



THIS IS OUR GAME

THIS IS WELSH RUGBY



TRY OUR GAME

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Introduction

We know that there are many women who have always been inspired to pick up a rugby ball and just having a go, we regularly here women saying 'its always been one of those sports i'd just love to try?' well now is the chance for us to help these women to give rugby a try. We want to support them in a low pressure, low stress, fun environment and get them to go along to a local club and have a bit of a laugh trying the game we know so many women are now hooked on! And if they decide this is the sport for them you can encourage them to join the team for next season.

We have set up a 'Try Our Game' programme for clubs which, will serve as a simple and supported introduction into rugby for new players and to help you attract more women into the game for the long term. Your regional Game Changer is a fantastic resource to assist you in the development of the programme at your club, you can find their contact details towards the back of this booklet.

This guide is to assist those who may be interested in running a try our game program and has been designed with coaches, female players and clubs in mind.

Why start a Try Our Game programme?

We have developed a 4 week coaching programme that can be run for approx an hour session once a week which has been tailored around ensuring a positive, fun and engaging introduction for women who are new to rugby. The aim of these introductory sessions is to build a safe environment to develop rugby confidence, have fun and hopefully encourage these women to take the next step and register to your club!

The WRU have developed this great resource that will aid you to:

- Organise the program - Including the all important welcome
- Delivery of quality fun, progressive and safe sessions
- Strategies on how to integrate those new players into your existing team
- Retain your players
- Reach out to your regional Game Changer



Organising and Event

Step 1: Club commitment

Women's teams are always looking for ways to grow their membership.

Set up a meeting with the relevant committee members to discuss running a Try Our Game programme. Make sure everyone is on board, motivated and enthusiastic about attracting new females to the team.

Step 2: Date and Venue

Decide on a starting date. We encourage doing the first 4 sessions away from normal club training.

It might be worth asking females in the community what days and times are good for them, consulting with them helps you already create that spark in interest.

Ensure training is held at your club so you can showcase facilities and demonstrate that new players are welcome. A friendly, safe environment is key to a positive first experience.

This means that the club NEEDS to be open, don't forget first impression count!

Step 3: The Right People

Firstly identify a key point of contact for the new participants, who will support them on the first steps of Trying Our Game.

If you are a coach then canvas your experienced players to see if they would like to assist you in the delivery of the sessions.

Also, don't underestimate the fact your existing players will be role models to others and will be looked up to by new players, female role models within the club can help mentor others and be a local role model.



Step 4: Equipment

Read through session plans and make sure you have all the equipment that is needed.

The sessions should not be technical. Just Fun, engaging, safe. Again, don't be afraid to ask the new females what they would like to do and tailor sessions to the needs and wants of the group.

It is important that the players are aware of what is needed to take part.

Collect old boots and keep them in the changing rooms so that the newbie's can try before they buy!

Step 5: Roles and Responsibilities

Its extremely important that the coach is supported, from a team of volunteers who can assist in the administration, advertising , delivery and everything needed for a successful female only rugby session.

Step 6: Advertising

Social media is huge and all appropriate channels should be utilized. Facebook to twitter amongst your existing members and your key contacts within your community. The more you advertise the more chance you have of new players turning up.

Other forms of advertisement are also available. Leaflets and posters can be distributed around your areas, use your community pied pipers to support you with this and tell everyone that we want Women to TRY OUR GAME!!



Best Practice

Few tips and hints....

- Get the local papers involved
- Request that a Welsh/Regional Women's rugby player attend to help create local interest
- Fun and games were the top priority for the activities with refreshments available after
- Collect contact details to promote the first training session and encourage players to return
- Nominate someone to talk to the attendees (not the coach) on the day and answer any queries they may have
- Use the club's Facebook page and Twitter profiles and Club logos on all letters and handouts
- Ask your Game Changer to promote the event on the National/Regional rugby websites
- Why not add in a social activity to your programme, maybe after the last session to show how social rugby can be...you could have a curry and quiz after training for example? Chance to do a bit of fund raising at the same time!

Deliver quality fun, progressive and safe sessions

Sometimes rugby may be quite daunting for someone who has never played, safety and player welfare are at the forefront of WRU strategies to ensure participants can play the game safely.



Coaching

The following points are highlighted to assist coaches of 'New Starters' to ensure they are introduced to rugby in a safe and enjoyable manner:

Awareness of players:

Acknowledge that there are New Starting players within the group thus ensuring the coach has designed the training session in order to control their introduction to rugby in a safe, enjoyable and challenging way.

Fundamental skill variances:

'New Starters' may have come from another sport but some may not have played any sport before, therefore, their fundamental sports skills may vary. Some players may have excellent agility, balance and coordination while others might have better ball handling skills. Some players may lack many of these fundamental sports skills and so training/playing must facilitate the development of these skills.

Progression:

Managing player expectations and needs with competence and readiness is the responsibility of the coach. There is no exact time frame for this, however, player welfare and safety is paramount. Progressing the player too quickly could facilitate injury, while progressing them too slowly might result in frustration, demotivation and ultimate departure from the game.

Game Understanding:

Coaches should remember that players joining the sport for the first time will have little or no game understanding and experience. Developing their understanding of 'what' has to be done, 'when', 'how' and 'why' it is done to be effective is also paramount. Most other invasion team sports are similar with respect to principles of play and therefore players can readily transfer these principles across other sports



15 Coaching Tips

Follow the session plans at the end of this manual, that have been designed for coaches who are delivering a session to those who are new to rugby. However, before we deliver consider the following 15 tips

1. Be prepared for when they arrive, have the first game/ warm up ready to go
2. Be welcoming, enthusiastic and remember to smile.
3. Keep explanations simple, encourage them to ask questions.
4. Be inclusive, involve all players
5. Always encourage and praise
6. Use a whistle to gain attention, try not to shout or lose patience
7. Avoid highlighting errors or weaknesses, and do not use negative words



8. Use your players names if you don't know them get to know them don't make one up
9. Make sure they know what to call you - coach is a great start!
10. Make sure your sessions involves problem solving, ask questions and give them an opportunity to discuss and try for themselves
11. Have a contingency plan if your session is not working or they are finding it too easy or too hard
12. Don't be tempted to join in, this effects control and could be dangerous
13. Encourage flair and risk taking, they must not be scared to make a mistake
14. Keep them busy, allow time for stoppages where they can talk and laugh but keep them engaged
15. Use and encourage humour, keep it fun!



Integrating with an existing team

Rugby union is an invasion team sport with a unique property relating to the off-side law; inducting and teaching new players this aspect of the game cannot be over-estimated since athletes and players from single and other team sports will have had little or no experience of this unique aspect of rugby union.

Managing the competence gap between new starters and experienced players when training and playing in competition is critical for player welfare, enjoyment and retention.

Being aware of player competences and confidence is critical to ensure players are trained and challenged appropriately with the correct intensity and rate of progression. This may require segregation of players from time to time to allow them to practice at an intensity to facilitate safe and enjoyable learning.

This demands an insightful, vigilant, patient and innovative coaching approach.

Integration

Knowing how and when to integrate these players into general team activities.

Coaches may have to tailor their session to allow for more individual attention while also ensuring that the player still feels part of the team. Knowing how/when to introduce them to general team activities safely is key.

Confidence in contact

This relates to both individual and in Unit play. Players should develop competence and confidence in all individual contact skills (attack and defence). In particular, if a player wishes to play in the forward unit, they must become comfortable, confident and competent with all positional skills required to play in 1st Phase set piece, Scrum and Line-out.

Exposure to Matches

Match readiness can be a difficult decision for the coach. Competence, confidence, training performance, physical fitness, size and level of competition are some of the factors the coach must consider before allowing a player to play part or all of a match. Again, the coach, in agreement with the player, should decide on what is in the player's best interest while also ensuring her safety.

Laws of the Game

Rugby can be complicated when it comes to the Laws of the Game, especially for a player who has no previous knowledge of the game. A player is required to have appropriate knowledge and respect for the Laws of the Game. Without appropriate knowledge a player may put themselves, their team-mates and their opponents at risk. This could also lead to frustration for the player, their team, the opposition and the officials.



Session Plans

The following pages provide a warm up and four session plans to assist the coach in delivering appropriate content to new players.

The sessions have been designed for new players to experience rugby at an introductory level in order to explore the game without exposing anyone to contact.

However, the fun and engaging manner of the sessions and the progressive delivery of techniques will encourage participants to continue their rugby journey into full contact.

Each activity is accompanied by a video to further explain the delivery and can be used as a visual aid for players as well as coaches.



Warm Up - Rugbycise

Warm Up

Warm up drills in rugby are important because they get your players' muscles ready for exercise and help to reduce the risk of injury. They're also a great way to mentally switch on players and to get them ready for the demands of training sessions or a match.

The Rugbycise warm up drills below have been included to give players new to the game a taste of some of the movements that are required to play the game. They can also be incorporated as fitness sessions.

Choose from the list below some activities and devise a 10 minute warm up. Be sympathetic with the number of reps and distances, it's not a beasting it's just a warm up!

- Tackle bag press in pairs - two players to lift tackle bag above head (10 reps)
- Flip the bag over - As states flip the tackle bag over a set number of times
- Roll the bag - Crouch over and roll bag using hands only over a set distance
- Tackle bag spins - Press up either side of tackle bag slide over bag keeping low (10 reps)
- Bag pulls - Pull the tackle bag running backwards over a set distance
- Shuttle runs - Partner work with tackle bag over a set distance.
- Ball Grapples - try and get the ball off each other set a time about 30's is advisable
- Pulses - On back feet in air with ball held in between 20 touches of ball
- Plank - On forearms for 30 secs holding the position
- Sumo Squats – With partner Squats while holding a tackle tube
- Squat holds – Back to back with partner hold a 45-degree angle of knees for 30secs

These are just some examples, have fun experimenting with the exercises but be appropriate to the group's needs. Some may want more so you can change distances and number of repetition's but others just want to have fun, so make it so!

Session 1 - Ball Familiarisation

Ball familiarisation will provide all players the confidence to catch, pass and handle a rugby ball. Ball familiarisation is a core fundamental skill throughout rugby and early exposure to handling, catching and passing will provide access for all players to explore the game further.

However, the importance of ball familiarisation should not over shadow the importance of activities being fun and engaging!

Warm up duration - 5mins

Activity 1 High Five Freeze

Duration 10mins
Min players 6
Equipment Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Have players pair up and stand by one of the outside cones. 10m from centre grid.
2. Set a small square grid with cones in the center of the larger grid and put 10-15 rugby balls in it.
3. On the instructor's signal, one player from each team will run to the center grid and grab a ball and run back.
4. The goal for each team is to get the most amount of balls back to their cone.

Activity 2 Up & Over

Duration 10mins
Min players 6
Equipment Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Start by separating players into equal teams you must have at least 3 in each team standing one behind each other arms length apart.
2. Player 1 starts by passing the ball over their head to the next player, once they have passed they run to the end of the line.
3. Player 2 then passes to the third player by passing through their legs then runs to the end of the line.
4. This process is repeated until all the team passes a point determined at the start by the coach

Activity 3 Tic Tac Toe

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Set up a 10 x 10 grid using 9 cones, set up 2 stations 10m from this grid and divide your players into 2 teams.
2. Each player must carry a ball at all times. The first players from each team run out and place a bib on one of the cones run back and tag next player, that player does the same and the process is repeated until there are 3 bibs from each team in the grid.
3. The next players run out and try and complete the game of noughts and crosses.

Activity 4 Inside the Dragons Lair

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Have players pair up and stand by one of the outside cones. 10m from centre grid.
2. Set a small square grid with cones in the center of the larger grid and put 10-15 rugby balls in it.
3. On the instructor's signal, one player from each team will run to the center grid and grab a ball and run back.
4. The goal for each team is to get the most amount of balls back to their cone.

Activity 5 Running Relay

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Start by separating players into equal relay teams of two or more and have them stand in line behind a cone.
2. Make the first race a simple down and back with a rugby ball in hand, passing to the next player in line on the way back.
3. Next, have players ground the ball and yell "Try!" when they get to the far cone. Have them run back and pass to the next player in line.
4. The next race should have two players from a team race down and back, completing three passes in between each cone, scoring at each end.
5. Last, let players have fun by celebrating a "try dance" at the furthest cone before running back to pass to their teammate.

Session 2 - Evasion

Following Session 1 - Ball Familiarisation, evasion will introduce new players to the concept of running, creating and passing into space away from the defender. This skill will develop continuity into a game, avoiding stop/start moments making the experience more fulfilling and fun.

Warm up duration - 5mins

Activity 1 Keep Ball

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Two teams of four players each start inside a 40 x 40 space.
2. The team with the ball works around the grid by passing the ball in any direction. The goal on offense is to score by passing to a player on their team who runs inside of either of the scoring boxes.
3. No running with the ball is allowed.
4. A turnover will occur if the ball hits the ground, or if a ball is intercepted.
5. Only offensive players are allowed inside the scoring boxes.
6. Defensive players cannot strip the ball from offensive players and must remain arms-length distance when defending.

Activity 2 Dodge Ball

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Set up a 10x10 grid. Have a centre line that each team cannot pass.
2. One team starts with a ball each and the object is to hit an opposing player below the waist. Each team has 5 goes to score as many hits as possible.

Activity 3 Tag Dogs

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. One player starts in the middle, facing the remaining players lined up along one edge of the grid.
2. Players must attempt to run from one side of the grid to the other without being tagged. When they arrive at other side, they stop and wait for a restart.
3. If tagged, the tagged player joins in with the center tagging group and attempts to tag others on the next round.

Activity 4 Try Score

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Two teams of four players start behind opposite try lines.
2. The offensive team starts by passing the ball in any direction.
3. If the offensive team gets tagged before they score they must set the ball on the ground, return to their try line, then return back to play and become the defending team.
4. The offense reverses the direction of attack if a try is scored.
5. A dropped ball results in a turnover to the other team.
6. The first team to get a set number of try's will win the round.

Activity 5 Around the World

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Have players form a circle with about 2 yards in between each other.
2. Start by having players attempt to complete passes around the entire circle without dropping the ball.
3. Once players can get around the circle, make the game harder by adding a time limit.
4. After the time limit, play a game of standing "Duck, Duck, Goose" with the circle. Instead of the tagger running away from the "Goose", have

Session 3 - Passing

Session 3 will develop ball familiarisation skills, introduced in Session 1, to allow new players to further their knowledge and ability with passing, in order to manage more demanding game situations. Passing will provide more context to the game of rugby with regards to the outcome of successfully evading defenders. However, do not add too much detail at this stage as the outcome for the session is to provide a fun and engaging environment.

Warm up duration - 5mins

Activity 1 Rugby Rounders

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. The offensive team forms a circle inside of the diamond grid.
2. The defensive team forms a relay line behind the "Home Base" cone.
3. On the instructor's signal, the offensive team will start passing a rugby ball around the circle to perform as many passes as possible. At the same time the defensive team will send their first runner (rugby ball in hand) around each of the bases.
4. The defensive team will have each team member run the bases once.

Activity 2 Atomic Touch

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Set up a 10x10 grid. Have a centre line that each team cannot pass.
2. One team starts with a ball each and the object is hit an opposing player below the waist. Each team has 5 goes to score as many hits as possible.

Activity 3 All Change

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Set up a 10 x 10 grid using 9 cones, set up 2 stations 10m from this grid and divide your players into 2 teams.
2. Each player must carry a ball at all times. The first players from each team run out and place a bib on one of the cones run back and tag next player, that player does the same and the process is repeated until there are 3 bibs from each team in the grid.
3. The next players run out and try and complete the game of noughts and crosses.

Activity 4 Clap Pass

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Make a circle of upto 6 players if you have more make another circle.
2. You all start with 5points to start pass the ball to anyone in the circle, that person has to clap before catching the ball.
3. If you dont clap before catching you loose a point. its a knockout game when the first person gets to zero its the person with the most points left wins.

Activity 5 Hot/Cold Potato

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Have players form a circle with one player starting with the rugby ball.
2. Players will start with a "cold potato" rugby ball where they take time to learn passing skill
3. The instructor will then change the ball to a "hot potato" and players should work on quickly passing the ball using the technique showed by coach with the "cold potato". Incorporate a time limit where players must pass within two seconds in order to increase the speed of the game.

Session 4 - TAG

Session 4 is designed to combine all the techniques delivered in each previous session into the context of a game of rugby without the element of contact. Tag rugby will provide the fundamental elements of rugby from a law and general play perspective, allowing new players to participate in an environment that is very close to the full contact game. The session will provide fun and engaging activities that allow progressive steps towards encouraging new players to continue beyond the fourth session.

Warm up duration - 5mins

Activity 1 Breakout

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. A smaller grid (6 x 6 yards) is centered within a larger grid (20 x 20 yards). Start with 4-8 players inside the smaller grid and 3-6 players outside the smaller grid, but still within the larger grid. Keep more players inside the grid than outside to start.
2. The smaller grid is a safe zone for the offensive team. The defensive team can only move in the large grid and cannot enter the safe zone.
3. On the instructor's signal, the players must try and escape outside the larger grid without having their flag removed by the defense.

Activity 2 Last One Standing

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Start the game with every player spread out in a large grid.
2. When the instructor yells, "Go!" each player will attempt to capture as many flags as they can without having their own flags taken.
3. When both flags have been removed from a player's belt they should leave the grid and let the other players continue.

Activity 3 Rats Vs. Rabbits

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Each player finds one partner and together they designate one partner "rats" and one partner "rabbits".
2. One team Rats lines up along the center line, facing the "rat's safe zone". The other team rabbits lines up next to their partner, arms length apart, facing the "rabbits safe zone".
3. The instructor calls either "Rats" or "Rabbits!" The team being called tries to get to their safe zone before getting tagged by the other team.

Activity 4 Chain TAG

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Same as TAG Doags but catchers must hold hands to form a chain if you get tagged/touched that person joins the chain. Once the chain has 5 players it may split

Activity 5 TAG Game

Duration	10mins
Min players	6
Equipment	Balls, cones & bibs



Description:

1. Split players into two equal teams and begin on opposite sides of the field.
2. Have players prepare by wearing flag belts and two flags.
3. Incorporate all lateral/backwards passing.
4. All stoppage in play restarts with a free pass, laterally or backwards.

Contacts

For further information, please contact your regional Game Changer.



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