



# Australian Rugby Union

*Generating Lifelong Passion for Rugby in our Communities*

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2009-10 Rugby Pathway Review

*Final Report Summary*

**2 December 2010**



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

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# Introduction

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In early 2009 the ARU commissioned a two-year review to establish a clear vision for the Rugby Player Pathway across Australia from 2011; one that the rugby community believes is in the best interests of kids.

The aim of the review in its first year was to provide a comprehensive report of the current state of play of the Rugby Player Pathway within Australia. The aim in its second year was to develop and pilot a common set of strategies that could be used to form the framework for an improved Rugby Player Pathway.

The review involved wide ranging research and consultation which included the following:

- Research into injury occurrence at U8, U10, U12 and U14 ages;
- Filming and digital coding of 82 matches across all ages of the pathway to determine activity levels per player and per team;
- Comparison of ARU Pathway with other Tier 1 rugby nations across the world;
- Management of three pilot competitions and analysis of the 33 participating teams;
- Benchmarking of the skill levels of players across all ages of the pathway;
- Convening of six working parties comprising representatives from junior rugby and State/Territory Unions, that each met on three occasions.

With the support of the Rugby community, both these aims were achieved.

In September 2010, the ARU commissioned a 'white paper' outlining the vision for the Australian Rugby Player Pathway for U6-U12 players. It detailed the recommendations for improvements to the Pathway for 2011 and how and why these recommendations had been established.

The 'white paper' was provided to the states and territories to distribute amongst their rugby community for review and comment. Formal feedback was provided by the states and territories to the ARU in October which supported the recommendations.

This report provides an overview of the 2011 Australian Rugby Player Pathway and details the modified rugby game-styles to be played by U6-U12 players around the nation next season.

## Section 1 – Responses to White Paper

The states and territories provided well considered responses to the white paper, which reflected the needs of their competitions and the obligations to their junior club and school stakeholders.

The reactions to the recommendations were supportive, enabling the Australian Rugby Player Pathway to be implemented nationwide, for 2011 as proposed. The levels of support for each state and territories' respective competitions are summarized in the table below:

	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12
ACT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NSW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓*
QLD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VIC	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓
SA	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓
NT	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-
TAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Code

✓	Supports the recommendation for this age-group in 2011.
✓*	Supports the trial of the recommendation for this age-group in school and club competitions during 2011.
-	Recommendation not considered for this age-group as competition is not conducted.

The Australian Rugby Union recognises that due to geographical and social differentiations, competitions across Australia have unique requirements and will support states and territories with the roll-out of their Rugby Player Pathway in 2011 by tailored means.

This will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Presentation of Australian Rugby Player Pathway framework to key stakeholders.
- Provision of dedicated training for state and territory staff.
- Facilitation of education courses and resources for pathway volunteers.
- Provision of Australian Rugby Player Pathway publications for pathway participants.
- Authorisation of minor adaptations for competition managers and administrators.

It is expected that individual communication management plans will be agreed upon in November for this purpose.

## Section 2 – Overview

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The Australian Rugby Player Pathway has existed for players aged 6 to 12 years since 1991 and has as its aims to:

- Keep it simple, free flowing and enjoyable;
- Let the players develop skills with safety;
- Discourage any dangerous actions or unsafe practice;
- Adopt an educative, positive reinforcement approach;
- Ensure that players receive an equal chance to participate regardless of ability;

The Australian Rugby Player Pathway for 2011 seeks to reinforce these aims by providing new and innovative game-styles that promote attack over defense and provide players with enhanced opportunities to carry the ball and run forward into space.

Each game-style has a developmental skills focus which takes into account the chronological age of the modern child and their capacity for safe and achievable rugby skill acquisition.

It is envisaged the Australian Rugby Player Pathway for 2011 and beyond will excite young players, and enable future Wallabies to learn how to play the game more easily, more enjoyably and correctly.

The modified rugby game to be played in 2011 are summarized in the table below:

GAMES	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12
<b>Game Style</b>	Small-Sided Games	7-a-side Tag	7-a-side Tackle	10-a-side Tackle	12-a-side Tackle		15-a-side Tackle
<b>Skills Focus</b>	Evasion and Tag Catch and Pass Running Scoring Tries Enjoyment		Tackle Ruck Maul	Attack Defence	Kick in General Play Contested Scrum and Line-out		Positional Awareness
<b>Playing Area</b>	1/4 field		1/2 field		Full field less 10m width		Full field
<b>Playing Time</b>	2 x 15mins  (U6: 1 x 15 mins small-sided games and 1 x15 mins tag)		2 x 15 mins	2 x 20 mins	2 x 20 mins		2 x 25 mins

## Section 3 – Laws Summary U6 to U12

LAWS	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12
Player Numbers	7		7	10	12		15
Playing Area	1/4 field L:40m, W:25m		1/2 field L:60m, W:35m		Full field less 10m width L:100m, W:60m		Full field L:100m W:70m
Playing Time	1 x 15mins	2 x 15mins	2 x 15mins	2 x 20mins	2 x 20mins		2 x 25mins
Ball size	Size 2		Size 3		Size 4		Size 4
Conversions	No		Optional In front, 10m back		Yes Not past 15m-line		Yes Not past 15m-line
Kick-off	Punt 5m exclusion zone		Punt or drop 5m exclusion zone		Drop		Drop
Restart after score	Tap on half way		Tap on half way		Kick-off		Kick-off
Kicking	No		No		Yes		Yes
Tackle	2 handed tag on shorts No offside lines		Yes		Yes		Yes
Lineout	2 players No contest		2 players No contest	4 players No contest	5 players Contested No lifting		7 players Contested No lifting
Lineout receiver	Must pass		Must pass		All options		All options
Scrum	3 players No contest		3 players No contest	5 players No contest	6 players Contested 1m push		8 players Contested 1.5m push
Scrum half	Must pass		Must pass		All options #8 moves illegal		All options
When is Lineout and Scrum over?	Played by fly-half or bounces		Played by fly-half or bounces		Ball out		Ball out
PK + FK	Tap only Opp 5m back		Tap only Opp 5m back		All options Opp 10m back		All options Opp 10m back

<b>COMMON LAWS</b>	<b>U6 to U12</b>
<b>Player Numbers</b>	Equal number of players on each team and teams must share players to reach maximum number of equal players. Unlimited rolling substitutions.
<b>Scoring</b>	No Drop Goals or Penalty Goals.
<b>Lineout</b>	No Quick Throw-ins. Must have a lineout receiver.
<b>Scrum</b>	Defending scrum-half can't go past midline and cannot leave scrum.
<b>Tackle</b>	Slinging tackles and Fending to the head illegal.
<b>Foul Play</b>	Yellow card = 5 minutes and YC and RC player may be replaced.
<b>Advantage</b>	Should be played as much as possible to ensure continuity.