Positive Development Through Rugby Union

'Coaching that develops people not just players.'

This module is designed to help coaches understand how their coaching fits into a much wider agenda than just sport. It will give each coach new tools to incorporate positive player development into their sessions as a specific coaching outcome, and not just as a consequence. It will help coaches to understand the specific needs of the young players that take part in not only Rugby Union but also sport in general. It will also provide coaches with a clear and inspirational picture of the ideal coach of young people.

We believe that rugby union, particularly at a younger age, has a much bigger role to play than just improving physical, technical and tactical skills. These are important, but rugby union is also a powerful vehicle by which the Social and Personal skills can be developed.

"I believe coaching is all about trying to develop better people, not just players and it's important to enjoy the whole experience"
Wayne Smith (N.Z. All Blacks Coach)

Though these more traditional areas have usually been used to develop young rugby players, the 3 Unions recommend that all coaches of young players use them as a vehicle to drive the development of the 'whole person'. The traditional, technical, tactical, physical and mental areas of development are inextricably linked to the social and personal areas of a young person's development.

Social and Personal Skills

Diagram1. How Social and Personal areas of player development underpin all other areas


Physical and Movement

Skill Focus

Personal and Social

Mental

Understanding the Game
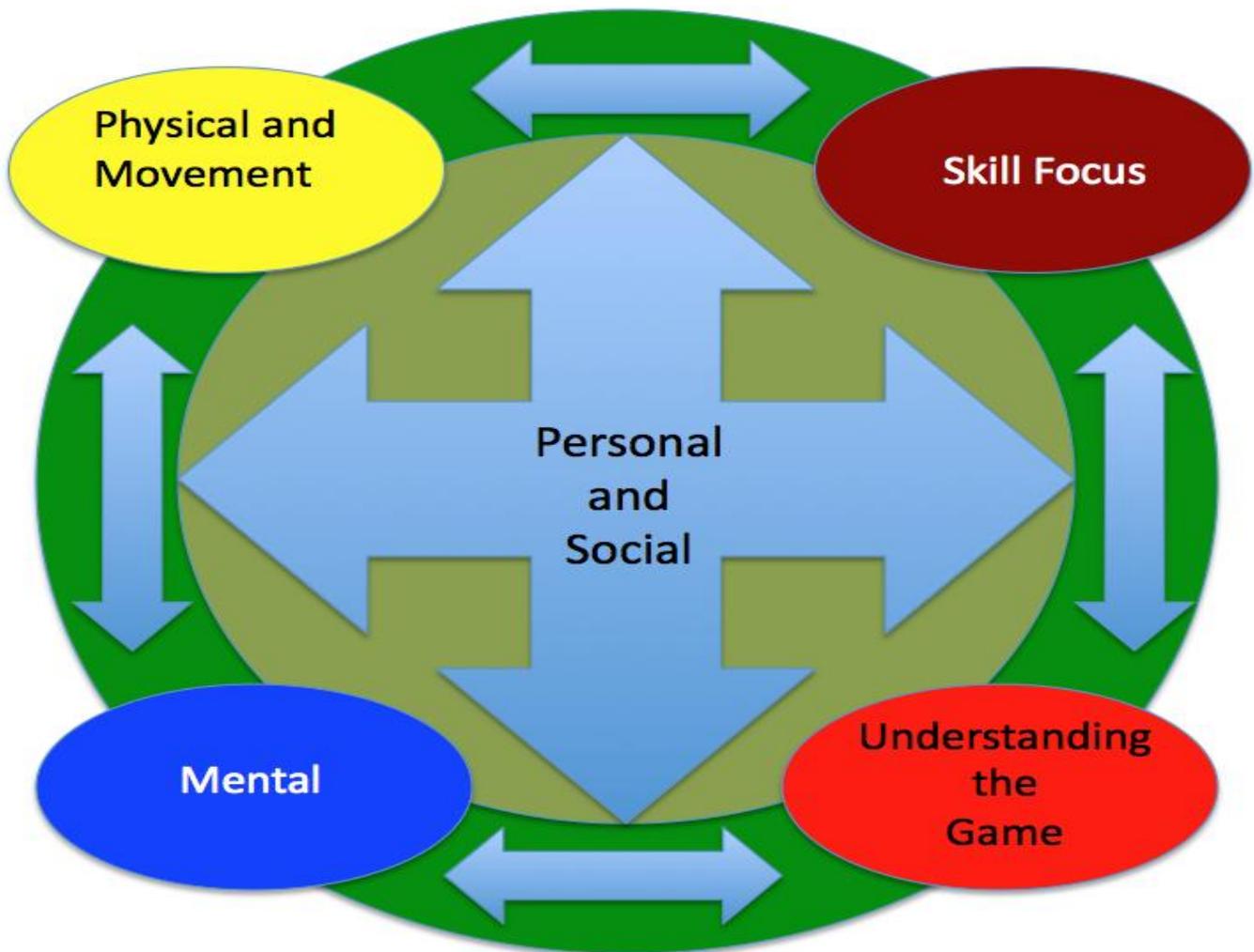
Adapted from SportscoachUK: -
A Guide for Governing Bodies of Sport

As we can see from Diagram 1: Personal and Social skills are central to the development of all the other areas, and therefore need to be planned for within the session. It is imperative that we understand the distinct outcomes and underpinning

capabilities that form the core of social and personal development. The core capabilities for developing social and personal skills have been identified as the 5Cs:

- Competence
- Confidence
- Connection
- Character
- Creativity

Diagram 2. Model of coaching young people, showing the positioning of the 5Cs
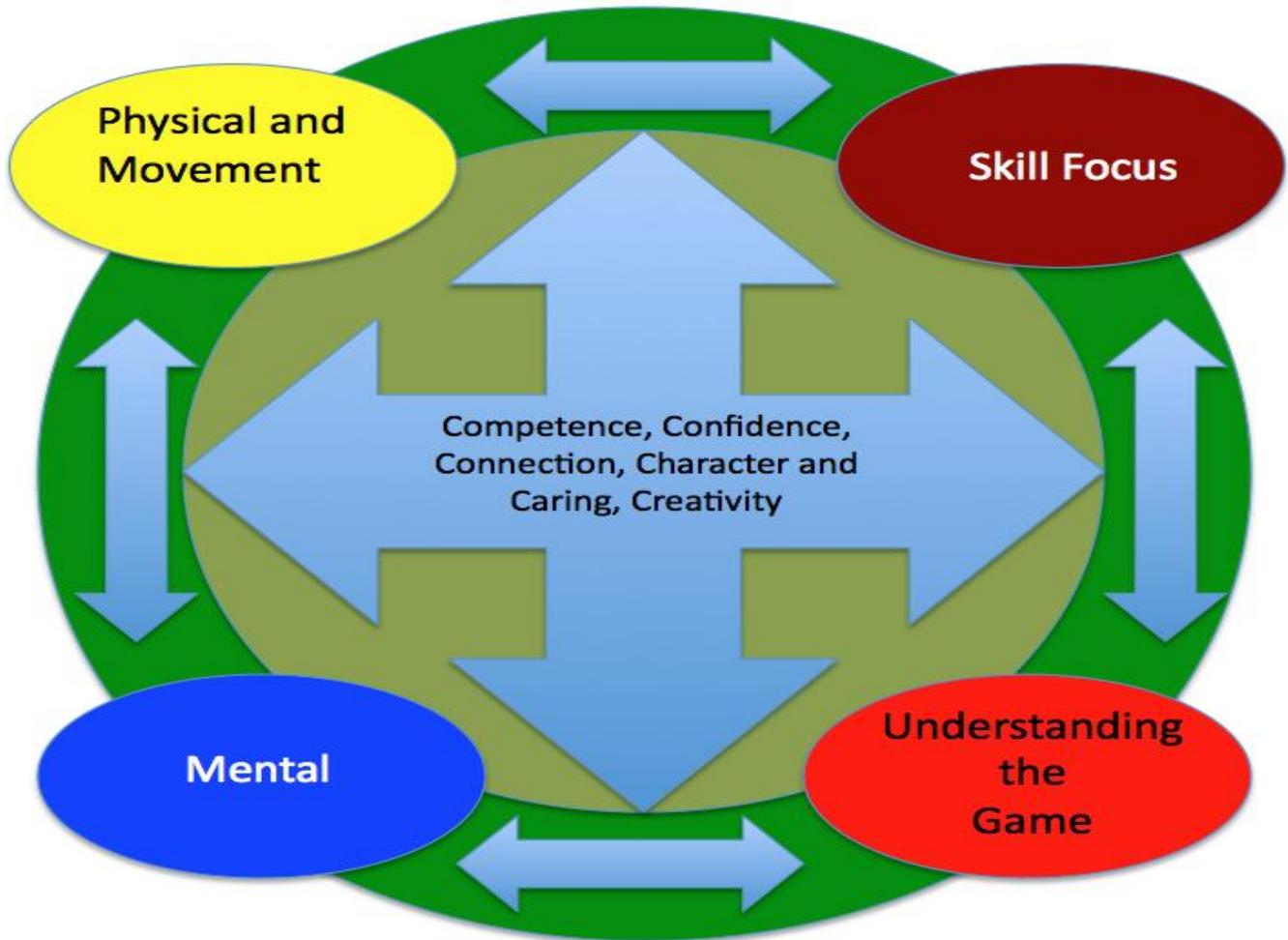
Research tells us that young people who score higher in the areas of competence, confidence, connection, character and caring thrive in comparison to their peers and make a more successful transition from childhood to adolescents and to adults on their way to becoming fully contributing members of society. This is no different in a sporting context.

Coaches will place different emphasis on each of the above components as appropriate at each stage of the player's development.

When developing strategies to develop the physical, technical, tactical, mental and social components of an individual's development a coach may need to ask themselves some questions.

Table 1. Questions coaches may now ask themselves:

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL	How do I develop the 5Cs for positive player development?
PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT	How do I help each individual player develop their movement expertise that will prepare him or her to participate in rugby union?
SKILL FOCUS	How do I prepare young players to develop specific rugby skills?
UNDERSTANDING THE GAME	How do I help players to develop the tactical appreciation needed for rugby union and how they can personally influence the way the game is played?
MENTAL	How do I facilitate experiences, which will help young rugby players to make calculated decisions that will improve performance?

Table 2: Definitions of the 5Cs for developing the 'Whole Person'.

5Cs	DEFINITIONS
COMPETENCE	To achieve competence, participants should obtain a positive view of their own actions by being in a coaching environment where appropriate techniques and skills are learnt in a supportive, progressive and enjoyable way.
CONFIDENCE	Confidence is an internal sense of overall positive self worth and self-efficiency. Confidence is promoted through exposure to success in individual or group challenges that build resilience, coping with failure and learning strategies. Players will develop confidence when practicing or playing in a learning environment, which promotes personal improvement and values effort and persistence over outcomes and results.
CONNECTION	Connection is the ability to build positive bonds resulting in effective and mutually beneficial relationships between players,

	coaches, managers, supporters and the environment. In rugby, connection is achieved through an opportunity to work with and help others, being part of a group and understanding the intrinsic benefit of participating in rugby union.
CHARACTER	This is achieved by possessing standards of correct behaviour, having a sense of right and wrong and a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. Rugby union supports these developments when it takes place in an environment that respects participants, coaches, officials, parents, supporters, sportsmanship and the rules/laws of the game.
CREATIVITY	This is about being able to find your own solutions to problems. The coaching of rugby offers numerous opportunities to promote creativity by putting young people in situations where they have to think for themselves and overcome problems such as: - time, space and opponents,

The development of the 5Cs in rugby union and their underpinning capabilities are linked to the development of the physical, technical, tactical and mental capabilities in a mutually inclusive way. It is imperative that coaches understand that these capabilities are not developed in isolation but interact and support each other's own growth. During each coaching session, coaches are able to achieve multiple outcomes for the players. For example, a coach can increase the player's technical skills and at the same time develop their creative and physical skills. You as a coach or player may recognise some of the 5Cs' characteristics as part of a positive coaching or teaching experience.

Ideas for developing COMPETENCE in young players

- Use appropriate content for age and ability of performers
- Use coaching skills appropriate to the development stage of the player
- Develop tactical awareness alongside technical skills
- Promote a strong focus on the task

Ideas for developing CONFIDENCE in young players

- Positive and beneficial and appropriate feedback from the coach
- Develop each players competence in agility, balance, coordination and speed (the ABC's of athleticism)
- Praise from peers and coaches
- Praise from coaches for effort, persistence, teamwork, commitment, and personal development

- Praise from parents
- Development in technical, tactical and physical skills – self worth and self-efficiency – I can do!
- Design activities with approximately 80% chance of success
- Through structured activities help the player to show optimistic perceptions of their own ability

Ideas for developing CONNECTION in young players

- Encourage your players to work sensibly with others, demonstrating, empathy, sensitivity friendship skills
- Encourage cooperation in different size groups
- Design competitive activities (2v2, 3v3, 3v2, 4v3)
- Give the children different roles in teams
- Get children to lead (captain) and coach peers
- Getting the children to talk about taking exercise because they fully recognise its benefits

Ideas for developing CHARACTER in young players

- Setting of team values, what is acceptable and what is not
- Showing respect for coaches, fellow players, referees etc
- Coach to act as a positive role model
- Work with players to develop a code of conduct for practice
- Encourage players to talk with each other and evaluate performance at the end of each session
- Encourage players to thank the coaching staff after each session

- Expect players to put out and take back equipment safely and correctly
- Talk with players about their behaviour before, during and after a game
- Leave the changing rooms as clean as possible
- Encourage players to shake hands even after informal games in practice sessions
- Have a discipline system for unfair play in practice
- Bring in a qualified official for some practice sessions and encourage players to discuss the reasons for decisions after the game

Ideas for developing CREATIVITY in young players

- Encourage your players to find their own solutions to problems, so they learn rather than simply copy and repeat
- Design activities where the players discover a number of ways to solve a problem
- Create scenarios to which players can respond creatively
- Set a supportive environment where players are encouraged to try different things and they know that they will not be chastised for trying them
- Allow the players to develop codes for different plays

Table 3: How the Physical, Skill Focus, Understanding of the Game, Mental Development and the 5Cs interrelate - pulling it all together.

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	Character	Creativity
A coach may					
PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT	Use appropriate content for age and ability of performers	Show how players are developing physically	Allow players to work with others	Ensure that all players learn why and how to respect their own bodies.	Use physical challenges in a problem-solving environment.
SKILL FOCUS	Use coaching skills appropriate to the development stage of the child	Provide good explanations and design activities that provide for an 80% success rate	Encourage players to give feedback to each other	Develop players to be able to practice for extended periods and understand why.	Allow room for individual approaches to technical skill development.
UNDERSTANDING	Develop	Ensure	Support	Help	Support each

THE GAME	tactical awareness alongside technical skills	tactical demands are understood and the necessary skill level established	player's understanding of different roles and the importance of working with team -mates	participants to appreciate how different positions/activities contribute to the overall outcome and accept their role within the team.	child as they create their own tactical solutions to problems set.
MENTAL	Promote a strong focus on the task	Provide good evaluations, feedback and an understanding of failure and learning	Work in an appropriate format and numbers for the ability and social capacity of the players	Allow participants to explain and accept codes and rules.	Set appropriate open tasks that support cognitive development.