IRB Training and Officiating courses

IRB training and education courses were first developed in the mid-1990s. In 2003, it became apparent the content of these courses was becoming dated, and the courses were critically reviewed.

As a result of this review, in early 2004 a Strategic Workshop for Coaching and Officiating Development was held in Lensbury, England, with invited participants who were actively involved in coaching and officiating education and development.

The set of benchmark competencies that were developed at this workshop formed the basis for the updating and redevelopment of these courses according to the structure shown above.

Since 2006, the new portfolio of courses shown above in Figure 1 has been developed. Now all IRB courses are competency-based, designed to provide learning and training appropriate to the contexts in which coaches and officials are active.
Welcome to the IRB Strength & Conditioning Level 1 course

This course is designed to provide beginner Strength and Conditioning coaches with a basic knowledge and understanding and a foundation of practical skills. This in turn will facilitate coaches to prepare players more thoroughly to play Rugby Union. This course links directly to the physical conditioning element of the IRB ‘Rugby Ready’ programme.

In the course, we include six Multiple Choice Questionnaires (MCQs). The MCQ is a short quiz really. It consists of six questions that all relate to the content described within each module. We have one MCQ placed at the end of each module. The MCQs serve a key purpose. They are intended to help you assess how well you understood the module. When you have answered all the questions, you will then be given feedback as to your knowledge of the preceding content.

Each MCQ question is designed so that you get a choice of answers. Ideally, you will choose the most correct or accurate answer from the selection of choices available. Once you have completed the MCQ and posted it, you will receive feedback on the accuracy of your choices. Good luck and enjoy the challenge.

The IRB Strength and Conditioning pathway has been designed by the IRB in conjunction with Setanta College. The pathway is as follows:

- (First Stage) – Rugby Ready
- (Second Stage) – IRB Strength and Conditioning Level 1
- (Third Stage) – IRB Strength and Conditioning Level 2
Course content

Within its six modules, the Level 1 course will address eight key topics:

- Long Term Player Development Pathway
- Functional screening
- Anatomical Adaptation
- Demands of the game
- Principles of training
- Speed and intermittent sprint endurance
- Periodisation
- Recovery

The Level 1 course will expand on the physical conditioning content in the Rugby Ready course. The topics addressed will seek to enhance the coach’s knowledge and understanding of Strength and Conditioning for the Rugby player. In particular, the course will introduce the coach to the Long Term Player Development Pathway in a practical manner. A simple yet informative Functional Screen will be outlined. The coach will then be introduced to the concept and practice of ‘Anatomical Adaptation’, or preparing the player to be fit to train, practice and play. This approach to physical conditioning emphasises a combination of stability, mobility and strength training activities while simultaneously engaging in Rugby-related activities.

The coach will study the physical demands of the game as well as the principles of training. These will allow the coach to integrate physical conditioning into a more game-related conditioning process. Practical guidelines for conducting the warm-up and cool-down will be discussed and described. Principles of the important component of speed development will be discussed. Practical examples of speed, multi-sprint/activity conditioning and conditioned games will be outlined.
Outcomes

Module 1 - LTPD Pathway

Content: The Long Term Player Development Pathway

- Introduction
- Preparing the player to perform
- The components of fitness
- LTPD Pathway and key principles
- Summary

Outcomes

The coach will be able to describe the different stages of the Long Term Player Development Pathway.

Stage: FUN
Age guide: 6-12
Player PLAYS
Coach GUIDES
Content: Learning to move, basic Rugby skills

Stage: PREPARATION
Age guide: 17-21
Player SPECIALISES
Coach FACILITATES
Content: Reaching full potential

Stage: DEVELOPMENT
Age guide: 12-16
Player EXPLORES
Coach TEACHES
Content: Learning the Game

Stage: PERFORMANCE
Age guide: 20 and over
Player INNOVATES
Coach EMPOWERS
Content: Consistency of performance

Stage: PARTICIPATION
Age guide: 15-18
Player FOCUSES
Coach CHALLENGES
Content: Playing the Game, developing the player

Stage: RE-INVESTMENT
Age: any
Content: Support and enjoyment of the Game

Figure 2: Stages of development along the Long Term Player Development Pathway

See the LTPD section of IRB Rugby Ready
Module 2 - Functional Screening

Content

- Introduction
- Facility and equipment required for the overhead squat functional screen
- Getting set up
- Instructions to the player
- Positioning of the coach
- Ethics in testing
- Warning
- What to screen
  - The 'yes' or 'no' scoring system
  - Additional examples of common compensations
  - What are the common compensations during the squat?

Outcomes
The coach will be able to administer a basic functional screen.

Module 3 - Anatomical Adaptation

Content

- Introduction
- Acute training variables
- Benefits of anatomical adaptation phase
- Anatomical adaptation integrated with the Rugby programme
- The warm-up for an anatomical adaptation session
- Bracing the core - what is it and how to do it?
- A sample anatomical adaptation circuit
- Exercise details
- Summary
- References

Outcomes
The coach will be able to implement an anatomical adaptation programme.
Module 4 - Game Demands

Content

- Introduction
- The demands of the game
- The principles of training
- Warm-up
- Cool-down
- Summary
- References

Outcomes

The coach will have an understanding of the demands of the game and will be able to describe the principles of training. In addition, the coach will become familiar with warm-up and cool-down activities.

Module 5 - Conditioning for Rugby

Content

- Defining speed
- Training modes for speed
- Summary guidelines for speed development
- Resistance training
- Practical speed-related drills
- Game-related conditioning
- Specificity in training
- Multi-sprint/activity training
- Additional game-related conditioning drills
- Summary of guidelines for multi-sprint/activity and conditioned games
- Summary
- References

Outcomes

The coach will have a knowledge and appreciation of the different methods of developing speed acceleration and game-related conditioning. The coach will also be able to implement speed, multi-sprint/activity and conditioned games to advance the match fitness of players.
Module 6 - Periodisation in Rugby

Content

- Introduction
- Terms used
- Periodisation - what is it?
- Summary
- References

Outcomes

The coach will have an understanding of programme planning and periodisation. The coach will also develop an understanding of the importance of recovery and be able to implement key elements of recovery, such as unloading and tapering, within the programme.