

Player Development Programme

Ages 11 to 16 · Strength · Speed · Skill · Nutrition · NRL & Super League Standards

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The Three Development Stages

Phase 1	Ages 11–12 Foundation	Movement skills, bodyweight strength, speed fundamentals, game sense. No free weights — bodyweight only. Build movement patterns correctly.	2x skill + 1x bodyweight circuit per week
Phase 2	Ages 13–14 Development	Introduce resistance training with light weights, speed mechanics, positional skills. Technique is still priority over load.	2x skill + 2x gym + 1x speed session per week
Phase 3	Ages 15–16 Performance	Progressive weight training (6–10 rep range), sprint power, game intelligence. Full supervised gym programme.	3x skill + 3x gym + 1x speed/conditioning per week

Strength Training Programme — By Age Group

■ No player under 14 should use heavy free weights. Ages 11–13 use bodyweight only. Ages 14–16 introduce light resistance with correct form taught first. A qualified strength coach must supervise all weight training.

Ages 11–12 — Bodyweight Circuit (3 days per week, 30 minutes)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Coaching Point
Press-ups	3 x 10–15	Chest to floor, core tight, full extension
Bodyweight squats	3 x 15–20	Knees over toes, sit back, chest up
Plank hold	3 x 20–30 secs	Flat back, breathe steadily, no sagging hips
Glute bridges	3 x 15	Drive hips up, squeeze glutes at the top
Lunges	3 x 10 each leg	Knee doesn't touch the ground, upright torso
Burpees	3 x 8–10	Full press-up at bottom, explosive jump at top
Sprint starts	6 x 10m	Explosive first step, drive arms, stay low

Ages 13–14 — Introduction to Resistance Training (3 days per week)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Load	Coaching Point
Goblet squat	3 x 12	Light dumbbell	Sit deep, chest tall, drive through heels
Dumbbell bench press	3 x 10	Light	Full range, control the descent
Dumbbell row	3 x 10 each	Light	Elbow back, squeeze shoulder blade
Romanian deadlift	3 x 10	Light barbell	Hinge at hip, soft knees, back flat
Box jumps	3 x 6	Bodyweight	Land soft, full extension on jump

Nordic curl	3 x 5	Bodyweight	Slow descent, build hamstring strength
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Ages 15–16 — Full Gym Programme (3 days per week — QRL Framework)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Rest	Coaching Point
Barbell back squat	4 x 6–8	3 mins	Depth below parallel, bar on traps, drive up
Barbell bench press	4 x 6–8	3 mins	Shoulder blades together, bar to chest
Pull-ups / lat pulldown	4 x 6–8	3 mins	Full hang to chin over bar, control down
Romanian deadlift	3 x 8	2 mins	Hip hinge, bar close to legs, flat back
Barbell overhead press	3 x 8	2 mins	Core braced, push bar overhead, no arch
Power clean	3 x 4	3 mins	Learn technique with empty bar first
Sprints	3 x 40m	3 mins	Acceleration phase, drive phase, mechanics

Speed & Agility Programme — Super League Academy Standards

Drill	Ages	Volume	Coaching Point
A-March	All ages	10m x 6 reps	Exaggerate knee drive and arm swing — foundation of sprint mechanics
A-Skip	All ages	10m x 6 reps	Skip rhythm develops elasticity and ground contact time
Wall Drives	11–16	8 drives x 4	Lean at 45°, drive alternate knees explosively — builds acceleration
Flying 10s	13–16	6 reps	Build up 20m then max sprint for 10m — develops top-end speed
T-Drill Agility	11–16	6 reps timed	Sprint 5m, shuffle left, shuffle right, backpedal — full agility test
Pro Agility 5-10-5	13–16	8 reps	Sprint 5m right, touch, sprint 10m left, touch, sprint 5m back
Reaction Starts	11–16	10 reps	Partner calls GO at random — multiple starting positions
Ladder Drills	11–16	3 patterns x 4	Two feet in each rung, Ickey shuffle, lateral run

Example Weekly Schedule — Ages 15–16 (Pre-Season)

Day	Session	Duration	Focus
Monday	Gym — Lower body	60 mins	Squat, deadlift, box jump, Nordic curl
Tuesday	Field — Skills session	75 mins	Passing, tackling, positional play, small-sided games
Wednesday	Speed & agility	45 mins	Sprint mechanics, T-drill, pro agility, ladder
Thursday	Gym — Upper body	60 mins	Bench, pull-ups, row, overhead press, power clean
Friday	Rest or home workout	30 mins	Bodyweight circuit, stretch, foam roll
Saturday	Full team training	90 mins	Patterns of play, set pieces, game simulation
Sunday	Active recovery	20 mins	Light walk, stretch, mobility work

Nutrition Plan — Ages 11–16 | NRL and QUT Research

Protein 1.4–1.8g/kg	Carbs 4–6g/kg training days	Fats 20–30% total calories	Water 2–3 litres daily
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Meal	What to Eat	Key Nutrients
Breakfast	Porridge oats + milk + 2 boiled eggs + banana + glass of milk	Protein, slow-release carbs, potassium
Mid-morning	Greek yoghurt + mixed nuts + apple	Protein, healthy fats, vitamins
Lunch	Chicken/tuna wrap + wholegrain bread + salad + fruit	Protein, complex carbs, fibre
Pre-training (1hr before)	Peanut butter on rice cakes + banana + water	Fast carbs, protein, hydration
Post-training (30 mins)	Chicken or salmon + sweet potato + broccoli + milk	Protein for repair, carbs to restock energy
Evening meal	Lean beef or chicken + brown rice or pasta + vegetables	Complete protein, slow carbs, micronutrients
Before bed	Cottage cheese or glass of milk	Casein protein for overnight muscle repair

■ Avoid: energy drinks, protein supplements under age 16 (food first always), ultra-processed foods.

● Attacker ■ Defender ▲ Cone → Run ■ Pass

Essential Field Drills — Used by UK Super League Academies

1

3v2 Attack Drill

Ages 13–16

3 attackers 2 defenders Rotate roles

3 attackers outnumber 2 defenders — rotate roles

<p>● SKILL FOCUS</p> <p>Attacking decision-making outnumbering the defence</p>	<p>● GAME TRANSFER</p> <p>Creating and exploiting overlap in live match situations</p>	<p>● COACHING CUE</p> <p>"Draw the defender — then give it!"</p>
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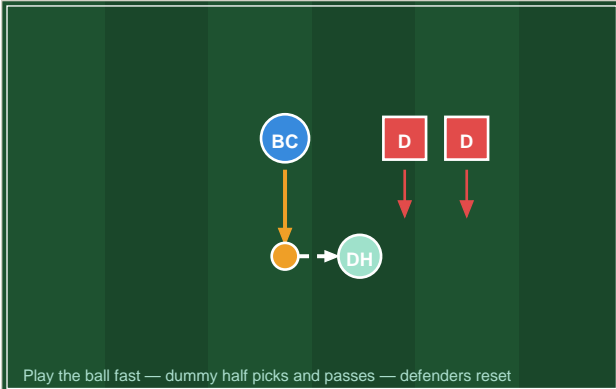
Ruck Speed Circuit

Ages 13–16

Ball carrier

Dummy half

Defenders reset



Play the ball fast — dummy half picks and passes — defenders reset

● SKILL FOCUS

Play-the-ball speed, dummy half awareness

● GAME TRANSFER

Quick play-the-ball wins the field position battle in every game

● COACHING CUE

"Ball down fast — dummy half on it NOW!"

3

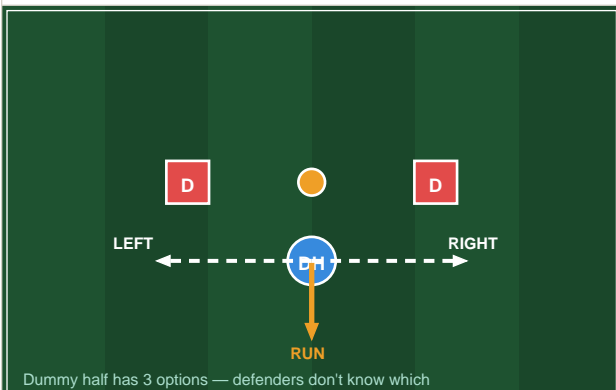
Dummy Half Options

Ages 11–16

Dummy half at ruck

3 options

Defence doesn't know



Dummy half has 3 options — defenders don't know which

● SKILL FOCUS

Quick decision-making from dummy half position

● GAME TRANSFER

Exploiting defensive gaps from every play the ball

● COACHING CUE

"See it early — commit fast!"

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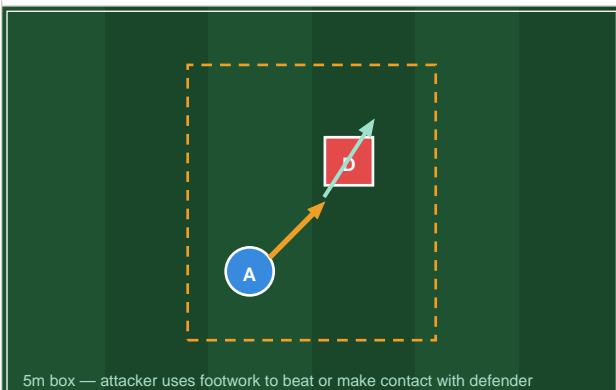
One-on-One Tackle Box

Ages 13–16

5m x 5m box

Attacker vs defender

Footwork focus



5m box — attacker uses footwork to beat or make contact with defender

● SKILL FOCUS

Footwork, evasion, dominant contact

● GAME TRANSFER

Beating the first defender — the most important skill in rugby league

● COACHING CUE

"Use your feet — make him commit!"

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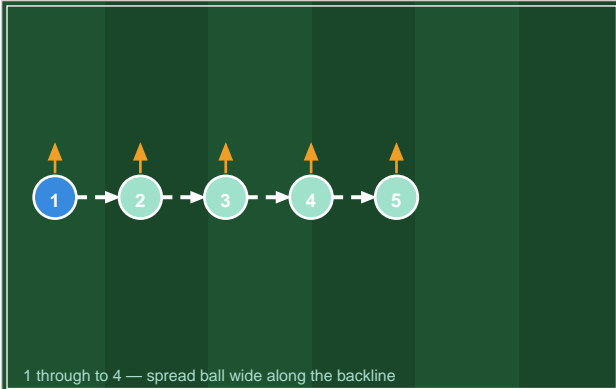
Backline Passing Drill

Ages 11–16

1 through 4

Spread ball wide

Defenders optional



● SKILL FOCUS

Backline passing accuracy, communication, timing

● GAME TRANSFER

Moving the ball quickly along the backline to create wide overlap

● COACHING CUE

"Flat and fast — hit the target!"

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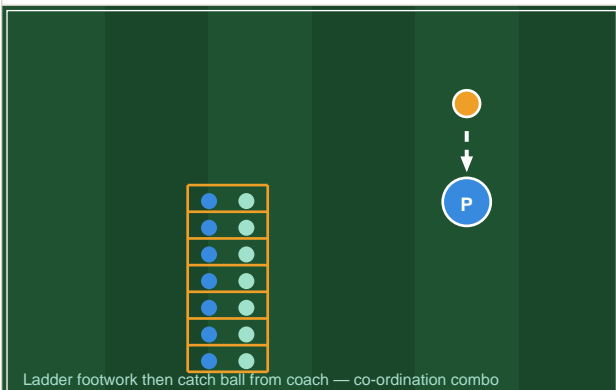
Agility Ladder + Ball Catch

Ages 11–16

Ladder footwork

Catch from coach

Combo drill



● SKILL FOCUS

Foot speed, co-ordination, ball handling under physical load

● GAME TRANSFER

Receiving ball after physical exertion — mirrors match conditions

● COACHING CUE

"Feet quick — eyes up for the ball!"