U8 · INTRODUCTORY CONTACT

JUNIOR RUGBY · THEME 1 — BUILD THE RUGBY FOUNDATIONS

Stage: Explore E
Builds into U9 & U10 ›

ON-FIELD COACH

Working with the referee: focus on catch, carry & pass · run & evade · fall and place · track to tackle · 2v2 tackle contest · offside · support lines · possession



CORE RUGBY SKILLS — E EXPLORE

Catch, Carry & Pass	Two hands up before the ball arrives · hands follow ball to target · keep moving forward
Run & Evade	Fast feet · ball in two hands · run straight · eyes up
Fall and Place	Land safe — knees, hip, shoulder · ball to near toes (prawn)
Track to Tackle	Align · approach · balance · contact · cheek to thigh
2v2 Tackle Contest	Enter square · shoulders above hips · feet past ball

RUGBY IQ — SCAN, DECIDE, COMMUNICATE

Eyes	Look up when running — find space or a teammate
Decide	Run if space · pass if teammate is in a better position
Offside	After tackle — get back onside quickly, behind the ball

COACHING FOCUS

On-field coach focus:	Work with the referee — at stoppages and key moments, give one cue, restart immediately. Keep stoppages short.
Watch for:	Any child who smiles at their first tackle. Acknowledge it every time. That moment builds the pathway.
Ask yourself:	Did every child smile today? Do they want to come back next week?
Coming next (U9 & U10):	Contact confidence deepens. Skill-drill-game continues.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES — E EXPLORE

Movement Literacy	Run · hop · skip · jump · roll · land safely
Balance & Coordination	Single-leg balance · change of direction without falling
Agility & Evasion	Ability to sidestep / tag dodge
Basic Endurance	Continuous play for short bursts (2–3 mins)

PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS — E EXPLORE

Enjoyment & Engagement	Smiles, wants to return, shows excitement to play
Focus on Simple Tasks	Follows 1–2 step on-field coaching cues in-game
Confidence in Trying	Attempts new skills — especially first contact — without fear
Emotional Regulation	Re-joins activity after mistakes or contact moments

SOCIAL & LEADERSHIP — E EXPLORE

Sharing & Turn-Taking	Waits in line · takes turns in activities
Basic Teamwork	Passes to a teammate when prompted
Respect	Listens to coach · follows whistle
Inclusion	Welcomes others into play