff, teachers, employers, and agents). **The types and sources of support players require will vary between different players and situations.** There is no one size fits all. Rather, **having access to support that is responsive to a player’s specific needs and requirements at that particular time is key.**

To provide such responsive support requires members of a player’s support network to **engage in frequent, open, and honest conversations with the player.** Through such conversations, individuals should actively seek to understand the player’s experience of the situation. Additionally, the quality of the support players receive, particularly earlier in the pathway, is dependent upon effective, **regular communication and joined up approaches across different members of the support network,** particularly players, parents, and coaches.



# TALENT DEVELOPMENT STAGES

EACH ASPECT OF THE TALENT PATHWAY - **EXPLORE, ADAPT, WIN** WILL INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF ONE ANOTHER, THEY ARE DYNAMIC, NON LINEAR, INTERCHANGEABLE AND INEXTRICABLY LINKED.

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## THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT

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There are 3 aspects to the talent pathway - these are listed below and provide broader principles around working with players.

Each aspect seeks to utilise elements from the other stages; for example, England Senior Teams set out to **Win**, but draw heavily from the foundations and skills used in **Explore** and **Adapt**.

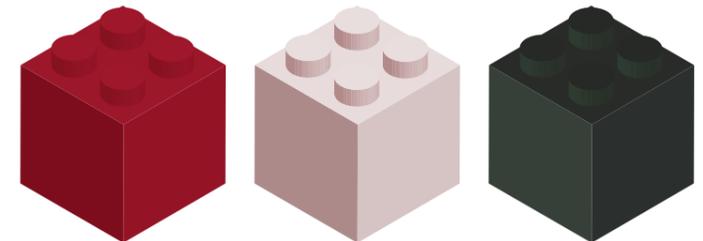
### EXPLORE

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### ADAPT

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### WIN

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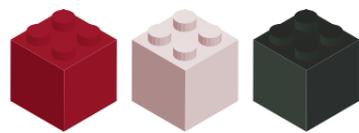


# EXPLORE



- Focusing on players exploring the game without boundaries.
- We are early in the journey; there is time to develop and we need to foster a love for the game.
- As rugby is a dynamic sport, at the Explore stage, we expect to see players being exposed to game-like training and given the time and freedom to explore the game further.
- Exploration should provide a broad exposure to all aspects of the game. Maturation is highly variable and players go on to change positions, therefore we must ensure a breadth of exposure.
- Coaches will also need to consider the principles of the game and how to implement these into training.

# ADAPT



- As players progress through the talent system, training must be used to help players develop a tactical understanding of the game. Rugby is a team sport and world class players need to learn to make decisions in dynamic environments.
- Training at this stage will look at game content and offer chances for players to learn within broader situations.
- Selection to talent development programmes significantly raises the commitment level for the player from the earlier stages of the pathway.
- Opportunity to participate in more competitive matches against stronger opposition provides players with increasing challenges.

# WIN



- At the end of the pathway there is a clear outcome - to win.
- Winning requires solid foundations that are built during the Explore and Adapt stages. It requires a focus on the processes, skills, environment and aspects which are controlled by the players and staff in each team.
- At this stage, players will spend time exploring and adapting to new skills, tactical and technical requirements and an ever changing rule set.



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# THE GAME

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# THE GAME

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- Rugby union is a highly complex, fast paced game requiring a broad skill set.
- Research has shown that training environments should be designed to develop player capabilities to overcome all eventualities of the competitive environment. It is argued that through a balance of off-field, on-field, technical, tactical, problem-setting and problem solving approaches, when applied appropriately, that individuals biological, social, physical, technical and tactical competencies can be developed.
- There is no 'right way' to coach or play. The principles of the game are there for reference. We recommend that you work with your coaching family to discuss and implement these in an appropriate way.
- There is nuance in the game - we encourage exploration and discussion to implement the principles of the game for each player, team & environment.



# PRINCIPLES OF THE GAME

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**ALL PLAYERS REGARDLESS OF POSITION WILL NEED TO ABLE TO EXECUTE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GAME.**

**WE HAVE CATEGORISED THESE IN 3 WAYS:**

**ATTACK**

**DEFENCE**

**CONTEST**

# DEFINITIONS

<b>CARRY</b>	Effective change of pace, ability to beat defenders in different ways - Footwork/Fend/Contact, Run Around Opposition, Keep the Ball Alive.
<b>PASS</b>	Get the ball where it needs to go in different ways.
<b>CATCH</b>	Ability to adapt and adjust hands and body to receive the ball
<b>KICK</b>	Ability to use a range of methods to exploit space, territory and gain points
<b>SUPPORT BALL</b>	Ability to anticipate and react to both ball carriers and non ball carriers actions. Choose the most effective support and communicate effectively
<b>SPACE</b>	Identify, create and move to space as the game changes in front of you
<b>GAME SENSE</b>	Ability to react and adapt to the changing picture in front of you (Run, Kick, Pass options)
<b>TACKLE</b>	Ability to select the most effective method to stop a ball carrier on your terms as a defender
<b>POST TACKLE</b>	Ability to maintain possession and keep the ball alive in the most effective manner in attack. In defence the ability to slow or steal the ball
<b>MAINTAIN POSSESSION</b>	Understanding role to maintain possession
<b>CONTEST POSSESSION</b>	Ability to identify opportunities to regain or disrupt possession
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	Communicates effectively with other players, coaches and officials
<b>DEFENCE</b>	Understanding of different defensive positioning and set ups.
<b>CLEAR OUT</b>	Ability to identify and remove players from the breakdown as quickly and effectively as possible
<b>JACKAL</b>	Contest for the ball to either slow the ball down or get the ball back
<b>KICK RECEIPT</b>	Ability to regather the kick in a variety of positions in attack and defence

# PRINCIPLES OF THE GAME: ALL PLAYERS NEED TO EXECUTE THESE SKILLS



<b>ATTACK</b> Progress the ball Penetrate & Score		<b>DEFENCE</b> Stop Scoring		<b>CONTEST</b> Recycle & Continue Contest & win the ball back					
TECHNICAL	TACTICAL	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL	IN VS OUT OF POSSESSION	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL			
CARRY	GAME UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT RECOGNITION APPLICATION	TACKLE	GAME UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT RECOGNITION APPLICATION	RECYCLE & CONTINUE	CLEAR OUT	GAME UNDERSTANDING			
PASS					KICK RECEIPT		CONTEXT		
CATCH				CONTEXT	RECOGNITION	APPLICATION	CONTEST & WIN THE BALL BACK	JACKAL	RECOGNITION
KICK								KICK RECEIPT	

Coherent and aligned common language

Support

# POSITIONS



**PROP**

**HOOKER**

**SECOND ROW**

**FLANKER**

**SCRUM HALF**

**FLY HALF**

**WINGER**

**CENTRE**

**FULL BACK**

# PROP

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**LINEOUT**

**MAUL**

**SCRUM**

**RESTART**

**CARRY**





<b>PROP</b>	<b>EXPLORE</b>	<b>ADAPT</b>	<b>WIN</b>
<b>SCRUM</b>	Explores body position and scrum set up	Scrum set up & scrum knowledge. Adapts to varying situations, positions in attack and defence	Can dominate and adapt under heavy pressure.
<b>LINEOUT</b>	Explores various lineout lifting technique and movement	Aware of lineout roles and ability to carry them out	Highly responsive to own teams calling and opposition movement with great technique
<b>MAUL</b>	Start and understanding of own & others movement in maul	Begins to influence opposition set up and understanding the tactical understanding of the maul	
<b>CARRY</b>	Exploring variety of techniques around carrying the ball & how to manipulate defences with different carries - use of footwork, P&G	Reading the defensive situation and adaptation to what's in front of you as the best form of carry.	Utilises right option for a positive outcome. Right option not only included carry options but also if the "right" option is to pass/offload/kick
<b>RESTART</b>	Explores responding to the ball flight.	Reacts to jumper and the flight of the ball to execute lift.	Dominates the space and works with the jumper to win the ball and play away.

# HOOKER

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**THROW IN**

**SCRUM**

**CARRY**

**BALL PLAY**

**DEFENSIVE  
BREAKDOWN**

**DEFENCE**





# SECOND ROW

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**LINEOUT**

**MAUL**

**SCRUM**

**RESTART**

**PRESSURE ON  
KICKERS**

**READ FLIGHT OF  
THE BALL**



# SECOND ROW

## EXPLORE

## ADAPT

## WIN

### LINEOUT JUMPING

Explores jumping in the lineout, different body techniques, how to be lifted & catching balls above the head

Understanding of lineout calls, how to adapt to opposition & how to move effectively in the lineout to manipulate the opposition

Effectively working as a lineout unit and wins the race off the floor. Constantly manipulates opposition and delivers the ball

### LINEOUT LIFTING

Explores the skill and various body positions required

Adjust to movement, dealing with opposition interference & adapts to call

Constantly finds the most effective lift, regardless of pressure interference & adapts to call

### LINEOUT CALLING

Explores the organisation of lineout and calling moves in attack and defence

Adapt calls according to opposition setup.

Takes into account all influencing factors and adjusts calling option appropriately for positive outcome

### MAUL

Start and understanding of own & others movement in maul

Begins to influence opposition set up and understanding the tactical understanding of the maul

Chief disruptor on opposition ball

### SCRUM

Explores body position and scrum set up

Works with prop and hooker to apply pressure as per the scrum call

Maintains relationship with front row on attacking and defensive ball to create dominance

### RESTART

Explores flight of ball & positioning. Above head catching

Responds to opposition pressure and variation in lifters (Single/double lift)

Dominates the restart creating a platform to play away

### PRESSURE ON KICKERS

Explores putting pressure on the 9's/10's when kicking

Reading the game to understand when to put pressure and when to stay in the defensive line

Consistently makes correct decisions of when to apply pressure to result in ball disruption/turnovers

# FLANKER



POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**BREAKDOWN  
- ATTACK &  
DEFENCE**

**CARRIES**

**SCRUM**

**BASE OF  
SCRUM**

**LINEOUT**



# SCRUM HALF

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**PASS**

**KICK**

**TACTICAL  
AWARENESS  
- ATTACK AND  
DEFENCE**

**GAME  
MANAGEMENT**

**COMMUNICATION**





# SCRUM HALF

## EXPLORE

## ADAPT

## WIN

### PASS

Explores a variety & different passing techniques

Selects the right type, style & speed of pass for the situation

Consistency in pace of delivery and accuracy

### PASS OFF BASE

Explores a variety of different base passes

Implementation of pressure, pick up positions & adapts to variability in ball position & adjusts accordingly

Creates ideal situation to pass the ball

### BOX KICK

Explores a variety & different kicking techniques

Adapts and reacts to the game situation when box kicking

Accurately kicks on target in relation to game plan and game context

### TACTICAL AWARENESS IN DEFENCE

Explores defending in different contexts & positions in the team

Begins to react to attacking picture defensively

Makes correct decision in relation to team strategy (plug the gap, get in the line, drop into backfield)

### GAME MANAGEMENT

Explores different team tactics & individual role within them

Adjusts and adapts individual role according to opposition and team needs

Ability to influence team and tactics within the game to your advantage

### CONTROLS THE PACE OF THE GAME

Explore playing the game as a scrum half

Adapts the pace of the game as required

Controls the pace of the game for 80 minutes

### COMMUNICATION

Explore communication style & delivery

Effectively organises and impacts individuals and teams as required.

Consistently impacts on all stakeholders - team mates, referee, coaches

# FLY HALF

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**GAME VARIATION  
IN ATTACK**

**PASS**

**KICK**

**RUN**

**COMMUNICATION**

**GAME PLAN**





<b>FLY HALF</b>	<b>EXPLORE</b>	<b>ADAPT</b>	<b>WIN</b>
<b>GAME VARIATION</b>	Explores and plays a variety of games in varying field positions	Adapts to defensive picture, field position & conditions to make the right decision. Something around game context - Scoreline/weather/referee	Consistently selects the right option - pass, kick, run & executes with precision
<b>PASS</b>	Explores a variety & different passing techniques	Selects the right type, style & speed of pass for the situation	Consistency in pace of delivery and accuracy
<b>KICK</b>	Explores a variety of different techniques across all kicking disciplines (Punt, Goal Kicking, Restarts, Box)	Kicking out of hand 1st, then goal kicking, then restarts	Accurately kicks on target in relation to game plan and game context
<b>RUN/ATTACKING THREAT</b>	Explores different ways of beating and fixing defenders	Adapts to the game situation when running with ball in hand	Consistently make decisions when to run, when to drift, when to go at the defender
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	Explore communication style & delivery	Effectively organises and impacts individuals and teams as required.	Consistently impacts on all stakeholders - team mates, referee, coaches
<b>GAME PLAN</b>	Explores implementing game plans, tactics & managing other players	Begins to adjust game plan/tactics according to opposition/conditions & own team need	Constantly evaluates, adjusts and communicates game plan according to context.

# WINGER

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**FINISHER**

**AERIAL  
SKILLS**

**KICKING**

**DEFENSIVE  
POSITIONING**

**ABILITY TO  
BEAT PLAYERS**

**SPEED**





<b>WINGER</b>	<b>EXPLORE</b>	<b>ADAPT</b>	<b>WIN</b>
<b>FINISHER</b>	Exploring different ways to score tries - footwork, kicking, fend	Finding & creating way in which to score	Consistently finishes try scoring opportunities
<b>AERIAL SKILLS</b>	Explores the skill of catching, chasing & attacking ball in the air	Selects the right technique to attack or receive a ball in the air in relation to opposition	Consistently winning the aerial battle
<b>KICKING</b>	Explores a variety of kicks	Adapts to field position, team tactics and opposition positioning & how kicks can affect those	Utilises kicking as a threat for opportunity to score, team tactics, to relieve pressure or manipulate the defence
<b>DEFENSIVE POSITIONING</b>	Plays in and explores defensive positioning in a variety of games	Adapts to and experiences different defensive systems	Working effectively as a back three pendulum
<b>ABILITY TO BEAT PLAYERS</b>	Explores different ways of beating defenders	Adapts to defensive cues (individual and team)	Consistently beats players across the pitch using a variety of means

# CENTRE



## POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**ATTACKING  
THREAT**

**KEEP THE  
BALL ALIVE**

**DEFENSIVE  
LEADERS**

**KICKING  
OPTION**



<b>CENTRE</b>	<b>EXPLORE</b>	<b>ADAPT</b>	<b>WIN</b>
<b>ATTACKING THREAT</b>	Explores and plays with different options utilising run, pass, kick	Adjusts to the situation and chooses the right option	Consistently makes good decisions to run, pass, kick dependant on context.
<b>ATTACKING THREAT</b>	Explores ways to beat people & create space for others	Adapts to defenders and team-mates to create space or win gainline	Consistently beats defenders or creates space for other players
<b>DEFENCE</b>	Plays in and explores defensive positioning in a variety of games	Adapts to and experiences different defensive systems	Consistently stops attackers and has the ability to lead the defensive line
<b>KICKING OPTION</b>	Explores a variety of kicks	Adapts to field position, team tactics and opposition positioning & how kicks can affect those	Utilises kicking as an threat for opportunity to score, team tactics, to relieve pressure or manipulate the defence

# FULL BACK

POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

**AERIAL**

**DEFENSIVE  
SKILLS**

**KICKING**

**BACKFIELD**

**PLAYMAKER**





# FULL BACK

## EXPLORE

## ADAPT

## WIN

### AERIAL SKILLS

Explores the skill of catching, chasing & attacking ball in the air

Selects the right technique to attack or receive a ball in the air in relation to opposition

Consistently winning the aerial battle

### DEFENCE

Explores different tackle methods

Adapts to the defensive picture in front with appropriate tackle choice

Consistently stops attackers when last in defence

### KICKING

Explores a variety of kicks

Adapts to field position, team tactics and opposition positioning & how kicks can affect those

Utilises kicking as a threat for opportunity to score, team tactics, to relieve pressure or manipulate the defence

### BACKFIELD

Develops understanding of the game and how that impacts on the backfield

Organises teammates into effective positions to ensure effective backfield coverage

Manipulate the backfield to get the opposition to do what you want them to do

### PLAYMAKER

Explores being in different receiver positions

Is able to adapt positions on the pitch to reflect defensive set ups or to create numerical advantages

Consistently creates numerical advantages & reacts to defensive set ups. Select the right option of run, kick, pass around counter attack

# PHYSIOLOGICAL

# INDIVIDUALISATION

## THE YOUNG ATHLETE

Young players are not young adults, and performance as a junior does not necessarily predict performance as an adult.

Practitioners should further their understanding of the specific developmental needs of young players.

As practitioners, we must have an appreciation of the demands of the current game and the demands of the future game.

A young player's development programme should cater for their specific needs, as opposed to mimicking a senior player's programme.

A player's programme should balance improving areas for development whilst maximising their points of difference.

What game are we preparing our young player's to play? The one on Saturday or the one in a few years time?

## PLAYER MANAGEMENT

Player wellbeing should consider all aspects of the young athlete, with all decisions made in the best interests of the player and their long term development.

Stakeholder alignment is essential in order to ensure the health of the player, and an optimised developmental journey.

**This process is player-centred, requiring:**

- Collaboration between all key stakeholders, with open and honest communication;
- Clarity on key developmental priorities and routes to achieving them;
- Alignment of a variety training & playing programmes;
- Player engagement throughout the entire process, along with significant others.

Stress is holistic, and therefore awareness of periods of stress outside of rugby is extremely important.

## THE ROLE OF COMPETITION

In early years, competition exposure should be inclusive and varied.

programme should be specific to their overall development needs. Proactive planning of competition exposure is important for it to effectively support long-term goals.

be scheduled appropriately to allow players to maximise the experience, whilst minimising injury risk.

Due to physical maturation, we should limit de-selection and encourage multi-position exposure.

Evidence shows it can take 72 hours to recover from a game. Competition should therefore

A player's injury history and physical profile should be considered when prescribing competition exposure.

As players progress, their playing

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## LAYING FOUNDATIONS

Prepare players with the competencies required for any sport and lifetime of engagement in physical activity.

### Key Principles:

- Prioritise the development of fundamental movement skills, which will underpin subsequent sport-specific skills;
- Multi-sport exposure;
- Multi-position exposure;
- Acquiring 60-mins of moderate to vigorous activity per day via a variety of activities;

### Activities may include:

- Sprinting regularly via races and chases
- Change of direction and agility via evasion games
- Jumping, landing, hopping, skipping
- Gymnastic and/or other activities that encourage players to develop a sense of rhythm, co-ordination and encourage physical exploration
- Combat sports or activities

## REPEATED PRACTICE

Prepare players to maximise their availability for training and playing over the long term, whilst focusing on general physical qualities that allow them to adapt to any rugby environment.

### Key Principles:

- The best ability is availability;
- The biggest risk of future injury is previous injury;
- Focus upon foundational physical qualities that improve a player's ability to consistently train & play;
- Balanced training & competition exposure.

### Prioritise 'general' physical attributes:

- Strength & Power:
  - Relative & absolute strength
  - Local muscular endurance
- Postures & Positions:
  - Prioritise fundamental movement competency
  - Strength & stability throughout full range of motion
- Fitness:
  - Aerobic fitness
- Body Composition:
  - Lean mass development



## REFINING PERFORMANCE

Tailor physical qualities to meet the specific demands of their environment and maximize performance in rugby-specific actions.

### Key Principles:

- Prioritise performance actions and the physical qualities that underpin them
- Maximise the qualities that give them their point of difference
- Contextual application of specific physical qualities

### Prioritise 'specific' physical attributes:

- Strength & Power:
  - Speed
  - Rate of force development & Power
  - Reactive strength
- Postures & Positions:
  - Focus on specific positions utilised within performance actions
- Fitness:
  - Anaerobic fitness
  - Specific work-to-rest ratios
  - Peak game intensity training
- Body Composition:
  - Position-specific targets



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# ROUND UP

Rugby has long been cherished by generations of players, families and friends. As the game has progressed, the knowledge and understanding around the needs of developing players has evolved. This document serves as a friendly guide, identifying and articulating vital considerations for those who wish to progress from grassroots rugby through the pathway to the top of the game.

As a reminder, **EVERY JOURNEY IS UNIQUE**. The pace of change will vary, the process is gradual and there is no race to be won. Our core mission to add value to every player and ensure they remain lifelong members of the rugby family is clear.

Whether you go on to reach your England senior cap, or play in your local club, embrace the journey and all that it will bring.



**England  
Rugby**