



PLAYERS are young adults aged 17-21 years. They are focused on 'Improvement and Performance', i.e. improving their playing ability and judging themselves based on their performance in training and games. Players will seek feedback from the coach in order to improve. Therefore, the coaching emphasis in Stage 4 is to 'Facilitate' player learning. Prompting, questioning and promoting player input and choice are key elements of 'facilitating' player development/learning at this stage. The coaching focus shifts towards achieving team goals through the Principles of Pressure and developing greater Game Appreciation.

Physical fitness emphasis now becomes about the introduction to ability-specific strength, speed and conditioning methods. As the game becomes more competitive so too do the demands put on players. Strength and conditioning should become more predominant and form a part of every training session or as extra training sessions if required. Players should be educated on the importance of physical fitness as well as nutritional strategies for pre-training, during training and post-training.

The game at Stage 4 is structured, 15-a-side, with most teams competing in leagues and cup competitions. Players may begin to start choosing to play as a forward or a back but should still explore playing positions either between or within units. The performance of the team and the outcomes of the result forms part of the motivation for these girls to train.



STAGE 4

The Player - Improvement and Performance

The Coach - Facilitates

The Game - Performance

Train to perform

Essence of the Player

Players are young adults aged 17-21 years approx. They are focused on 'Improvement and Performance, i.e., improving their playing ability and judging themselves based on their performance in training and games. Players will seek feedback from the coach in order to improve. Players may be of mixed ability and/or experience and so coaches should be aware of the separate notes on 'Coaching Late Beginners'.

Essence of the Coach

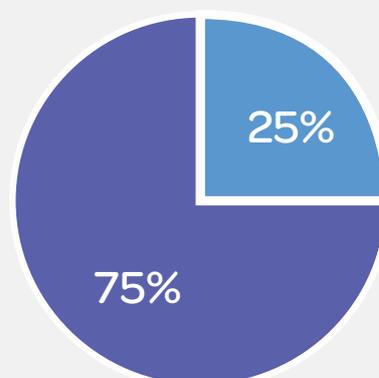
The coaching style at Stage 4 is to 'Facilitate' player learning. Prompting, questioning and promoting player input and choice are key elements of 'facilitating' player development/learning at this stage. Coaching focus shifts towards achieving team goals through the Principles of Pressure and developing greater Game Appreciation.

Game Development

- The game is 15-a-side rugby with players strongly considering their playing position as a forward or back. Occasionally, as a player improves and develops a wider range of skills they may change playing positions.
- As players identify and choose playing positions the emphasis on 1st Phase play (25% approx.) becomes more prominent with teams using it as a platform to launch attacks. Emphasis on general movement (75% approx.) is still dominant with respect to training time and focus.
- The focus of the players, and coach, is to understand strategically, tactically and technically what they need to do in order to execute a positive performance to achieve outcomes.

Stage 4 - Technical Emphasis

- General Movement
- 1st Phase



Personal Characteristics

- **Competitive:** Players are competitive with their team-mates and as a team against their opposition. They will compete for playing positions against their team-mates and look to improve and develop their game in order to do this. The competition structure becomes more competitive with most teams having the opportunity to play in leagues and/or cups.
- **Developing self-identity:** Players are developing their potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to social context and positioning. Self-identity is the quality that makes a person unique from others in their team/group.
- **Challenging:** As young adults, players will challenge more readily and question the rationale and

reason for actions.

- **Learning to focus:** The players are learning how to co-ordinate, focus and organise themselves around different factors such as work, study, sport, social life.
- **Independence:** Many players at this stage are exploring or realising significant levels of independence such as working, living away, making significant life choices etc. and therefore, this will reflect in their perspective with respect to being coached and managed in rugby.



Strategic Development

- Developing a deeper understanding of Units (forwards/backs) and Mini-Units together with General Movement (play before, in and behind the defence/attack). Develop strong understanding and co-ordination between units winning the ball and units using the ball from 1st Phase.
 - A Mini Unit involves a group of 2-4 players related through activity, speciality or purpose. E.g. the front row in the scrum, the halfbacks, the players involved in a ruck or maul.
 - Play 'before' the defence refers to the movement, lines of running and passing that occurs before engaging the defence. The key tasks involved are; positioning, lines and speeds of running and the timing of the pass.
 - Play 'in' the defence refers to the actions that occur as the attack meets the defence when attempting to penetrate the tackle line. The key tasks of players involved are; to draw or commit defenders, ensure accurate/appropriate lines of running, change pace, the contact area, decision-making, and timing and accuracy of passes.
 - Play 'behind/beyond' the defence refers to the movement, lines of running and passing that occurs after penetrating the 1st line defence. Players must focus on; lines and speed of running, lateral and channel support, decision-making, communication and continuity.

- Introduce an understanding of the Principles of Pressure and Game appreciation: The Principles of Pressure refer to the team's understanding of applying pressure on the opposition by maintaining possession, establishing pitch position or scoring points. Development of strategic decision making skills using the Principles of Pressure, along with consideration to weather conditions, score and time remaining.

Tactical Development

- Players are beginning to establish their playing position within the team. They are developing an understanding of their key functional roles in order to successfully undertake a task in a Team, Unit or Mini-unit skill in 1st phase play (Possession and Go Forward) and General Movement (4 Families).
- 1st Phase:
 - Attack: Players are beginning to develop an ability to make decisions based on the Principles of Pressure and Game Appreciation. Players are developing a strong understanding and co-ordination between units winning the ball and units using the ball from 1st Phase.
 - Defence: Disrupting opposition to gain possession or prevent clean ball. Developing Systems – 'rush defence and drift defence'.
- General Movement: Players are continuing to develop their understanding of General Movement with the introduction of the 'Axis group'. Players practice making decisions based on what family they should be in, their positioning on the pitch in relation to these, and where they may be during the next phase of play.
 - 'life of the ball group'
 - 'early group'
 - 'axis group'
 - 'late group'
- Introduction of the 'Axis group'
The 'axis group' is defined as the group of players arriving in the vicinity of the breakdown as the ball is emerging, responsible for providing close attack options (either side of the breakdown) and channel support options for the 'early group'.
- Defence:
 - Defending 1st, 2nd line and 3rd Line
 - Developing Systems – for example, 'rush defence and drift defence'
 - Counter Attack
 - Contesting and Turning over possession in the tackle.

Technical Development

- Developing techniques under pressure: Pressure can be added by manipulating time/space/ repetition. Training should aim to put players into match-like environments/situations whereby they practice performing skills under pressure.

- Players continue to develop position specific skills. Some players may choose to play as a back or forward, however the coach should be aware that it is possibly too soon to assign players in any one position and so exploring various playing positions should still occur.

Physical Fitness

- Introduction to ability-specific strength, speed and conditioning methods. (i.e. one fitness programme does not suit all).
- Education on nutritional strategies: pre-, during and post-training/matches and around menstrual function and training.
- Increase awareness of recovery strategies and methods and their connection to performance. (E.g. compression garments, increase number of hours sleep per night, foam rolling).
- Personal responsibility to prepare individually for training and games.
- Improve game specific conditioning and energy system development, i.e., fitness training should reflect the stop-go nature of the game of rugby.

Mental Development

- The promotion of individual self-confidence is important at this stage in order to assist with player development. It will aid the player in their decision making on the pitch if they have confidence in their abilities and actions.
- Players develop a sense of their own self-worth or value as a player.
- Facilitating the realisation of individual and collective achievement through goal-setting.

