



Adapted from the booklet New Image Rugby; the Leprechaun Way  
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## **NEW IMAGE RUGBY/THE LEPRECHAUN WAY**

New Image Rugby is a modified version of Rugby Football. It originated in Argentina and was formalised in New Zealand as New Image Rugby and in Australia as Walla Rugby. We in Ireland call the New Image game "Leprechaun Rugby". It is a fast and exciting soft-contact game of 'touch' rugby designed to assist general physical development, to play an important role in 'games concepts' programmes and to introduce the game of Rugby Union to primary school children in a very simplified form.

The non-tackling, soft-contact nature of Leprechaun Rugby allows it to be played by males and females as a mixed activity, irrespective of size, age or ability.

Leprechaun Rugby aims to encourage the positive development of running, balancing and handling skills. Handling skills can be developed along with similar skills in sports such as netball and basketball but the new concept is that of only passing backwards, as in traditional Rugby. The concept of set plays should also be established through the modified scrum, maul and line-out situations. Because the game relies on skill rather than physical size and strength, it places a greater emphasis on team-work and support play.

There are some basic laws for Leprechaun Rugby but FLEXIBILITY is the keyword. The game can be played by any number of players and the size of the pitch can be increased or reduced in ratio to the numbers playing. Leprechaun Rugby can be played on a variety of surfaces: grass, asphalt/tarmac, artificial turf or in sports halls.

*Leprechaun Rugby should be free-flowing, fast and exciting. Its most essential feature is one of ENJOYMENT. It is hoped that the game will not only be regarded as a primary school game but will be extended to a summer game for the whole family. With the introduction of Leprechaun Rugby players will become part of the worldwide 'Rugby Family' rich in tradition and inspired by the features of friendship, camaraderie and enjoyment.*

W.A. Anderson



## **THE ETHOS OF THE GAME**

The role of the teacher, parent or club coach is to organise a game in which the children enjoy participation. Children are very capable of playing games on their own, without the interference of adults, as watching any playground activity will testify.

The teacher can encourage children to take responsibility for their own game by delegating the authority of the REFEREE to a child. Children must understand RESPECT FOR THE LAW and should be encouraged to be honest, and dissuaded from cheating.

Thus, if a child genuinely believes he/ she has made a two handed touch tackle he/she should claim a TACKLE loudly. Any player in possession of the ball who hears 'touched' must either pass immediately or turn for a ball take, regardless of whether they felt that they were touch-tackled, or not.

**ABSOLUTE HONESTY on the part of both tackler and tackled is essential.**

Players who infringe the LAWS (e.g. kick the ball) should own up immediately and expect the opposition to get possession. Similarly if a player goes into touch, he/she should stop immediately, allowing the opposition to have the throw in.

DISSENT should be discouraged at all times, even to the point of dismissing a player from the field for a short period, if they argue or dispute a decision.

THE REFEREE'S DECISION IS ALWAYS FINAL, especially, if the referee is one of their peers.

The teacher, however, should arbitrate if a decision is incorrect, and should question and explain to the player/referee if a misconception arises. In this way children learn to respect authority, and concentrate on playing the game.

Finally, although competition should be encouraged at every stage in the teaching of the game, it must be remembered that it is ONLY A GAME. The defeated team should recognise the better play of their opponents by congratulating them, whilst the successful team should display modesty in victory.

"THREE CHEERS FOR.. "  
is a time honoured way to finish a great game!!

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# **SECTION 1: LEPRECHAUN RUGBY LAWS**

## **LAWS FOR LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

Leprechaun rugby has been developed to introduce the game of Rugby Union to Primary School children. It has been designed to develop the skills of running, ball handling and a form of tackling which does not make ground contact. Rugby Union scrums and lineouts are included. As the forceful contest is removed from these set plays, the options and opportunities for running players are increased. The non-tackling and soft contact nature of Leprechaun Rugby contains all the running and handling skills of Rugby Union and allows boys and girls, and players of different ages and sizes, to play safely together.

The lessons include practices designed to promote co-operation and decision-making. The drills concentrate on skills and co-ordination which will help in the general development of a young player.

## **PLAYING FIELD OR AREA**

This can be any size from 10 m x 20 m upwards  
i.e. 4-a-side game can play on 10m x 20m area.

8-a-side game can play on a 30m x 40m area.

10-a-side game can play on a 50m x 70m area.

## **NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

This can vary from 4-a-side up to 10-a-side. The emphasis is always to have more backs than forwards. Suggested format for the number of players-a-side could be:

Four-a-side game

1 person scrum, 1 person lineout, 3 backs.

Eight-a-side game

3 person scrum, 2 person lineout, 5 backs.

Ten-a-side game

3 person scrum, 2 person lineout, 7 backs.

## **DURATION**

This will depend on the time available, the age of the players and the numbers involved in each team. For example, suggested times:

4-a-side – 5 mins each way

8-a-side – 10 mins each way

10-a-side – 20 mins each way

## **SCORING**

1 point is awarded for a try.

A try is scored by pressing the ball down over the try line with one or both hands.



Scoring a try

## START OF PLAY

The team who wins the toss can either choose the end of the pitch or to pass off. When passing off the opposition must be 5-10 m away depending on the size of the pitch and the size of the teams.

## OFFSIDE

In Leprechaun Rugby there is no offside when running, tagging and passing. However, defenders must be seen to be making an attempt to be behind the ball. Offside lines apply for set plays (scrum and lineout), the ball take and penalties. These are imaginary lines drawn across the field parallel to the goal lines.

## ATTACKING TEAM

The attacking team carries the ball downfield, running, passing or handing back, to score a try by placing the ball over the goal line. The ball can only be transferred to a player behind the ball carrier. No forward handling or passing is allowed.



Direction of passing

## DEFENDING TEAM

The defending team attempts to halt the running progress of the attacking team by tagging the ball carrier.

## TAGGING AND BALL TAKE

To tag, a player must contact the ball carrier with two hands. The ball carrier must then immediately pass backwards. Any attempt to gain territory without trying to pass, will result in loss of possession,

OR,

If the ball carrier can't see anyone to pass to he/she should immediately stop, turn and transfer the ball immediately to a support player. The support player must then pass the ball without running; this is called a 'take.'

### **INTERCEPTING THE BALL**

An opposition pass maybe intercepted once it is caught cleanly and not dropped forward.

### **GATHERING A DROPPED BALL**

If the attacking team drops, knocks or throws the ball to the ground, the defending team can pick up the ball and play on. If the attacking team picks up the ball a scrum is formed with the defending team putting the ball into the scrum.

### **FORWARD PASS**

A forward pass is an infringement, and when this occurs a scrum takes place with the non-infringing side putting the ball into the scrum.

### **GOAL LINE TAGS**

If a player is tagged while in the process of scoring a try the try is allowed. However if they don't follow through and score the try, a scrum is, formed 5 meters from the goal line with the defending team putting the ball into the scrum.

### **LEPRECHAUN LINEOUT**

If the ball or player carrying the ball crosses the touchline, play is restarted by a lineout with the ball thrown in by a member of the non offending team.

The lineout can be formed in a

4 - a-side game, 1 forward from each team

8 - a-side game, 2 forwards from each team

10 - a-side game, 2 forwards from each team.

The thrower stands 3 metres from the jumper and throws the ball to the jumper. The jumper must catch the ball in two hands with both feet off the ground. There is a 1 metre gap between the players in each line. No player from either side can leave the line out until the ball is in the hands of the scrum half. If a team throwing in the ball fail to jump and catch the first attempt, a second attempt should be allowed. After that the opposition are awarded a penalty anywhere within the length of the lineout. At lineouts all players other than forwards and the scrum halves must be 5 metres back from the midline of the lineout. This offside line is an imaginary line and stretches right across the pitch.

Leprechaun lineouts are not contested.

## LEPRECHAUN SCRUM

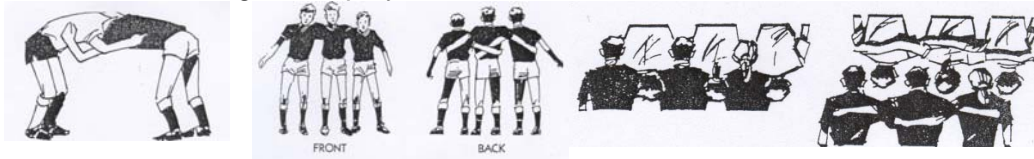
A scrum occurs when:

- A player drops the ball forward and a player from the same side picks it up.
- A forward pass is made.
- The player accidentally becomes involved in play while offside
- The player with the ball is tagged behind the goal line.

The scrum can consist of 1 or 3 players

e.g.

- 4 - a-side game 1 player from each side in the scrum
- 8 - a-side game 3 players from each side in the scrum
- 10- a-side game 3 players from each side in the scrum



1 v 1 scrum.

Binding for 3 v 3 scrum

3 v 3 scrum engaged

NO PUSHING is permitted and the opposition may not contest for the ball. The scrum half stands on the left hand side of the scrum holds the ball midway between knee and ankle and puts the ball in straight. Then it is struck (won) by a team-mate in the Hooking position (the person in the middle) so that the ball comes out the back of the scrum where the scrum half will either pass or run with it.

The opposing scrum half must be positioned behind the scrum and must not move from there until the ball emerges from the scrum.

## SCRUM SAFETY

In a scrum, children with long, thin necks are not suitable for the front and second rows of scrums and must not be selected to play in these positions. Even though the laws of Leprechaun Rugby have been modified to exclude pushing, the principle of selecting appropriate body types starts at this level. Front row players should always be of similar size. A balance within the second row unit is also recommended. Players in the scrum should always keep their head up and above the height of their hips. When an injured player leaves the field, particular attention must be given to the physique of the replacement player. It may be necessary to reallocate playing positions.

## PENALTIES

All penalties are tap kicks. A player from the non-offending team simply taps the ball off their foot and passes to a teammate. All opposing players must be at least 5 metres from where the tap kick is taken.

## **REASONS FOR AWARDING PENALTIES**

- Ball carrier pushes or hands off opponent.
- Defending player prevents the ball carrier from passing or transferring the ball immediately after a tackle.
- The ball carrier makes further ground after a tackle, without passing the ball.
- A player in a scrum or lineout competes for the ball when his/her team is not putting the ball in.
- A player in the opposing team takes the ball from the ball carrier.
- A player deliberately obstructs an opponent.
- A player is offside.

## **SAFETY IN LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

The modified laws (no tackling or pushing in scrums) enable children to play in a variety of positions, learn the running and passing skills of a backline player as well as the positioning, tactics and skills of a forward player. Playing sport places physical demands on children and the teaching of skills and laws in preparation of competition is essential for satisfying and safe participation.



**SECTION 2:**

**SAMPLE LESSON PLANS TO  
INTRODUCE THE GAME OF  
LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

## **LESSON 1**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To introduce the players to the key factors of passing and catching.
2. To make the players aware of support and space.
3. To introduce the concept of competition with attackers and defenders.

### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.

Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

NB: A grid is a square 10mx 10 m.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

1. Throwing and catching a rugby ball in the grid.  
(a) static (b) on the move - walking, jogging.
2. Passing the ball to partners while on the move.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Keep on the move using all the space.

### **CATCHING**

1. Reach for the ball.
2. Catch the ball with two hands.
3. Keep the ball away from the body when catching.

### **PASSING**

1. Look at the receiver.
2. Swing the arms with the ball in two hands.
3. Pass at the target area, ie the hands of the receiver
4. Ball must reach the target with the correct speed, ie weight the pass

### **B DEVELOPMENT/CONCLUSION**

a) Players number themselves 1 - 4

No. 1 the DEFENDER

Nos. 2, 3, 4, the ATTACKERS

b) Attackers 'score' if they attain FIVE consecutive passes.

c) Defenders become attackers if they make a two handed touch tackle on a player in possession.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

ATTACKERS Pass and move into space.

Support close if a team member is under pressure.

DEFENDER Pressurise the ball carrier.

## LESSON 2

### OBJECTIVES

- 1 To reinforce key factors of running, passing and catching.
- 2 To introduce scoring a try and picking ball off ground.
- 3 Further development of the 3 v 1 game, attackers v defender.

### ORGANISATION

Groups of 4 in grids.  
Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

### A INTRODUCTION

Passing and catching on the move in grids.

1. All passes one metre, pop pass.
2. All passes three metres, normal pass.
3. All passes greater than three metres, spin pass.

### TEACHING POINTS

Pass to the target.  
Weight the pass.  
Pass and move into space.  
Receiver reach for the ball.

### POP PASS

Pop the ball in the air to the target.  
Hands underneath the ball.

### NORMAL PASS

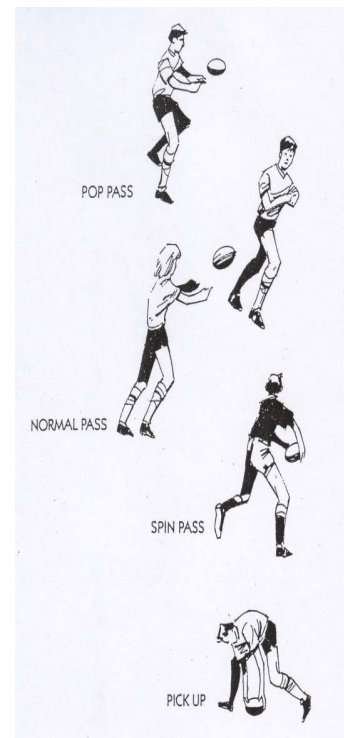
Pass straight to the target.  
No spin necessary.

### SPIN PASS

One hand underneath to spin the ball.  
Upward movement with this hand when passing.

### PICKING UP THE BALL

Bend the knees.  
Pick up with two hands (scoop from behind).  
Feet astride the ball, lead with shoulder.



### B DEVELOPMENT

Place the ball on the ground, partner picks it up.  
Place the ball on the ground, partner picks it up and passes. Use three types of passes.

### TEACHING POINTS

Bend knees.  
Feet astride ball.  
Pick up and score.

Pick up with two hands (scoop from behind).  
Lead with shoulder.  
Don't stop to pick the ball up.

### **C CONCLUSION**

3 v 1, attackers v defender.

Attackers 'score' if they attain five consecutive passes one of which is rolled along the ground.

Introduce adherence to Laws:

1 Not permitted to run (or throw ball) outside grid.

2 Admit to a successful tackle.

Use Laws to develop skill.

1 Forbid passes above shoulder height.

2 Touch tackle with TWO hands.

### **OTHER EXERCISES** - (In groups of 4 per grid)

a) A player picks the ball up, runs 4- 5 metres and scores a try. This is repeated by the rest of the players in the group, running at random.

b) A player places the ball on the ground; the second player picks up and passes. This is then repeated.. .

c) As in (b) except that each player picks up and passes five consecutive times.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Emphasise. . .

Running with the ball.

Catching.

Passing.

Use of space.

Support.

Aggressive defence.

Obey the Laws.

## **LESSON 3**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To reinforce basic skills by adding variations on skill practices.
2. To develop techniques into skills through competitive practice.
3. To introduce the 4v4 game of Leprechaun touch rugby whilst permitting passing in any direction.

### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.  
Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

Running, catching and passing within the grid, and practising scoring tries and picking up the ball.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Emphasise all teaching points from Lessons 1 and 2

### **B DEVELOPMENT**

3 v 1, attackers v defender game.

If defender makes a TWO HANDED TOUCH TACKLE on the shorts, he/ she becomes an attacker with the tackled player becoming the defender.

Attackers score a point with 5 consecutive passes.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

ATTACKERS: Support by working off the ball  
No overhead passing.

DEFENDER: Pressurise carrier.

### **C CONCLUSION**

#### **ORGANISATION**

4 v 4 in a double grid (10 m x 20 m)

This stage permits one grid group to play against the adjoining grid group.

#### **LAWS FOR 4 v 4 GAME'**

##### **GOAL LINES AT EACH END**

1. Passing can be in any direction.
2. Scoring achieved by placing the ball with 2 hands on the ground behind the goal line.
3. When ball carrier is touched with 2 hands he/she must pass the ball.
4. If the ball goes outside the area, a tap and pass is awarded to the non-offending team at the place where the ball went out.
5. After a score the restart is a tap and pass at the end at which the try has been scored.

**TEACHING POINTS**

Run forward with the ball.

Carry the ball in two hands.

Support the ball carrier.

Attack the spaces.

Two handed touch tackle on shorts.

Ball carrier must pass immediately when touched.

## **LESSON 4**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To develop the skills of scoring, picking up and passing.
2. To encourage running and evasion skills.
3. To develop the 4 v 4 game by:
  - a) adding progressively the compulsory back pass,
  - b) introducing the concept of offside lines through simple laws.

### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.  
Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

1. Pick up, run into space and score a try.
2. No. 1 scores a try, No. 2 sweep passes the ball. Continue with different player using the sweep pass each time.
3. No 2 sweep passes the ball 5 consecutive times to other players who score tries. The sequence is repeated.

### **SWEEP PASS**

This is performed by placing the back foot close to the ball and the front foot along the line of the pass. The player should sweep it off the ground in one motion, i.e. do not stand up and then pass.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Pick up and carry the ball with two hands.  
Use all the space.  
Back foot close to the ball, front foot along line of pass.  
Sweep the ball off the ground in one motion.

## **B DEVELOPMENT**

### **ORGANISATION**

4 v 4 in a double grid.

### **TWO HANDED TOUCH TACKLE GAME WITH PASSING IN ANY DIRECTION**

Introduce the compulsory BACKPASS in stages.

- a) First pass backwards after a restart.
- b) First 2 passes backwards after a restart.
- c) First 3 passes backwards alter a restart.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Run forward with the ball.  
Encourage straight running.  
Support the ball carrier.  
Support behind the ball.

## C CONCLUSION

### GAME: TWO HANDED TOUCH WITH ALL PASSES BACKWARDS

When ALL passes must be backwards it is necessary to introduce OFFSIDELINES.

At a restart:

a) All players must be behind the ball.

b) Opponents' offside line is 5 metres away parallel to the goal-line.

The ball carrier must go forward. Support players must get behind the ball carrier to receive a pass. This introduces the concept of alignment. The initiative often rests with the defending team who can pressurise the attackers forcing them backwards.

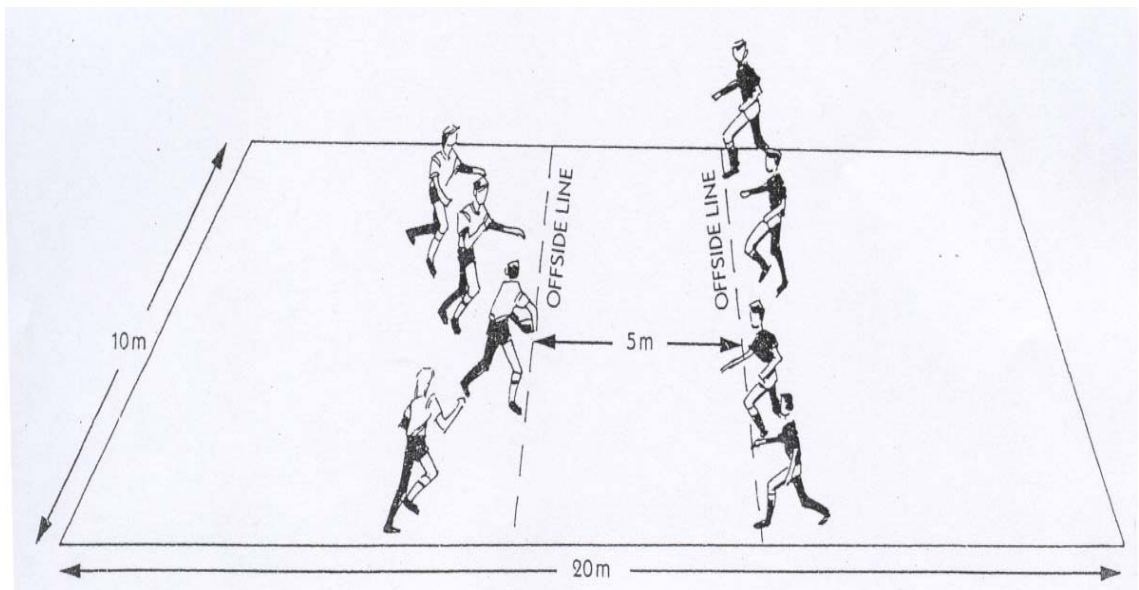
### TEACHING POINTS

Get behind the ball carrier.

Run onto the ball.

Run forward with the ball.

Encourage straight running.



## LESSON 5

### OBJECTIVES

To continue work on passing and evasion.

### ORGANISATION

1 grid

Groups of 16

Ball ratio - 4 - 8 balls: 16

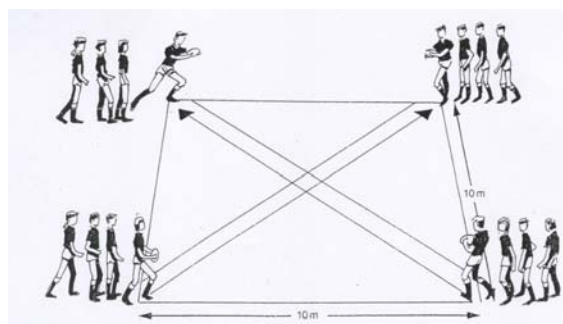
### A INTRODUCTION

a) Organise 16 players into 4 groups of 4. Each group of 4 line up at each corner of the grid, facing the corner diagonally opposite. They start with two balls at adjacent corners. Players run diagonally to opposite corner and pop the ball up to the player standing. The player who pops the ball up joins the back of the new group and the player who receives the ball runs to the diagonally opposite corner.

b) Use 4 balls i.e. one at each corner. The players run diagonally and pop the balls up at the opposite corners.

c) Using 4 balls, place a ball on the ground 2m from each corner. Players run diagonally picking up the nearest ball and scoring a try 2m from the opposite corner.

d) Use 4 balls. Player runs diagonally, crosses central point and passes to the opposite corner.



### TEACHING POINTS

Pop the ball up, pass the ball or score try.

Avoid each other in the middle of the square.

Always carry the ball in two hands.

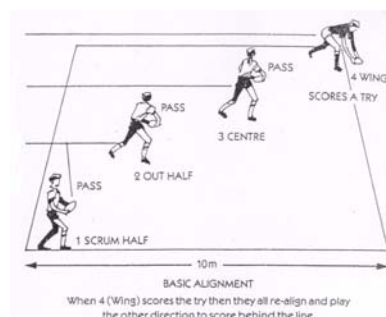
### B DEVELOPMENT

Basic alignment in grids.

Organise the players in a line across the grid.

<u>PLAYER</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>TASK</u>
No. 1	(Scrum half)	Give standing pass to No.2
No. 2	(Out half)	Run straight onto pass then take and give to No.3
No. 3	(Centre)	Take and give a pass to No.4
No 4	(Wing)	Score a try

Alternate the positions of the players.



When 4 (Wing) scores the try then they all re-align and play the other direction to score behind the line.

### TEACHING POINTS

Pass to the target.

Reach for the ball.

Run onto the ball.

Run parallel to the touchline.  
Weight the pass.

### **SHUTTLE RUNNING AND PASSING**

No 1 stands and passes to No 2 who passes to No 3. Nos 2 and 3 are running. No 3 passes to No 4 who is standing.

No 3 and No 2 re-align and No 3 receives the ball from No 4, running in the opposite direction.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Emphasise quality of pass.

Straight running.

Take and pass the ball in one movement.

Re-align quickly.

### **CONCLUSION**

4 v 4 TOUCH TACKLE GAME: no forward passes.

During the game praise skills and constantly reinforce teaching points.

### **NEW LAW, KNOCK ON.**

If the ball is dropped forward to the ground, the opposing team gets possession and they restart with a pass off at the place of infringement.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Emphasise two offside lines.

Opposition must be 5 metres back.

## LESSON 6

### OBJECTIVES

1. To show that the speed of the pass will normally beat the defender.
2. To further develop lateral passing and straight running.

### ORGANISATION

Groups of 12, 1 ball in grid.

### A INTRODUCTION

SPEEDBALL-based on the playground game of 'stuck in the mud'.

Divide group of 12 into 2 teams, TAGGERS with the ball and EVADERS.

The TAGGERS pass the ball to each other and tag the EVADERS with the ball, held in both hands.

All can run except the ball carrier.

EVADERS can move anywhere in the grid to avoid being tagged and when tagged or run out of bounds they must stand with their feet apart.

The EVADERS can free each other by crawling between the legs of the tagged person.

When all EVADERS have been tagged and are standing still, the teams change roles.

The winning team is the team which tags their opponents in the shortest time.

### TEACHING POINTS

Let the ball do the work.

Move into space.

Take and give the ball quickly.

Keep looking for EVADERS to touch.

### B DEVELOPMENT

#### ORGANISATION

Groups of 4 players aligned at each end of a double grid, 20m x 10m.

No 1 (Scrum half) must make a pass while standing to No 2 (out half).

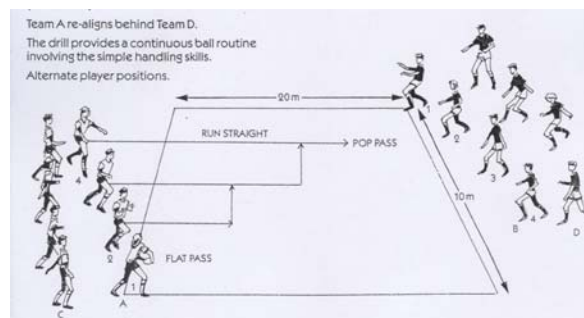
No 2 (Out half) passes to No 3 (Centre)

who passes to No 4 (Wing) who passes to Team B No 1 (Scrum half).

Team A re-aligns behind Team D.

The drill provides a continuous ball routine involving the simple handling skills.

Alternate player positions.



## **TEACHING POINTS**

Run straight.

Reach for the ball.

Pass in front of ball receiver.

'Pop' up the ball to the next team.

## **CONCLUSION**

**ORGANISATION** - 4 v 4 game in 2 grids.

Laws to date – The ball changes sides if:-

1. It goes out of play.
2. There is a score.
3. There is a 'knockon'.
4. The ball goes over head height.
5. The player fails to pass immediately after being touched.
6. There is a forward pass.

## **LESSON 7**

### **OBJECTIVES**

To develop evasion skills, pass before the tackle and during the tackle.

### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4, in grids.

Ball ratio 1:4 players.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

**DODGEBALL** -3v1 touch tackle game.

1. TAGGER has the ball and tries to touch everyone in the grid. When EVADERS are touched with the ball they must stand still with feet apart. They can move again when another EVADER has crawled between their legs.
2. The EVADERS have a ball each and the TAGGER tries to make a two handed touch tackle. The number of balls will dictate the game played.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Carry the ball in two hands.

Change direction off either foot.

Move into space.

Tackler should close down the space.

Tackler call 'touched' when a two handed touch is made.

### **B DEVELOPMENT**

#### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.

Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

- a) 3 v 1 game where the defender stands at the side of the grid. The defender tries to touch attackers before they score across goal line.
- b) 3 v 1 game. Defender stands in the middle of the square. Again attackers must try and score before being touched.
- c) 3 v 1 game. This time attackers can pass when they are touched. The pass must be immediate.

#### **TEACHING POINTS**

When the first pass is made the defender can move.

The attackers should move the ball wide into space.

Pass before being touched in (a) and (b).

Emphasise the tackler marking opponent.

In (c) attackers try to go past defender and pass.

Support must run onto the ball.

### **C CONCLUSION**

#### **ORGANISATION**

4v4 game in 2 grids.

- 1) Passes may be in any direction, attempt to score over goal line.
- 2) All passes must be backwards in 4 v 4 game.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Pass before being tackled or pass during tackle.

Pass must be immediate if tackle is made.

Failure to pass immediately during tackle results in ball going to the opposition.

## **LESSON 8**

### **OBJECTIVES**

To introduce the pass during the tackle and the TAKE with a view to continuity.

### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.  
Ball ratio 1:4 players.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

1. Moving around passing i.e. normal pass pop pass, spin pass.
2. 3 v 1 game. Passing before being tackled or during the tackle.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Go around the defender.  
Attackers must pass immediately when touched.

### **B DEVELOPMENT**

#### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.  
Ball ratio - 1:4 players.

- a) No 1 stops and turns shielding the ball No 2 takes the ball and passes to No. 3 who runs and starts the sequence again.
- b) 3 v 1 playing across square using the TAKE to keep continuity. Change defender after every score.

THE TAKE IS USED ONLY WHEN A PASS CANNOT BE MADE IMMEDIATELY.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Shield the ball by turning.  
Keep the ball close to the body.  
Take the ball.  
The player who takes the ball must pass immediately.

### **C CONCLUSION**

Use all methods of passing to play 4 v 4 game in 4 grids, i.e. (20m x 20m) and use all the laws which have been introduced so far.  
Move on to 8 v 8 game with same laws and same size of playing area.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Emphasise running forward with the ball.  
Try to pass before the tackle.  
Keep the ball available in the tackle and pass immediately.  
The take and pass must be performed quickly.

## LESSON 9

### OBJECTIVES

To develop passing and introduce the scrum.

### ORGANISATION

Groups of 4 in grids.

Ball ratio 1:4 players

### A INTRODUCTION

1. Ball handling and passing skills in grids.

### TEACHING POINTS

Ball in two hands.

Ball passed to the hands.

Weight the pass.

Reach for the ball.

Use all the space.

### B DEVELOPMENT

To introduce players to the scrum.

#### ORGANISATION - in pairs.

1. Stand facing partner.

2. **Crouch** by bending knees but keep back straight.

3. **Touch** partner on the shoulder by bending forward but still stay in a crouched position and keep back straight.

4. **Engage** by putting heads to the left so that the shoulders of players touch. The heads should end up in under the chests.

5. Arms should hold on the opposite player's body.

6. Players should have their bodies in an almost horizontal position with knees bent, back straight, head up and shoulders above hips.

**There is no pushing allowed, just leaning.**

#### TEACHING POINTS

Crouch with the back straight.

Keep head up.

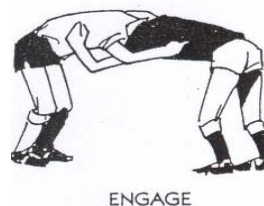
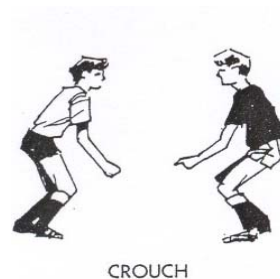
Touch shoulders with one (right) hand.

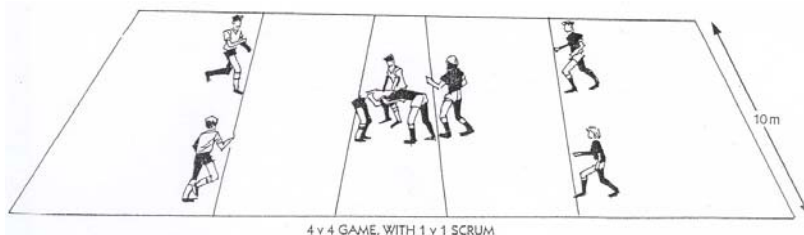
Keep knees bent in push position.

Shoulders must be above hips.

Shoulder to shoulder touching.

**NO PUSHING, JUST LEANING.**



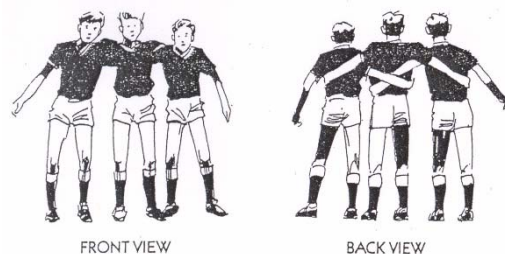


## B DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

To introduce players to the 3 v 3 scrum.

### ORGANISATION - in 6's.

1. Three players line up side by side with a prop standing on either side of a hooker. The props bind first by putting their inside arm around the hooker's waist. The hooker then brings his/her arms down just under the props arms.
2. **Crouch** by bending knees and keeping back straight opposite the other three.
3. The props reach forward with their free hand and **touch** the opposite prop's shoulder.
4. **Engage** slowly by leaning forward, putting their heads to the left and coming to rest shoulder to shoulder.
5. The outside arms of the props should bind on each other.
6. Again players should have their bodies in an almost horizontal position with knees bent, shoulders always higher than their hips.



There is **NO PUSHING IN THE SCRUM.**

### TEACHING POINTS

Emphasise to always keep the back straight, head up, shoulders above hips, knees bent, and **NO PUSHING.**

### CONCLUSION

1. 4v4 – all laws apply so far but now introduce scrum 1v1 when there is a forward pass or a knock on. Grid (20m x 10m).
- 2 Game 8v8 - again apply all the laws introduced so far but this time a 3v3 scrum when there is a forward pass or a knock on. (Grid size 20m x 20m).

### TEACHING POINTS

Identify all positions associated with a scrum, i.e. props and hookers, scrum halves, out halves, centres and wingers.

When a scrum takes place both back lines except for scrum halves must be five metres back.

## **LESSON 10**

### **OBJECTIVES**

To continue with evasion and passing and introduce the 1v 1 lineout and the 2 v 2 lineout.

### **ORGANISATION**

1 grid.

Ball ratio 1:1.

### **A INTRODUCTION**

1. All players with one ball each moving in one grid. Running with the ball in two hands and evading everyone in the group. React to different instructions, eg:-

- change direction
  - change speed
  - roll and pickup the ball again
  - set the ball down and pickup someone else's
  - throw the ball in the air and catch it
  - juggle with the ball around the body
  - make a figure of 8 through the legs
- Etc. . .

2. Same exercise as above only this time one ball per two players. In pairs passing the ball through the square. Again react to different instructions, e.g.

- change speed
  - change direction
  - roll the ball for partner to pick up
  - change partners on call of change
  - set ball down and pick up someone else's
  - throw ball in the air and catch someone else's.
- Etc...

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Always run with the ball in 2 hands.

Practice evading and changing direction.

Always look at receiver when passing the ball.

Use different types of passes.

### **B DEVELOPMENT**

#### **ORGANISATION**

Groups of 4 in grids.

Ball ratio -1:4 players.

Introduction of lineout - one thrower, one jumper and two scrum halves. The thrower stands 3 metres from the jumper and throws the ball to the jumper. The jumper must catch the ball in two hands with both feet off the ground. The jumper lands and feeds the scrum half to the left or scrum half to the right.

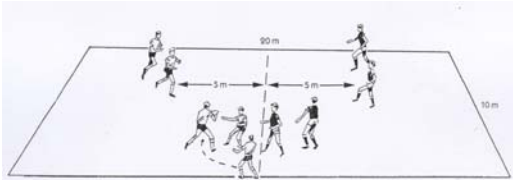
## TEACHING POINTS

Jumper must catch the ball in the air above his/her head.

Catch the ball in two hands.

Turning the air to land on two feet facing scrum half.

The thrower, jumper and scrum halves should change positions after a number of throws.



## B DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

Introduction of the 2v2 lineout.

## ORGANISATION

Groups of 8 in 1 grid.

Ball ratio - 1:8 players.

This time we have two throwers, four jumpers and two scrum halves. The thrower stands 3 metres from the jumpers who are standing in 2 lines, one behind each other. The scrum halves stand on either side of the lineout and the non-throwing thrower stands beside the thrower.

In a Leprechaun lineout there is no competition for the ball and each side has 2 throws to gain a successful jump and feed.

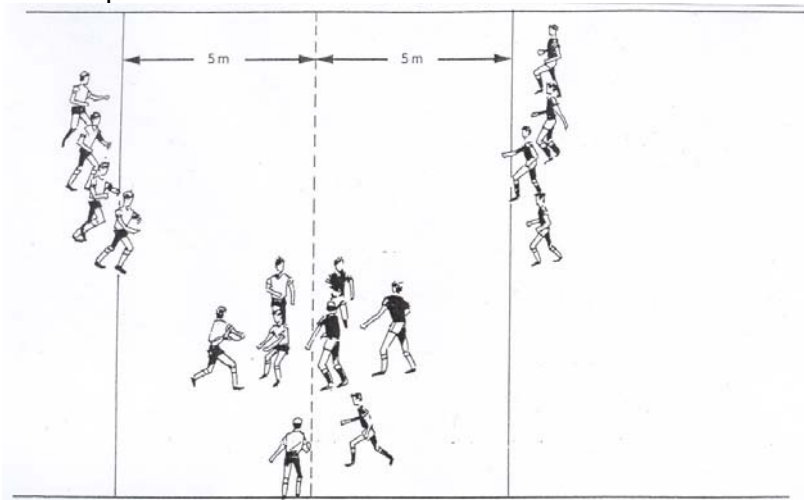
## TEACHING POINTS

Jumper must catch the ball in the air above his her head.

Catch the ball in two hands.

Land on two feet facing the scrum half.

No competition for the ball in the air.



## **C) CONCLUSION**

### **ORGANISATION**

4v4 game - in 2 (10m x 10m) grids -1 ball.

Using all the laws introduced so far with the introduction of lineout. A lineout occurs when the ball or a player holding the ball goes out of play over the sideline. In the 4v4 game the thrower should move to receive the feed from the jumper and become scrum half. The opposition are not allowed to jump or compete for the ball and the opposition scrum half and jumper cannot move until the scrumhalf in possession has passed or moved.

10v10 game - this should include 3 forwards and 7 backs.

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Encourage running, handling and passing.

Make sure teams are back 5 metres from lineouts, scrums, penalties (i.e. tap and pass) and restarts.



**SECTION 3:**  
**VIDEO INTRODUCING**  
**LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

## **SECTION ONE**

### **TEACHING BASIC SKILLS**

When introducing new skills to school children it is important to KEEP IT SIMPLE. Children like to be active, and learning is best achieved through participation and simple progressions. Initially the key factors in teaching the underarm pass may be introduced with the children remaining on the spot, but very quickly, once the basic teaching points have been made, the children should learn through experience, first by passing while walking and quickly progressing to gentle running. This ensures interest, activity and progression.

Only four teaching points need to be emphasised.

1. RECEIVER

"Reach for the ball" or "take the ball early"

2. PASSER

In Rugby, all passes should go to the target area i.e. the hands.

3. "Weight the pass" - not too hard, not too soft. Passes should be at a speed that the receiver can handle comfortably.

4. "Pass and move into space", It is important that children learn early to work off the ball, by passing and moving quickly into a support position in space. Emphasis should be placed on the attackers performing the simple running, handling and passing skills with the teacher laying particular emphasis on WORK OFF THE BALL AND SUPPORT.

Once the children have acquired the fundamental elements of passing, both long and short passes, they should be introduced to an element of COMPETITION. In its simplest form this might be how many good passes they make without dropping the ball, or within a time limitation. This provides challenge where the children compete against themselves, or their peer groups, and develops the skills by putting them under pressure.

### **3 v 1 COMPETITION – ATTACKERS v DEFENDER**

The skills of passing, running and support can be incorporated into a simple game of 4 v 1, 3 v 1 or 2 v 1, in which the individual is a DEFENDER and the others are ATTACKERS. The concept of numerical superiority is quickly established through the game, as is the method of scoring and introduction of simple rules.

The method of defence in Leprechaun Rugby is the TACKLE, which involves touching the attackers with two hands on the torso. The tackler is encouraged to be aggressive by attempting to touch the attacker whilst in possession of the ball.

The tackle puts the skills under further pressure.

The teaching point for the teacher to recognise is that the newly acquired SKILLS BREAKDOWN UNDER PRESSURE.

Willie Anderson employs the same structure in introducing the basic skill of picking up the ball from the ground and scoring a try by leaving the ball 'dead' on the ground. The simple teaching points "head up", "bend the knees" and

"feet close to the ball" are essential in developing more advanced skills in the game such as the pass off the ground. Emphasis must be placed on correct body position.

As a variation on a theme one player only is asked to pick up and pass, thereby providing repetitious practice. The teacher should ensure that the players work on their 'weak' side, as well as their strong side, thereby developing BALANCE in performing skills. A variation in the scoring method of the 3 v 1 game ensures that the newly acquired technique, the pick up, is practised in a game, thereby developing the skill.

The teacher is afforded the opportunity of developing the CONCEPTS of TIME, SPACE and SUPPORT. If the receiving player has little time or space, the support must be close. With more time the player is under less pressure and the support may be in space, but further away.

#### **4 v 4 GAME OF ATTACK**

Children are always keen to form teams and compete against opposing teams. The grid organisation facilitates the transition to 4 v 4 team competition so that a teacher with 32 children can relatively simply progress to 4 games involving 8 teams of 4, in 8 grids.

The same rules/laws apply as in the 3 v 1 game, but the method of scoring is different. The GOAL now changes from the number of passes, to touching the ball down behind a finite line – THE GOAL LINE- to score a TRY.

The object of the game is to encourage running, handling, passing and support along with evasion and tackling skills. The limited rules means few stoppages, whilst passing forward develops children's perception of space.

Even at this early stage the teacher should appoint a REFEREE from one of the players in each game. The reasons are twofold. Firstly it releases the teacher to move between each game, praising skilful performance. Secondly the referee is made a figure of authority and respect and all children must be taught to adhere to the referee's decision. Disputes will naturally arise, but the teacher, by referring to his appointed referee and through judicious questioning, may adjudicate.

Dispute over a referee's decision should be eliminated whilst honesty and fair decisions should be encouraged.

Although the Laws are kept to a minimum to encourage constant activity, the teacher may decide to employ a new RULE to encourage good skill performance. Hence the introduction of the "no overhead passes" rule, which forces the children to pass to the desired target areas of the teammate.

The game of ATTACK, permitting passing in any direction is an excellent game for developing running, handling, passing, evasion and touch-tackling skills and is an important stage in the introduction of children to Rugby Football.

The game may have significance in its own right, and may be the end product for children of 7-9 years of age. There is no reason why schools should not organise inter-class, or even interschool competitions and tournaments played under the simple rules.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **INTRODUCING THE BACK PASS**

One characteristic that distinguishes rugby from other sports, is the **COMPULSORY BACK PASS**. This has two significant influences on the game that the teacher must recognise.

1. The advantage transfers to the defender who is able to **GO FORWARD TO TACKLE**.

2. To provide the attackers with more time, a **LAW** is introduced to provide 5 metres of space between the attacking and defending sides. In effect this creates **TWO OFFSIDE** lines (which incidentally characterise the adult game).

**A DEFENDER IS OFFSIDE IF HE ENCROACHES WITHIN THE 5 METRE AREA AT A PASSOFF.**

**AN ATTACKER IS OFFSIDE IF HE IS IN FRONT OF THE PLAYER WHO PASSES OFF TO RESTART THE GAME.**

A relatively simple way to allow the players to adjust to the artificial imposition of the compulsory back pass, is to introduce it gradually, as in the video, until eventually, all passes must be backwards.

Teachers may experience difficulty at this stage as the children can be confused, especially if they have been playing the forward passing game. Attacking players are now faced with the prospect of passing backwards, when the objective is to progress forward in an attempt to cross the goal line.

At this stage it is essential to spend time teaching children, the **LATERAL PASS** and **STRAIGHT RUNNING**. This can best be achieved using the formal lines of the grid as reference points.

The same **HANDLING** skills are emphasised as before, "reach for ball", "weight the pass", "ball to target", but more emphasis is placed on the **PASSING** skills, and **RUNNING LINES**, "run straight onto the ball" (ie. parallel to the touchline).

The running, handling, passing **DRILLS** shown in this section of the video need to be practised constantly if the players are to eventually go forward with the ball. Having a score as the final objective focuses attention on the reason for running straight onto the pass, and also provides a game relevance.

As the skill level improves, so the teacher puts the skill under greater pressure by acting as the **OPPOSITION**.

By providing an opposition from the side, the teacher seeks to show the group how the opposition can be outflanked through straight running and quick transfer of the ball.

By providing opposition from the front, the teacher seeks to develop **DECISION** making by the ball carrier. If the ball carrier runs straight at the

opposition, he can commit this opponent to a tackle, whilst he gives a flat pass to an unmarked opponent.

When the players become more proficient in straight running and lateral passing, the teacher will introduce one of their peers as the OPPONENT, changing the drill to a game in which the attackers have different OPTIONS.

- (a) The attackers try to outflank the defender or
- (b) The attackers try to beat their opponent
- (c) One attacker draws the defender and passes to his unmarked team-mate.

As the performance level increases, so more opponents can be added.

The REALIGNMENT practice encourages the players to get back into position to attack, when, although aligned diagonally, they are required to run straight. The introduction of the defender also develops DECISIONMAKING.

The SHUTTLE RUN practice is designed to involve more players, similar to an attacking BACKLINE and can be used as a CONTINUOUS practice in which an entire class can be very active using only one ball. A useful practice for the Primary schools where equipment is often very limited.

### **SUMMARY**

The first 33 minutes of the video is therefore, devoted to the basic skills of running, handling, passing and touch tackling culminating in a flexible game called ATTACK that has few LAWS but encourages constant activity through retaining possession and employing attacking and counter-attacking movements.

The game of BACK-PASS ATTACK may also be considered as a game in its own right and should be considered as the second stage of developing the more formalised game of Leprechaun Rugby.

## **SECTION THREE**

### **DEVELOPING THE GAME OF LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

The more structured game of Leprechaun Rugby requires the introduction of more formal individual and group techniques, as well as more detailed LAWS.

In order to enable a team to retain possession and change the point of attack Leprechaun Rugby permits the BALL TAKE. Thus, when a player is unable to pass immediately he/she has the option of turning in order to allow a support player to take the ball and pass back to another team-mate. The opposition, however, are not permitted to remain on their opponents side of the ball and must retreat to an ONSIDE position.

At the ball take both sides quickly realign on their own side of the ball, the attacking side with a deeper alignment to provide time and space, and the defending side remaining flat and marking player for player.

A KNOCK-ON occurs when a player knocks, or drops, the ball in a forward direction with the ball hitting the ground. In the early stages of skill development these minor fumbles are a frequent occurrence and the teacher may chose to ignore them in the interest of CONTINUITY.

If the ball is knocked forward and is retrieved by the opposition they gain the ADVANTAGE of having possession and the game continues. If, however, the same team retrieve the ball play is stopped and the game is restarted with a SCRUM.

#### **1 v 1 SCRUM**

The Scrum in leprechaun Rugby is merely a means of restarting the game and is, unlike the game of Rugby football, a non-dynamic event in which opponents lean against one another by interlocking shoulders.

#### **LAWS AT THE SCRUM**

**PUSHING IN THE SCRUM IS NOT ALLOWED  
BOTH BACK LINES MUST BE BACK 5 METRES**

In the initial stages of introducing the Scrum, only two players, one from each team are required. The teacher should encourage EVERY child to learn the Scrum position, and in the game this can quite easily and randomly take place if the nearest players to the breakdown are designated as scrum opponents.

#### **1 v 1 LINEOUT**

When a player steps 'into touch', instead of restarting with a pass off, a LINEOUT is formed comprising, initially one player from each team standing 3

metres in from the touchline. The ball is thrown in by the non-offending team and the lineout player has an uncontested jump for the ball.

**THE PLAYER MUST CATCH THE BALL WHILE HIS/HER FEET ARE OFF THE GROUND.**

In the 8 v 8 game of Leprechaun Rugby the Lineout comprises two players from each side with one metre spacing between the players.

### **3 v 3 SCRUM**

Similarly in the 8 v 8 game the front row of the Scrum comprises three players from each side, the middle player is called the HOOKER and the side support players are called PROPS.

A rhythmic chant has been devised to help the children to remember the safe procedure for engagement.

'Hands up' (Hooker only) 'Head up' 'Bind' 'Crouch' 'Touch' 'Engage'.

It is very important that the Scrum is stable and does not collapse to the ground. Thus teachers should ensure that children are well matched in weight and size, that they all have a stable base and that they support their own weight on their Feet.

The children are now prepared for the 8 v8 game of New Image or Leprechaun Rugby. The game can be played indoors, providing there is sufficient space. Similarly the game can be played safely in the school playground, or any open space.

## **SECTION FOUR**

### **FULL GAME LEPRECHAUN RUGBY**

The more structured game of Leprechaun Rugby with formalised LAWS is outlined in the accompanying teacher booklet. It should never be forgotten, however, that the objective of the game is to have children and adults engage in a fun activity that is active, safe and competitive.

The numbers in each team may vary without any loss to the quality of the game, but obviously the size-of the field must expand to accommodate the number of players on each team.

Throughout the video the organisation of players has been in multiples of 4. 3 v 1 games, followed by 4 v 4 games and a recommended number of Leprechaun Rugby is teams of 8 .

In an 8 player team it is possible to have SCRUMS comprising 3 players from each team.

LINEOUTS comprising 2 players from each team.

One SCRUMHALF ,with the remaining players as ATTACKING BACKS.

The pitch size can be 30 metres (3 grids) wide and 40 metres (4 grids) long.

A feature of the game is the constant activity and involvement of all children. The game is about retaining POSSESSION and probing with attacking runs. The players should be encouraged to always KEEP THE BALL ALIVE and stoppages for infringements should be kept to a minimum by the referee.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The IRFU recommend that the following publications are essential to further reading.

1. Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland.  
Government of Ireland 1996.  
Government Publications Sales Office,  
Sun Alliance House,  
Molesworth Street,  
Dublin 2.
2. "Our Duty to Care" Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children"  
Child Care N.I.,  
11 University Street,  
Belfast BT7 1FY