Botswana Long Term Athlete Development

RUGBY

A framework to guide rugby in Botswana towards lifelong participation and excellence for all levels: from grassroots to podium and beyond.

Botswana Long-Term Athlete Development

BLTAD: Rugby

SCRUMMING FOR SUCCESS

TRY 6

Active for Life

All Ages: Support active involvement in rugby and/or healthy lifestyles.

TRY 5

Senior: Competition Excellence

18+: Achieve optimal performance in international competition.

TRY 4

Junior: High Performance Experience

16-17: Develop advanced position-specific skills to maximize rugby performance.

TRY 3

Youth: Development (Triple T's)

13-15: Promote rugby specific skill development.

TRY 2

Grassroots: Early Specialization

6-9 & 10-12: Focus on sport skills development while enhancing core rugby skills.

TRY 1

Active Start: FUNdamentals

< 6: Promote fun and participation with development of movement skills

SCRUMMING FOR LIFE

TRY 1: Active Start

Key Considerations

Active Start: Build enjoyment and love for being physically active.
Physical Literacy: Learning all basic FUNdamental movement skills and develop basic motor skills to build confidence and competence.

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Multi-sport participation (encourage FUNdamental sports – Athletics, Gymnastics, Swimming).

Types of Training: No introduction to coaching, some organized physical activity.
Skills to Train: FUNdamental movement skills (see *Appendix B)*, Agility, Balance, Coordination (ABC's of Physical Literacy)

Duration of Training: 30-45 minutes (split into 15-minute activities)

Rugby Training Frequency: 1-2 sessions per week

Non-Rugby Frequency: 1-3 sessions per week

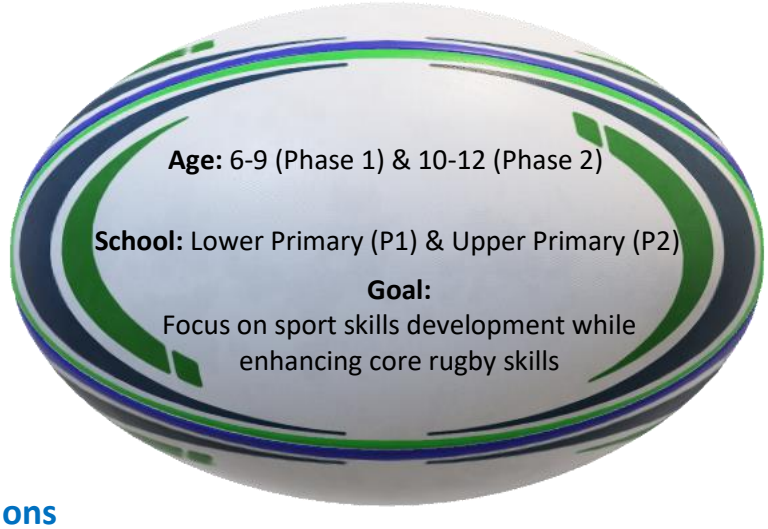
Equipment: Size 1 Training (Mini) Rugby Balls

Modifications: All tag (no contact), field is divided into quarters for training.

Types of Competition: Unlimited FUN competitions and experience in different sports.

- ✓ National Festival: all ages, development, gender and region included.

TRY 2: Grassroots



Key Considerations

Learn to Train: Enhance and develop *ABC'S* – Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed while further developing physical literacy and overall sports skills [Phase 1].
Train to Train: Integrate some physical, mental, cognitive and emotional training components while developing core rugby skills [Phase 2].

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Participation in 3-4 different sports – playing all positions

Types of Training
Phase 1 → Fun and modified games to develop spatial awareness and dodging skills
Phase 2 → Introduction to rugby game structure (attack and defense)

Skills to Train

Phase 1 → Passing, jumping, running, kicking, supporting, moving forward into space, being comfortable with the ball

Phase 2 → Develop core rugby skills (catching, passing, evasion & support skills)

- Develop confidence with and around the ball
- Develop rugby match awareness by playing games that foster action and reaction to others
- Introduction to contact skills (emphasize safety and correct posture)

Duration of Training: 60-90 minutes per session

Rugby Training Frequency
Phase 1 → 1-2 sessions per week
Phase 2 → 2-3 sessions per week, with one focused around team training

Non-Rugby Frequency
Phase 1 → 2-3 different sports/sport activities each chronological year
Phase 2 → 1-2 different sports/sport activities each chronological year

Equipment
Phase 1 → Size 3 Rugby Ball
Phase 2 → Size 4 Rugby Balls, mouthguards when contact is introduced, contact assistance equipment (tackle bags and rings)

Modifications
Phase 1 → No contact, game is played on a smaller field, seven players per side, rules are designed to develop the game principles of possession, forward movement and pressure
Phase 2 → Contact should be introduced (players are not allowed to fend of tackles), smaller field, ten players per side, transition into the full game is beginning

- **Gender Consideration**: At *Phase 2,* female athletes will be transitioning to 10 players per side rather than 15, as participant numbers restrict full competition.

Types of Competition:
Phase 1 → Local competition. Children should compete against all genders. Plenty of FUN competitions along with participation/competition in other sports.
Phase 2 → Local competition. Children should be separated based on gender as contact is introduced. 2:1 training to competition ratio.

- ✓ RBBH Festival 1: Held in May (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ RBBH Festival 2: Held in July (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ National Festival: all ages, development, gender and region included.

Talent Identification

Phase 1 → Not applicable at this age.
Phase 2 → Athletes should begin to understand Botswana's National Rugby structure and aspire to advance to the U13 North/South levels.

TRY 3: Youth Development

Age: 13-15

School: Junior Secondary

Goal:
Promote rugby specific skill development

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Participation in 2-3 sports – playing 2-3 positions

Types of Training: Introduction to understanding sport specific skills while learning and applying principles of rugby match development. Single or double periodization, with well-structured programs within in rugby season.

Skills to Train: Increasing power and accuracy of core rugby skills.

- Progressive introduction into game related kicking skills
- Perform core rugby skills in match/game scenarios
- Develop positional awareness in relation to the ball (game setting)
- Develop proper contact methods (how to give and receive a tackle)

Duration of Training: 90-120 minutes per session

Rugby Training Frequency: 3-4 sessions per week (8-10 hours per week). Team oriented rugby training and individualized strength and conditioning.

Non-Rugby Frequency: 1-2 different sports/sport activities each chronological year

Equipment: Size 4-4.5 Rugby Ball (based on age range). Mouthguards when participating in contact. Scrum caps introduced at this stage. Contact assistance equipment (tackle bags and rucking shields, tackle rings).

Modifications: From age 13, players are introduced to the game played under full rules. At this stage they should be playing with 15 players per team on a full field. At the early part of the Youth stage (13 years), some modified rules should include limited pushing in the scrum and no lifting in line-outs.

- **Gender Consideration:** Females may compete with 15 players per side, however, only if clubs/schools are combined. Otherwise the focus in on 7s and 10s rugby.

Types of Competition: Recreational length of season is 12-15 weeks. 2:1 training to competition ratio. Participation in other sports with a 5:1 training to competition ratio. 21-24 active weeks in other sports.

- ✓ RBBH Festival 1: Held in May (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ RBBH Festival 2: Held in July (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ National Festival: all ages, development, gender and region included.
- ✓ U13 North/South specific competition for selected athletes.

Talent Identification

If an athlete is competing for the U13 North or South teams, the next level for their progression is the U16 North and South teams. The first national team is also at U16. Athletes should aspire to compete for this team as they work towards the TRY 4 stage. See *Appendix F* for Talent Identification flowchart.

Opportunities for Late Starters: During TRY 3, there are many changes in skill and coordination and individuals grow and learn at much different rates. Certain talent that developed late could have been missed during U13 selection. Clubs and National bodies should be alert of potential late developers as well as transitional athletes who recently started rugby training.

Strength & Conditioning

Athletes should begin to complete the Six Basic Movement Patterns (page 27), as well as the corresponding exercises. The strength and conditioning should include:

- Light weight training (use of dumbbells and medicine balls)
- Resistance training
- Endurance & agility training

Anti-Doping

At this stage, athletes should be introduced to the World Rugby educational course; “Keep Rugby Clean.” This will be the athletes first introduction to anti-doping where they will learn about the risks of performance enhancement drugs and the repercussions if they are caught doping at higher competition levels.

TRY 4: Junior High Performance

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Participation in 1-2 sports – playing 1-2 positions

Types of Training: Recreational/Performance refinement of core rugby and contact skills. Refinement of individual position-specific skills. Recreation with double/rest single periodization. Performance with double/rest single periodization.
Skills to Train: Application of individual responsibilities in a game scenario and understanding principles of play and game planning.

- Proficiency in core skills should be reached at this stage, with increased power, accuracy and ability to deliver under pressure
- Increasingly specialized in positional knowledge
- Refinement of unit/team skills on the field
- Proficiency in game related kicking skills

Duration of Training: 120 minutes per session

Rugby Training Frequency: 4-5 sessions per week (10 hours per week). Team oriented rugby training and individualized strength and conditioning.

Non-Rugby Frequency: Athletes can specialize in 1 or 2 sports at this stage. However, even when they specialize, they can still try multiple positions within their sport.

Equipment: Size 5 Rugby Ball, mouthguards mandatory during full contact stage, scrum caps (based on position) and contact assistance equipment (tackle bags and rucking shields, tackle rings).

Modifications: No modifications. Game is played under standard rules and field size.

- **Gender Consideration:** Females may compete with 15 players per side, however, only if clubs/schools are combined. Otherwise the focus in on 7s and 10s rugby.

Types of Competition: 1 match per week in season. Recreational length of season is 12-15 weeks (age grade). 15-22 weeks for high performance athletes.

- ✓ RBBH Festival 1: Held in May (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ RBBH Festival 2: Held in July (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ National Festival: all ages, development, gender and region included.
- ✓ U16 North/South specific competition for selected athletes.
- ✓ U16 National specific competition for selected athletes.

Talent Identification

If an athlete is competing for the U16 North or South teams, the next level for their progression is the U18 North and South teams. The first National team is also at this stage (U16). Athletes should aspire to compete for this team and work towards U18 National selection at TRY 5.

Potential Talent: Selection should focus on athletes with current talent and how they can foster that current talent to peak when winning counts.
Opportunities for Late Starters: Rather than looking at physical attributes (strength and speed), those that may not be fully developed during their teen years could still have potential talent. Therefore, they can be identified by: ability to learn new skills, FUNdamental Movement and Sport Skills, tactical awareness, adaptive strategies and determination.

Strength & Conditioning

Athletes should be comfortable completing all of the Six Basic Movement Patterns as well as the corresponding exercises. Their strength and conditioning should include:

- Full weight training (Use of barbells and heavy dumbbells)
- Resistance training
- Endurance & agility training
- Interval circuits and plyometrics

Anti-Doping

At this stage athletes should be completing the entire World Rugby “Keep Rugby Clean” course. This includes 10 modules focusing on doping control, checking medications, learning the World Anti-Doping Agency prohibited substance list, therapeutic use exemptions and dietary supplements.

TRY 5: Senior Competition Excellence

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Participation in 1 sport – focus on 1 position/discipline
Types of Training: Performance refinement of core rugby skills under increased game situation pressure. Individualized position specific skill development program.

Skills to Train: Understanding application and execution of high-end rugby skills in a variety of game situations.

- Awareness of differing styles and systems of play
- Consistency and control are key (execution of effective tactical principles)
- Ability to read the game: being aware of opponent's tactics and strategies
- Demonstrate a "winning mentality" and implement winning tactics

Duration of Training: 90-150 minutes per session

Rugby Training Frequency: 5-6 sessions per week (15-20 hours per week). Team oriented rugby training and strength and conditioning, plus individualized training and strength and conditioning.
Non-Rugby Frequency: No outside sport participation is required. Any addition participation should be done to refine agility, balance and coordination or strength and conditioning factors.

Equipment: Size 5 Rugby Ball, mouthguards mandatory, scrum caps (based on position).

Modifications: No modifications. Game is played under standard rules and field size.

- **Gender Consideration:** Females may compete with 15 players per side, however, only if numbers permit. Competition excellence for women is focused on 7s competition.

Types of Competition: 22-28 elite games per season. 42-week program with a 2-week transition.

- ✓ RBBH Festival 1: Held in May (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ RBBH Festival 2: Held in July (multiple stages of development attend this festival)
- ✓ National Festival: all ages, development, gender and region included.
- ✓ U18 North/South specific competition for selected athletes.
- ✓ U19 North/South specific competition for selected athletes.
- ✓ U19 National specific competition for selected athletes.
- ✓ High Performance Competition for athletes selected to National U21/U23 and Vultures XV National Squad

Talent Identification

If an athlete is competing for the U18 North or South teams, the next level for their progression is the U19 North and South teams. There are also multiple National squads in this age range. Athletes should aspire to progress from U19 National → U21 National → U23 XV National → National Vultures XV.

Potential Talent: Being able to identify elite rugby talent and then fostering that talent to minimize athlete burnout and have them progress through the National competition structure.

Opportunities for Late Starters: Opportunities should be available for late starters in tertiary schools. These opportunities should focus on the recreational aspects of rugby.

Strength & Conditioning

Athletes should be performing all of the Six Basic Movement Patterns as well as the corresponding exercises at an elite level. Their strength and conditioning should include:

- Full weight training (Use of barbells and heavy dumbbells)
- Resistance training
- Endurance & agility training
- Interval circuits and plyometrics
- Athletes should be performing strength and conditioning routines individually and with their team

Anti-Doping

At this stage athletes should be completing the entire World Rugby "Keep Rugby Clean" course. This includes 10 modules focusing on doping control, checking medications, learning the World Anti-Doping Agency prohibited substance list, therapeutic use exemptions and dietary supplements. Ensure to review the WADA prohibited substance list each year, as it is always updated. Anti-doping testing and prevention is more common at the competition excellence stage. It is very important to understand the risks and to stay away from recreational drug use.

TRY 6: Active for Life

Key Considerations

While the goal is to send athletes to the Olympics, only 1% of the population will reach the podium. Therefore, the other 99% must be catered to.

- Participants can enter and re-enter into the Active for Life stage at any point in their life after they have developed FUNdamentals
- There are two streams of Active for Life: Recreation and Personal Excellence

Primary Objective

Reinvestment in Rugby → Recreation, Social, Fun and Health
Everyone Involved → Player, Official, Coach, Administrator, Supporter
Content → Support and enjoyment of rugby.

Training Objectives

Number of Sports: Encouragement of mutli-sport participation.

Types of Training: While some participate for recreation, others participate for personal excellence. This differs from elite excellence as they wish to remain competitive above a recreational level.

1. **Recreation:** Fun/social games and leagues, non-competitive, healthy living initiatives, mixed or same genders
2. **Personal Excellence:** Age-appropriate training, coaching and competition at a re-elite level

Skills to Train: Flexibility, Cardiovascular Endurance, Hand-Eye Coordination, Life Skills.
Types of Competition: Amateur competition and unstructured recreational practice.

For the full and complete Botswana Long Term Athlete Development Rugby Framework, please contact the Botswana Rugby Union or the Botswana National Olympic Committee.

Key Stakeholders

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Botswana Rugby Union

Gaborone
Botswana