



Coaches Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsible for selecting and preparing teams for matches
- Plans and prepares for training sessions and activities
- Ensures all players get equal opportunity to take part in club/team activities
- Sets the right example for players on and off the field
- Educates players in the ethos of rugby and the values of being a true sportsman
- Acts fairly in the treatment of all players
- Works closely with the Club Youth or Mini coordinators
- Conforms to IRFU Safeguarding Policies, in particular the Declaration of Intent
- Attains relevant coaching qualifications
- Ensures all activities are safe and supervised



Physical Contact

There are specific circumstances with the sport of rugby which will require coaches/volunteers to come into physical contact with the young people within their age group from time to time in the course of teaching them the skills for their age group. Examples of activities where safe practice is critical e.g. the introduction/development of tackling. Coaches should be aware of the limits within which contact should properly take place. As a general principle all coaches should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical actions

It should be recognised that physical contact between an adult and a young person which may occur during legitimate coaching may be misconstrued or misunderstood by other young people, parents/guardians or other adults. Touching young participants, including well intentional informal and formal gestures can if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised.

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. Appropriate physical contact may be required to assist in the development of a skill or activity or for safety reasons e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.

When is physical contact appropriate?

Rugby requires a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to assist a young person when learning how to tackle for the first time but the following should be taken into consideration:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching

What about physical punishment?

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful in all circumstances. It is a criminal offence and should be reported to AGS and Tusla. For more information on Physical Contact see pages 59-60 of Sport Ireland's Code of Ethics



Supervision & Safety

Adult/Player Ratio Ratios are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to activity, location and resources. It is important to ensure that there are enough people to be able to cope with the number of children participating in any activity and adequately respond to an emergency.

As a guide, a ratio of 1:10 should be considered as a minimum requirement where players are 11 years of age or older and a ratio of 1:8 for children under that age. For younger players or situations involving travel, the ratio should increase depending on the requirements or the activity the group will be involved in.

Considerations:

- Age, gender and ability/disability of the group
- Where girls are involved aim for a mix of male and female adults
- Type of activity (training, traveling or social) to be undertaken
- Time involved
- Experience of the adults (coaches, managers and helpers/assistants) involved
- Previous experience with group or club and likely behaviour
- Location of activity or event and type of travel involved

Ensure:

- Players are never left unattended during training/matches
- Adequate numbers of coaches/ helpers are available to supervise all activities
- Coaches and managers are aware where the players are and what they are doing. Dangerous behaviour should not be tolerated at any stage
- Ensure the respect for the privacy of all young people in changing rooms, showers and toilets, remain outside with easy access in case of an incident. In the event of mixed teams females should supervise the changing area for girls
- There should be sufficient separate changing facilities for mixed gender and mixed ages
- All participants are informed beforehand of what behaviour will be accepted and not accepted from them, use codes of conduct
- Those who are operating in a supervisory role should have access to adequate first aid material as well as all important local phone numbers



Safety Practices

Safe management practices will not only enable a club to run smoothly and efficiently, but it will also help to minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to happen to children.

Playing and training areas

- All equipment needed is clean, safe and of the standard required
- Vehicle access available at all times to the training or playing area
- Each team knows where their designated playing/training area is
- All activities to be safe and appropriate to the age group
- Activities are supervised by suitably trained adults of the club

Before Training Starts Ensure:

- Training should be provided for all newly-recruited personnel e.g. courses for coaches and referees and/or training to work with Age-Grade Players, safeguarding, etc.
- An 'Incident Log' is kept by those in a supervisory capacity for the purposes of recording incidents which may occur which do not necessarily qualify as accidents or injuries requiring medical attention. These should be given to the CWO for safe keeping
- Plans and preparations are made for training sessions and activities
- Always have appropriate adult /child ratios

During Training Ensure:

- All players get equal opportunity to take part in club/team activities
- Educate players in the ethos of rugby and the values of being a true sportsperson
- The coach acts fairly in the treatment of all players
- All activities are safe and supervised at all times
- Always have appropriate adult /child ratios



After Training Ensure:

- Any serious incidents or injuries should be clearly recorded, describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, and how the situation was resolved. Injury reporting can be done via IRFU website

If an Accident/Incident occurs:

Assess the situation and alert appropriate medical support if required.

For Minor injuries:

- Ensure only appropriately-qualified First Aid personnel assist the injured person
- Never give medication or drugs of any kind without professional / suitably qualified support
- Always inform parents / guardians of the incident and actions taken as soon as possible

For Serious Injuries:

- When injured Age-Grade Player cannot be moved, take other Age-Grade Players away and ensure they are supervised
- If in doubt, send immediately for an ambulance.
- Ensure access to the playing area for emergency vehicles
- Be aware of the IRFU guidelines in relation to medical emergencies
- Implement the accident reporting procedures/policies of the club/Branch or IRFU, see www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/medical.php.
- Inform the parents/guardian of the injured Age-Grade Player

First Aid Equipment:

- Bags and/or boxes should be made from suitable materials designed to protect the contents therein and should be clearly marked
- Contents should only contain items which first-aid persons have been trained to use. There should be sufficient quantities of the items available at all times and check the bag regularly to ensure the contents are not out of date. Advanced equipment maintained and in good working order
- The use of all equipment, medications, bandages etc. should always be directed or supervised by a suitably qualified person