

TAG LEAGUE

Modified Laws of the Game for Junior Competitions

First Edition 2014



Introduction

The laws and explanations contained in this document should be read in conjunction with those outlined in ***“TAG LEAGUE Laws of the Game First Edition 2014”***.

In particular, the **“Spirit of the Game”** and **“Code of Conduct”** will apply to all Tag League competitions and should be read, understood and adopted at all times by all officials, participants and spectators.

Index

Simplified Rules:

To assist coaches, parents and players, these key sections are outlined in a simplified manner suited for explanation to junior players.

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Training and Development Drills:

A key component of junior competitions is skills development. To assist coaches and parents in this objective, we have developed and included some training drills which are designed to assist in the development of skills of players for each key facet of the game.

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Modified for Juniors - Laws of the Game

Summary

- 8 players on the field per team (minimum of 5)
- Unlimited interchanges
- Kick-off to be unassisted (holding the ball is not permitted)
- Only players are permitted to be on the field during the game
- Marker is not allowed in Junior U/9 competitions.
- Dummy half cannot score in Junior U/9 and Junior Plus U/12
- Dummy half cannot be tagged in possession in Junior U/9 and Junior Plus U/12 (changeover will result)
- Defensive line cannot move until first receiver or dummy half touches the ball in Junior U/9 and Junior Plus U/12 (penalty will result)
- Kicking in general play is not allowed in Junior U/9 and Junior Plus U/12 (change over will result)
- Kicking in general play permitted in Teen Tag.
- Contact is not permitted in defence or attacking play.

Age Division	Junior Under 9 Yrs	Junior Plus 10-12 Yrs	Teen Tag 13-15 Yrs
No Marker Allowed	✓		
Single Marker Allowed		✓	✓
Dummy can't get tagged	✓		
Dummy can't score	✓	✓	
No diving allowed	✓	✓	
Defence can't move until 1 st receiver touches	✓	✓	
Defence can't move until dummy touches			✓
No kicking allowed in general play	✓	✓	
Kicking allowed on zero, after 4 th			✓

The “Play-the-Ball”

Definition: the act of bringing the ball into play after a tag on their own player or the team has been tagged the statutory number of successive times (6) or due to an infringement which will result in a change-over.

A **change-over** is the act of giving the ball to the opposition for them to restart play with a play-the – ball (PTB).

When does a “change-over” occur?

- After a team has been tagged the statutory number of successive times (6)
- After a knock-on (when no advantage has been gained)
- When the ball goes into touch
- When a forward pass has been ruled
- When a kick in general play travels higher than the referee’s shoulder (off the boot)
- When a kick in general play is not permitted
- When the travel of the ball is “irregularly” affected (from a pass or kick) after it touches the referee

How to play-the-ball correctly

- Have control of the ball (ball in the hands)
 - Be facing the oppositions goal line (be square)
 - Place the ball on the ground and roll it back using the foot
 - Make sure that dummy half picks up the ball before it rolls back 2m
- Note: dummy half may pick up the ball whilst only wearing one tag provided they only take one step before they pass the ball

What if there is no marker?

In Junior U/9 and Junior Plus U/12 a marker is not permitted.

However, in all other age groups the marker is “optional”. Where a marker is permitted, but not positioned, the attacking player may “play-the-ball forward”.

How do “play-the-ball forward” correctly

- Have control of the ball (ball in the hands)
- Be facing the oppositions goal line (be square)
- Place the ball on the ground, release the ball and push it forward using the foot before regathering

Note: A player may PTB forward whilst only wearing one tag provided they only take one step before they pass the ball

Note: A “PTB forward” is not the same as a “tap kick”.

Attacking Laws

All **Tag League** competitions are considered to be predominantly attacking games. As such, it is the responsibility of the attacking player (ball carrier) to make every effort to attack (promote the ball and their field position) whilst carrying the ball.

The objective of the game is to ground the ball (with control) on or over the opponents' goal line to score (a try). In doing so, the attacking team (team in possession of the ball) may run, kick (where permitted) or pass the ball in their attempt to score. The defending team can prevent this by removing the "tag(s)" from the ball carrier (attacking player).

The attacking team is allowed six (6) consecutive tags in which to score. Upon the sixth (last) tag, the tagged player will place the ball on the ground and a change-over will result; and the defending team will assume the attack. A change-over will commence with a play-the-ball (PTB)

An attacker must:

- Always advance the ball, promote their field position
- Only run into gaps (between defenders) and not initiate contact with defenders
- Always have their shirt tucked into their shorts
- Play-the-ball correctly and on the mark

An attacking player is not allowed to:

- Run behind a team mate whilst a defending player is within tagging distance (arms length)
- Jump (upward movement of the body with both feet simultaneously or independently leaving the ground) to avoid a defender or within tagging distance of a defender
- Make contact with a defender (once the defender has gained position)
- Pass the ball forward to a team mate
- Pass the ball back to a team mate (in the field of play) once they have crossed their opponents goal line
- Surrender (give themselves up/offer their tags to the defender)

Defence Laws

The objective of the defence (team not in possession of the ball) is to halt the progress of the attacker by removing one/both of their tags.

The defender must not:

- Accidentally or deliberately move into the path of the attacker and initiate contact
- Attempt to impede the progress of an attacker by pulling on clothing
- Impede the progress of an attacker by tripping or holding onto any body part
- Play at the ball
- Throw the tags away (more than 1m) once the tag(s) have been removed
- Call out “tagged” unless a tag has actually been effected
- Call “inside” either to deceive the attacker (to pass the ball) or to advise other defenders of their intent.

When calling in defence, a defender must clearly distinguish themselves as a defender (ie: “inside is mine” or “I’ve got the inside”, etc.)

- In any way interfere with the player playing the ball
- Remove the tags from any attacking player who does not have the ball

Making a Tag

Once the tag is made, the defender will hold the tag, or put it/them down on the ground not more than 1m from where the tag was initiated.

- Where a marker is not permitted, the attacker will PTB at the nearest of his/her tag(s) on the ground, or where instructed by the referee.
- If a marker is permitted, the attacker must PTB directly in front of the marker and no further away than an arms-length (tagging distance) from the marker.

At the PTB

- The defensive line must retire seven (7) meters back from the PTB – in line with the referee
- The team defending cannot move forward off the defensive line until the first receiver touches the ball, or dummy half has run (with the ball)
- Where a marker is permitted, the marker cannot move until the dummy half has touched the ball
- Where a marker is permitted, the marker cannot at any time strike for the ball with the foot or run around the ball player (enter the ruck) in an attempt to regather the ball
- Where a marker is permitted, the defensive line cannot move forward until the dummy half has touched the ball (Teen Tag) or first receiver touches the ball (Junior Plus).

The defensive line must retire ten (10) meters from:

- a tap restart
- penalty
- goal line drop out
- kick-off

When is a player off-side?

A player is off-side when:

- They are in front of the ball at the kick-off
- They are in front of the ball at a tap re-start
- They receive the ball when in front of a player passing the ball to them
- They are in front of the ball when kicked in general play (where permitted)
- They are less than seven (7) meters from the PTB
- They are less than ten (10) meters from a tap re-start

Can a player be off-side if they are not involved in the PTB?

Yes.

All defending players must retire the required distance or be continually moving directly backward to make the required distance before they advance.

Note: Moving backwards “diagonally” is still considered to be off-side because you are following the play before having retired the required 7m. The only way to get on-side is to retreat directly parallel to the touch lines.

Scoring

A try is scored when an attacking player grounds the ball (with control) on or across the opponents' goal line whilst:

- Wearing both tags
- Being "simultaneously" tagged
- Wearing one/no tags (Refer Section 7: Scoring 9.7)

Diving to score a try is permitted (Teen Tag) provided:

- The hands/knees/arms/body of the attacker does not touch the ground before the goal line (whilst there is a defender within tagging distance)
- The attacking player does not dive over any other player
- The initial trajectory of the dive is towards the ground (down)
- The dive is not considered dangerous/reckless/intimidating by the referee

When regathering a kick from general play (Teen Tag), the ball must be controlled before it is touched on the ground for a try:

- If the ball rolls across the goal line it is deemed "dead ball by the kicking team", must be controlled before touching the ground.
- If a defender touches the ball (that has crossed the goal line) before it is touched by the attacker, it will be deemed "dead ball by the kicking team"
- A player may dive to regather the ball from a kick even if the ball has crossed the goal line (in the air) provided it is controlled before it touches the ground and as it touches the ground.

Infringements

When is a penalty awarded?

A penalty may be awarded for infringements of the laws, misconduct or breaches of the Spirit of the Game and Code of Conduct.

These may include:

- Being off-side, Incorrect play-the-ball
- Late tag/pre-tag, Jumping
- Obstruction, Contact,
- Kicking out on the full at the kick-off
- Back-chat, dissent, foul language,

A penalty can only be taken once the referee has given the mark **AND** instructed the play to proceed.

- If a penalty is not taken on the mark, the referee will request that it be taken again: on the mark
- If a penalty is taken before the referee has given the instruction to proceed, the referee will request that the penalty be taken again: upon instruction

How do you take a penalty?

A penalty can be taken by a:

- “tap kick” (facing in any direction)
- A play-the-ball action (facing forward)

Note: The ball must make contact with the foot whilst in the hand(s) or on the ground.

At a penalty re-start:

- The attacking team must be on-side (behind the ball)
- The defending team must retire ten (10) meters from the penalty mark
- The defending team must not move forward until the ball has been played (touched)

What is considered contact?

- Intentional or accidental collision of bodies

Who initiates contact?

Contact can be initiated by either the attacker or the defender.

- If a defender has gained position, the responsibility to avoid contact is with the attacker
- A defender who moves into the (running) path of an attacker is deemed to have initiated contact
- If a defender(s) closes the gap (into which an attacker is running into) they will be deemed to have initiated contact

A gap exists in relation to time/distance of the attacker from the defence.

Spinning is permitted provided it is into a gap.

Misconduct

The referee is the sole judge of the play, at all times during the game and:

- All players and spectators are under the control of the referee from the time they enter the playing area to the time they leave
- The referee, at his/her discretion, may caution, sin bin or dismiss a player
- The referee has the power to terminate a game due to weather, lightning or player and spectator behaviour

A player is guilty of misconduct and will be penalised if they:

- Trip, kick or strike another player or make any attempt to do so
- Deliberately interfere with an opponent who is not in possession of the ball
- Re-enter the field of play without the referees' permission
- Are effecting or attempting to effect a tag and make contact with any part of an opponent's body accidentally, intentionally, recklessly or carelessly
- Deliberately, unknowingly and/or continuously breaks the Laws of the Game
- Behave in a manner that is contrary to the Spirit of the Game covenant or the Code of Conduct
- Dispute the decision of the referee by word, action or gesture

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DRILLS

The Tag League Association recognises the importance of developing the skills of junior players. This serves to build a foundation for future development, but more importantly allows the junior player to gain more enjoyment from their participation as they are more capable of contributing to the success of their team. This is fundamental in the long term participation of players in the sport.

What we have developed is by no means comprehensive. In particular, Coaches or Parents should build good habits in terms of stretching and warm up before undertaking any of the activities outlined.

We believe that the general fitness of players is a personal responsibility. However a limited amount of Jogging, Sprints, Stepping and other stamina building exercises should also be included as part of a balanced training regime. This can be integrated with ball handling exercises to make things more interesting.

It is important to remember that training should be fun. We have attempted to develop drills as a fun recirculating exercise that participants will get better at with practice. Each drill should only be run for about 5 minutes at a time before moving on to another activity. By doing this participants will remain engaged and not get bored and tune out which will cause a drop in performance.

As a separate activity in developing a game day strategy, Coaches and Parents should look at how the skills being developed can be used to assist the team in successfully competing in junior competitions.

People will often look at the result of a game as an absolute measure of success, but at a junior level it is important to recognise that the performance of the team is best measured by their application of the skills they have, as measured against the skills of their opposition. Remaining focussed on developing the skills required to meet or exceed the performance of an opposing team is the best objective, as this is the path to ultimate success.

We truly hope that these drills assist in that objective.

If you have any questions, have suggestions, have, find or develop some drills that you feel might be of assistance in specific skills development, we would love to hear from you. Just send an email to; Manager@TagLeague.com.au

Play-the-Ball: Beginners

Participants: 4

Preparation: Set out cone markers as indicated by **C** (to represent a defender making a tag). Cones should be approximately 10m apart

The Drill:

Step 1

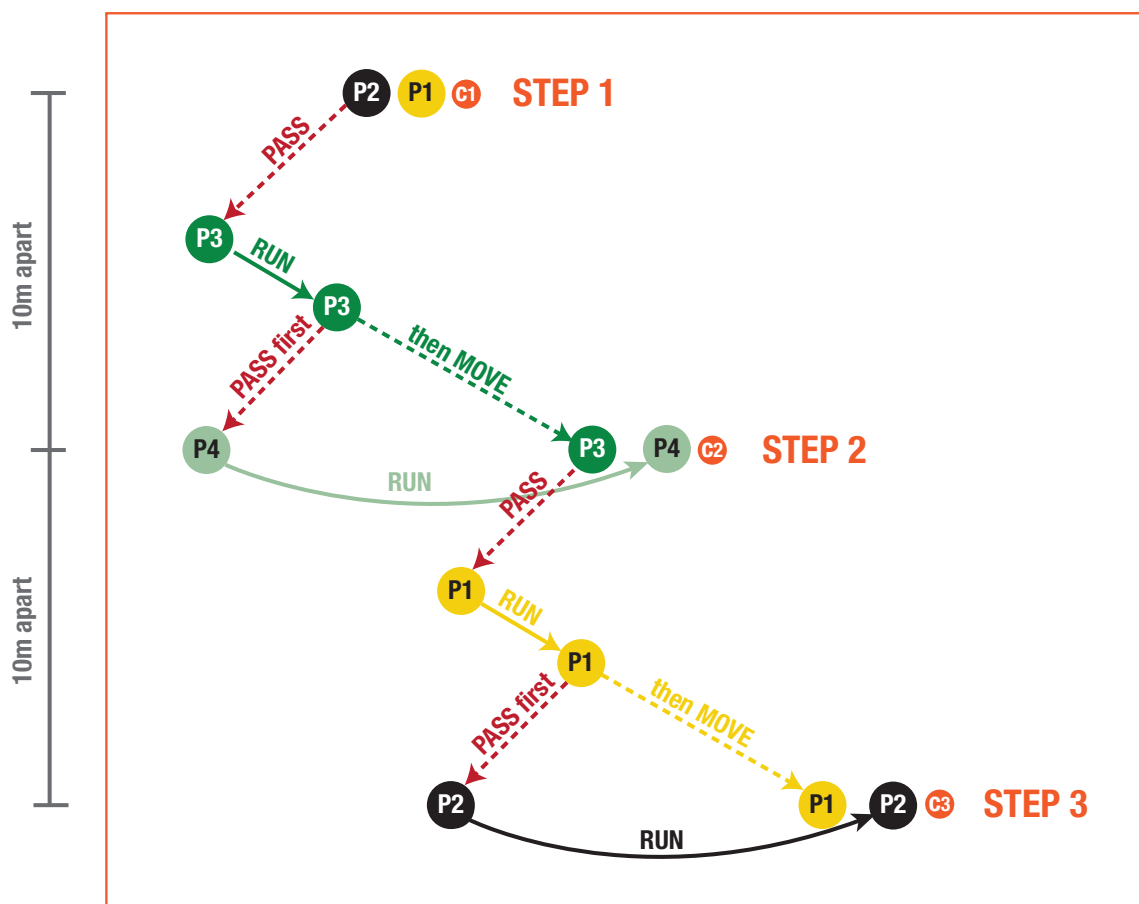
- Have 2 participants take up position behind the first cone (C1) as indicated by P1 & P2
- Have the 3rd participant (P3) take up position approximately 2 metres behind and 3 metres across from the first cone
- Have the 4th participant (P4) take up position a further 4m across from the 3rd participant (P3)
- P1 plays the ball to P2
- P2 collects the ball and passes to P3
- P3 runs forward and passes to P4
- P4 catches the ball and runs towards the next cone (C2) and takes up position behind the cone(tagged), prepares to play the ball to P3
- P3 then takes up the Dummy Half position behind P4

Step 2

- Previous process is repeated with P1 & P2 now taking the role of P3 & P4 (receivers)

Step 3

- The drill can be extended / repeated in as much as space permits.



Learning Outcomes

- Control at the PTB
- Readiness/positioning of the dummy-half.
- Initial pass to first receiver.
- Pass/catch/run

Play-the-Ball: Advanced

Participants: 4

Preparation: Set out cone markers as indicated by **C** (to represent a defender making a tag).
Cones should be approximately 10m apart

The Drill:

Step 1

- Have 2 participants P1, P2 take up position on one end (C1)
- Have the 3rd participant P3 take up position in the middle (C2)
- P1 runs towards P3 with P2 following
- P1 stops at P3 (tagged) and plays-the-ball to P2 who has assumed the dummy-half position

Step 2

- P2 dummies to the left, then runs towards the next cone (C3)
- P1 stays at C2, P3 has run to take up position at (C3) behind P2

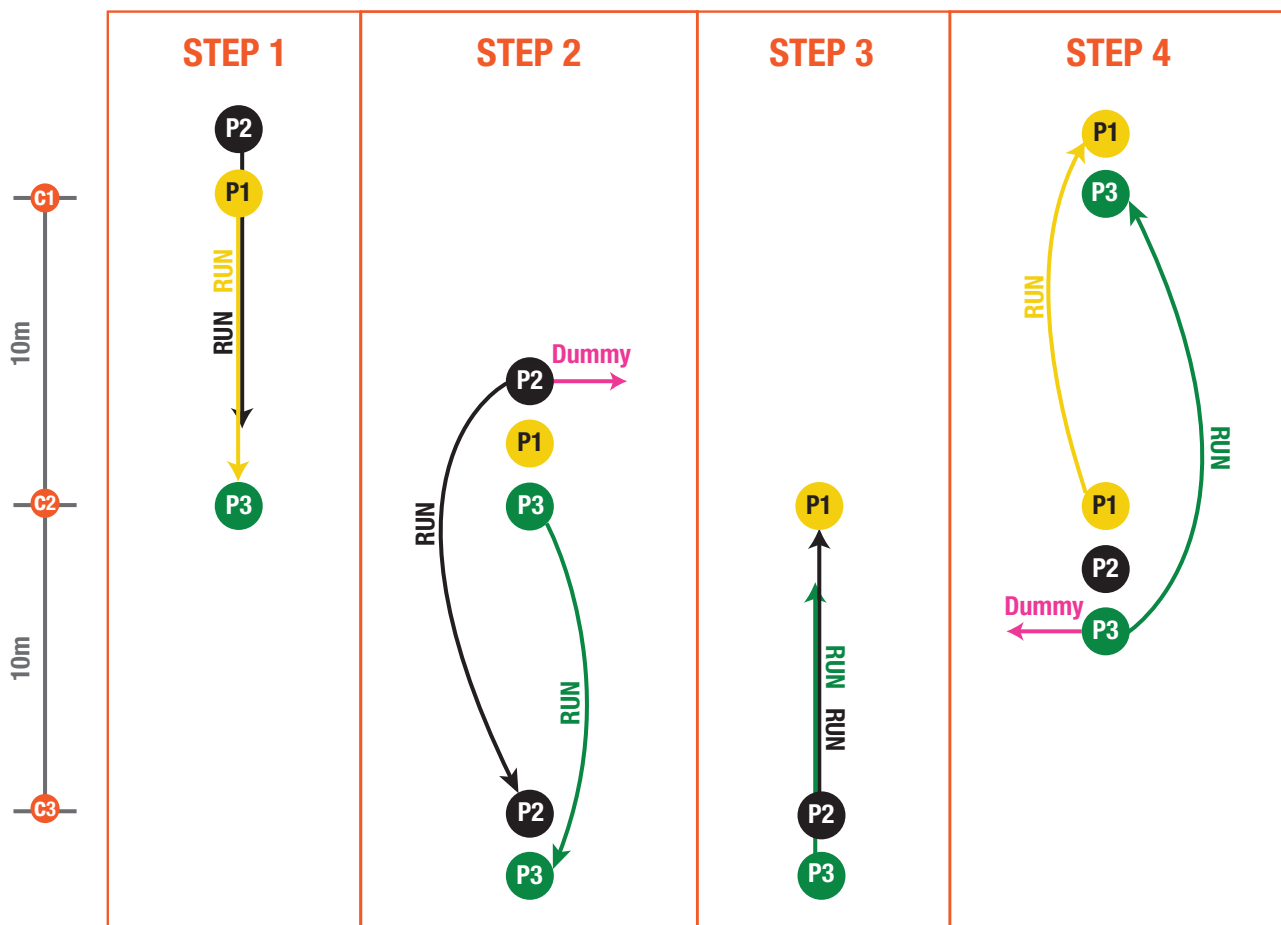
Step 3

- P2 runs towards P1 with P3 following
- P2 stops at P1 (tagged) and plays-the-ball to P3 who has assumed the dummy-half position

Step 4

- P3 dummies to the left, then runs towards the next cone (C1)
- P2 stays at C2, P1 has run to (C1) to take up position behind P3

Repeat



Learning Outcomes

- Speed at the PTB
- Positional speed at dummy-half
- Control at the PTB
- Dummy pass and run

Defending: 2 on 1 tagging

Participants: 4

Preparation: Mark a straight line or use a line already marked

The Drill:

Step 1

- P3 and P4 stand 1m either side of the marked line
- P2 takes up position 5m down the line
- P1 takes up position 3m across and 2m in front of P2
- P2 starts to run towards P3/P4 and is passed the ball

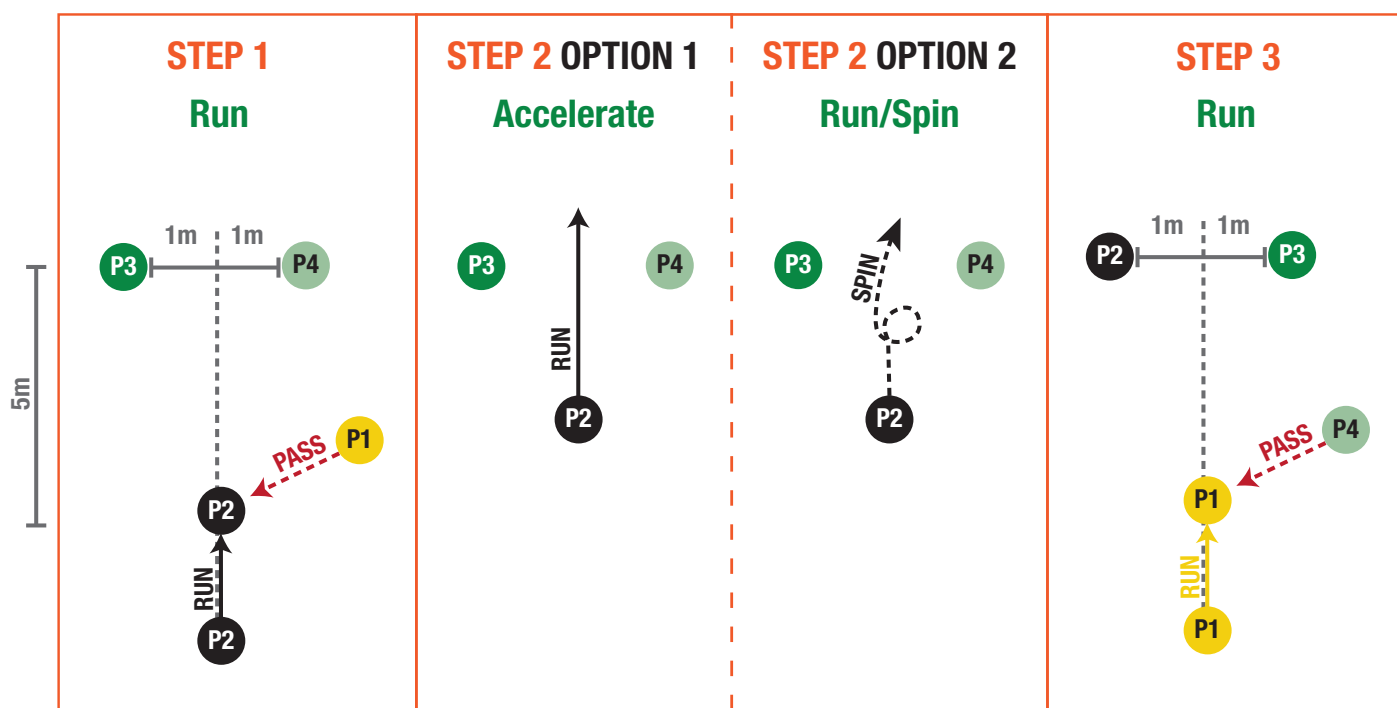
Step 2

- P2 then runs between P3 and P4 attempting to avoid being tagged by either;
 - accelerating through the gap, or
 - spinning through the gap
- P3 and P4 cannot shift ground or close the gap, they can only tag by reaching for the tag nearest them.

Step 3

- Players rotate position with;
 - P4 taking the place of P1
 - P1 moves to P2, P2 to P3, P3 to P4

Repeat



Learning Outcomes

Attack:

- Taking a pass on the run (at speed)
- Running a straight line
- Adjusting speed (accelerate through the gap)

Defence:

- Focussing on the tag
- Adjusting to attacker spinning
- Avoiding contact when tagging

Defending: 2 on 2 Tagging Drill

Participants: 5

Preparation: Mark out a 10m x 10m grid with cones

The Drill:

Step 1

- Have one participant (P1) take up position just outside the square at one corner
- Have two participants take position as the two active defenders (P2, P3) in the middle of the square
- Have two participants take position as the two active attackers (P4, P5) on the edge of the square adjacent to P1
- The drill is initiated by the ball being passed to P5 by P1
- P5 will then run the ball towards P2 with P4 also running in line

Step 2

- P5 will then opt to either:
 - dummy to P4 and run to avoid P2, or
 - pass to P4 who then runs / spins to avoid P2/P3

Step 3

- P1 will then take up position in the centre of the square
- P5 moves to the outside of the square
- P2, P3, P4 all move in a circle to restart the drill

Repeat

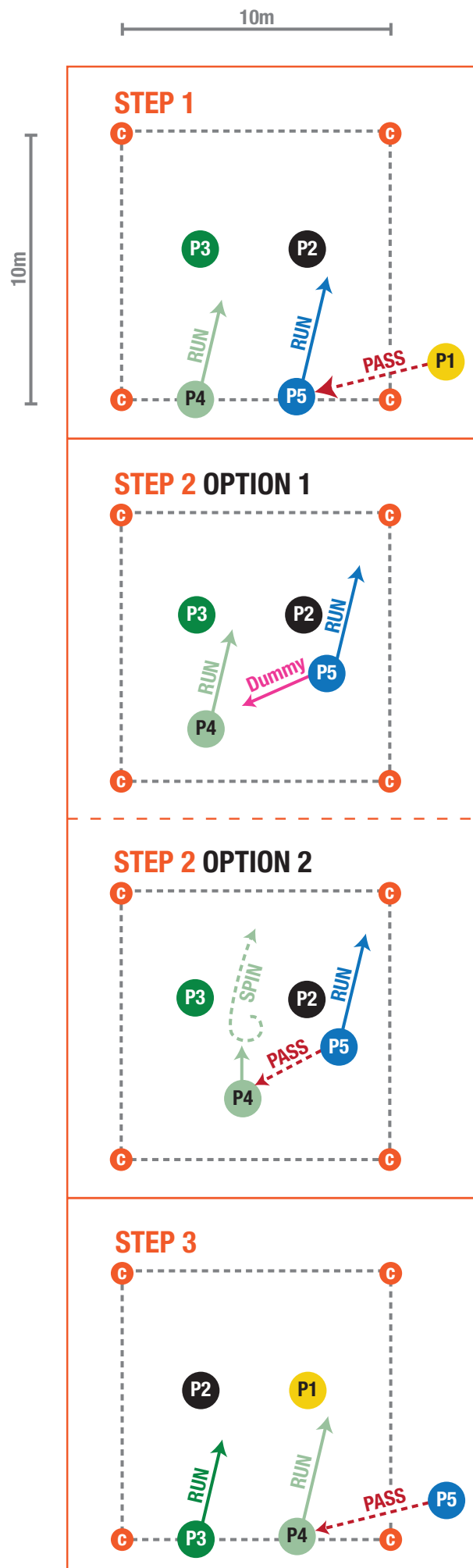
Learning Outcomes

Attack:

- Draw and pass
- Dummy and run
- Running into a gap

Defence:

- Communication (calling your player in defence)
- Effective tagging
- Straight defence line (non staggered)



Attacking: Run around play or How to create an extra player in the attacking line

Participants: 4

Preparation: Nil

The Drill:

Step 1

- Place 3 cones (C1,C2,C3) in a line each 4m apart (to take the place of players in a defensive line)
- Place a 4th cone (C4) a further 4m across but 7m forward (to take the place of a Marker)
- Have 4 participants (P1,P2,P3,P4) take up position as follows;
 - Ball Player (P1) in front of C4
 - Dummy Half (P2) behind P1
 - P3 & P4 spaced 3m apart, across and slightly back from P2
- P1 plays the ball
- P2 gathers the ball and passes to P3
- P3 runs forward in a path between C3 and C2
- P4 runs forward with P3 in a path between C2 and C1

Step 2

- P2 starts to move across and behind P3.
- P4 continues to run forward with P3, P4 starting to move laterally away from P3 to make space for P2
- P2 continues to run across and behind P3
- P2 runs forward between P3 & P4
- P3 passes to P2 who runs forward onto the ball in a path between C2 & C1

Step 3

- P2 passes to P4 who runs forward onto the ball in a path outside of C1

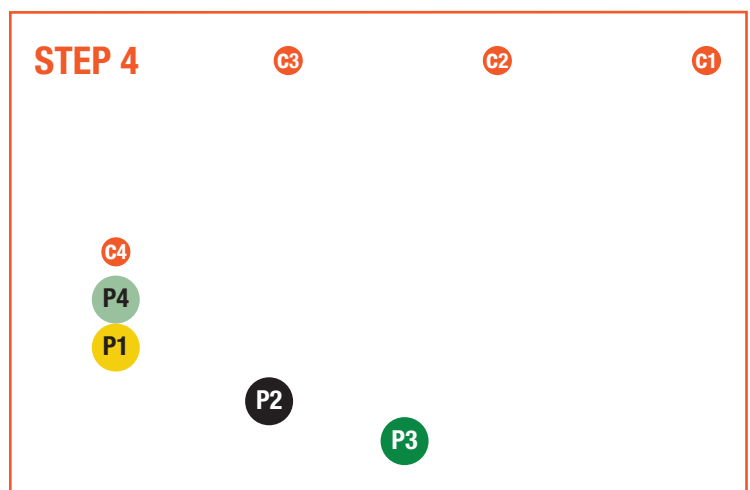
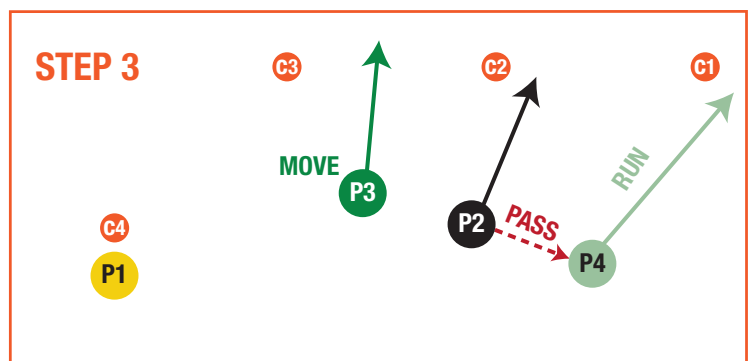
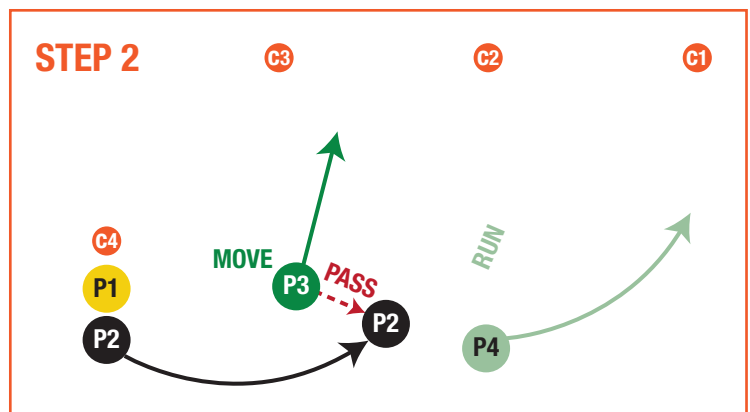
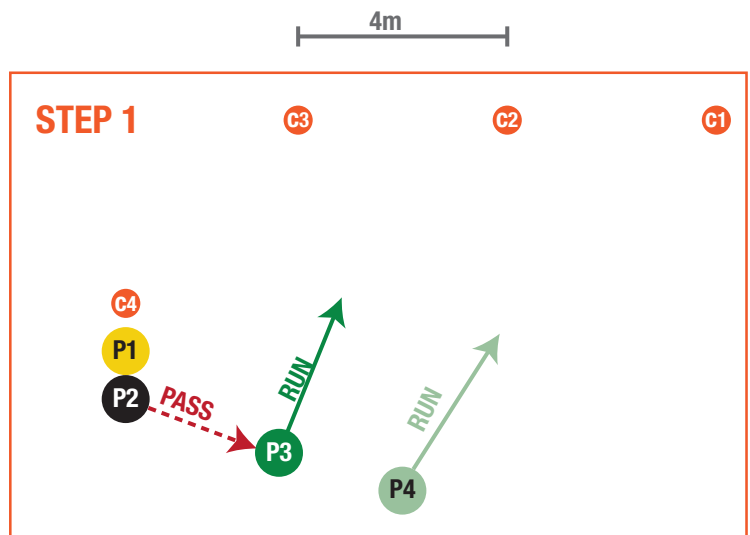
Step 4

- Players rotate position with;
- P4 taking the place of P1
- P1 moves to P2, P2 to P3, P3 to P4

Repeat

Learning Outcomes

- Effective passing from dummy-half
- Multiple involvement in single play (by the dummy-half)
- Basic "set-play" structure
- Identifying the "gap" to run into



Attacking: X Play or How to switch the play to an inside runner

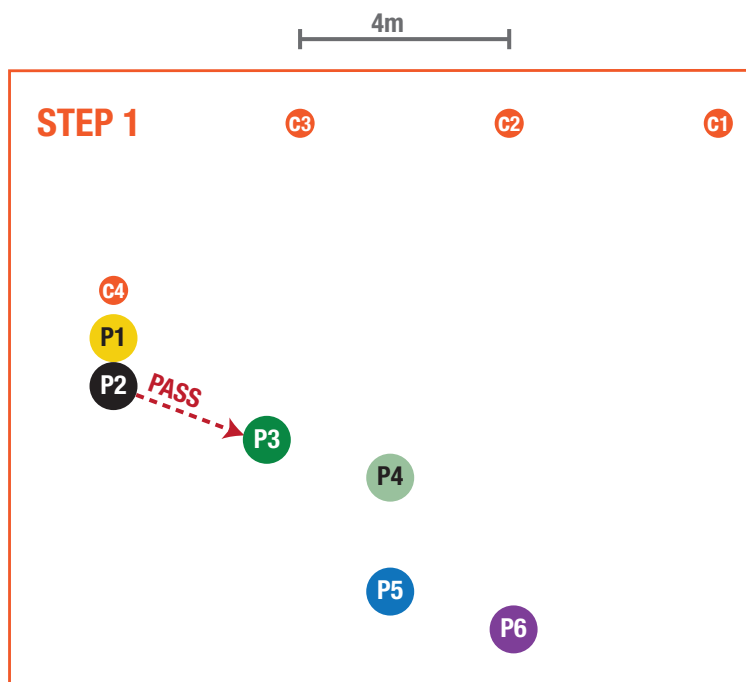
Participants: 6

Preparation: Nil

The Drill:

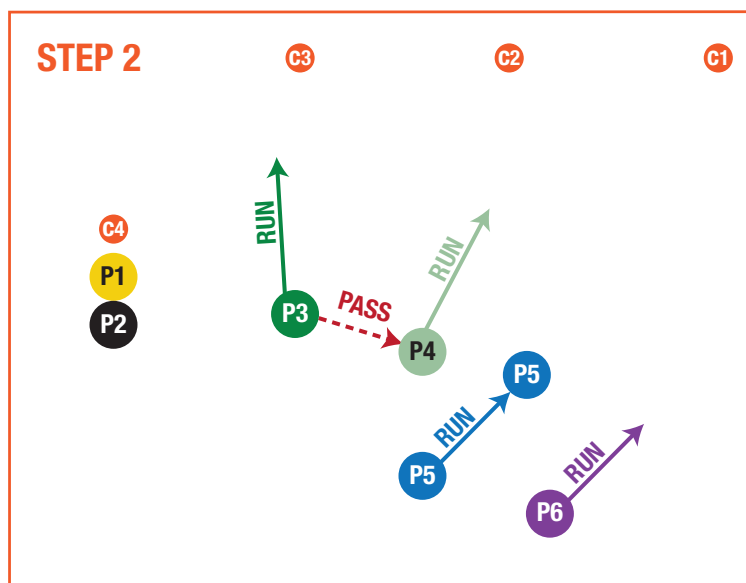
Step 1

- Place 3 cones (C1,C2,C3) in a line each 4m apart (to take the place of players in a defensive line)
- Place a 4th cone (C4) a further 4m across but 7m forward (to take the place of a Marker)
- Have 6 participants (P1,P2,P3,P4,P5,P6) take up position as follows;
 - Ball Player (P1) in front of C4
 - Dummy Half (P2) behind P1
 - P3 & P4 spaced 3m apart, across and slightly back from P2
 - 2 back line players P5 & P6 positioned behind and across from P4
- P1 plays the ball to P2
- P2 gathers the ball and passes to P3 who runs in a path between C2 & C3



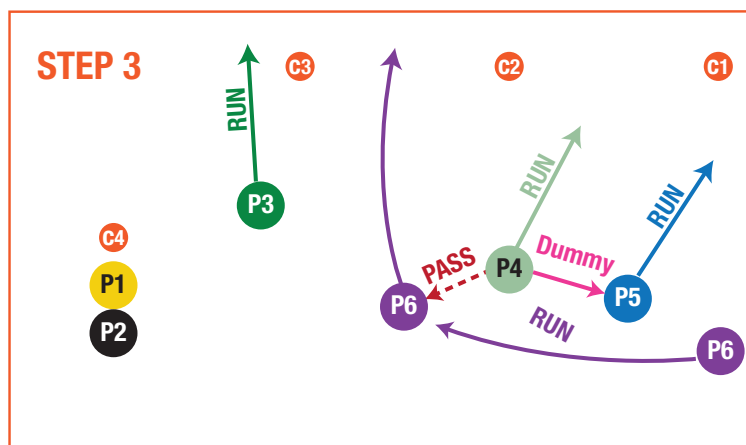
Step 2

- P3 passes to P4 who runs in a path between C1 & C2
- P3 continues to run in a path inside of C3
- P5 starts to run forward outside of P4 in a path outside of C1



Step 3

- P6 cuts back inside of P4
- P4 "dummies" to P5 but instead passes short (inside) to P6 who runs in a path between C2 & C3



Step 4

- Players rotate position with;
- P6 taking the place of P1
- P1 moves to P2, P2 to P3, P3 to P4, P4 to P5, P5 to P6

Repeat

Learning Outcomes

- Backline ball control (catch & pass)
- Decoy play
- Switching the attack
- Communication and execution

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



“A new way to play”