Rugby Lesson 4 Play, compete and show respect

Years 3 and 4 | Ages 7 to 9 | 60 minutes | Non-contact tag rugby

Learning questions: How can we use our skills under pressure? How do we respond to winning and losing?

Success criteria: Run, pass or support at the right time; defend safely and stay onside; help referee a game fairly; respond to a result with respect.

Equipment: Soft size 3 rugby balls, cones, bibs, tags, stopwatch. One ball per pitch; spare balls for quick restarts. Mark up to two pitches, a safe central corridor and cone-bounded viewing zones.

Time and activity	Organisation and instructions	Teaching points	Differentiation
0 to 10 min **L4.1 Bomb Tag**	**Choose two or more taggers** to suit group ability. They work together with a rugby ball (the "bomb"), passing and moving to stop runners in a marked area. **Only the ball holder may tag, using a gentle hand touch while carrying the ball.** Never throw or strike a runner with it. Tagged runners touch an outside cone and rejoin immediately. Rotate taggers every 60 to 90 seconds. **Variations:** add taggers; limit the carrier to five steps; introduce more balls when ready.	• Look up; find a teammate in a better position. • Pass, then move to help the tagger. • Runners find space; keep touches gentle.	**Support:** Walk/wheel, wider area or fewer taggers. **Challenge:** Five-step limit, more taggers or another ball.
10 to 15 min **L4.2 Pitch and referee briefing**	Where space allows, mark **two pitches and a cone-bounded viewing zone beside each**. Position the teacher in the clear central corridor with sight of both games. **No more than six pupils per team**. Brief pupils on tries, one-tag removal or gentle two-hand hip touch, passing, being onside, and quick restarts. Two pupils on each pitch take turns making the first call; play pauses if there is a disagreement. Show the two-pitch visual and agree what respectful winners and losers say after a game.	• Pupil referees call "tag", "try", "out" and restart. • Stop, listen and use a calm replay if unclear.	**Support:** Coach helps with disputed calls; make teams smaller or use one pitch if needed. **Challenge:** Pupils agree a call, then restart without teacher intervention.
15 to 35 min **L4.3 Longer games**	Run two simultaneous games of roughly nine minutes each, with a short changeover between rounds. Teams of up to six. Swap opponents or starting possession for round two; share referee roles. After a try the other team restarts from centre; after a tag/touch, stop; return the tag directly; defenders retreat five walking steps facing attackers; the carrier **passes, then reattaches** the tag. Defenders move up when the pass is released. Sideways/backward passes; controlled standing try. During any brief wait, pupils observe from the coned viewing zone, encourage both teams and rehearse short passes with a spare ball where safe. Rotate playing time fairly.	• Use space; choose run or pass under pressure. • Support wide and behind; defend in front. • Keep decisions and restarts quick.	**Support:** Wider pitch, protected first receive or walking pace. **Challenge:** Lead a fair restart and make a useful support run after passing.
35 to 38 min **L4.4 Coaching point**	Keep the pause brief. Ask: "What changed when the defence closed space?" Show one **run or pass decision** and one calm response to a disputed call. Give the next game a shared challenge: a pass followed by support, and one example of encouragement to an opponent.	• Run into a clear gap; pass when it closes. • Pause, listen, agree and restart.	**Support:** Show with a shadow defender and a short spoken cue. **Challenge:** Pupils demonstrate both roles and explain their choice.

Lesson 4 continued

Time and activity	Organisation and instructions	Teaching points	Differentiation
38 to 53 min **L4.5 Final and placement games**	If results and space allow, play a **final on one pitch and a placement game on the other** at the same time, up to 15 minutes. Each team has no more than six; give every team a game. Alternatively continue mixed games if a final would reduce playing time or access. Pupils referee their own games with the teacher nearby. Keep the coned viewing areas clear of the touchline. When a game ends, spectators can offer specific, positive encouragement; the result stands even when disappointed.	• Use skills when tired or under pressure. • Accept fair decisions and respect opponents. • Praise effort, support and honest self-refereeing.	**Support:** Rotate players regularly; use equal game time and an accessible pitch. **Challenge:** Lead team communication and a fair response to the result.
53 to 60 min **L4.6 Greeting and moving review**	At the whistle, teams **wish one another well and offer a handshake or agreed greeting**. In threes, walk and exchange gentle passes while discussing: “How did we feel when we won or lost?” “What can we do when disappointed?” “How do gracious winners behave?” Invite examples: breathe, name the feeling, congratulate the other team, thank teammates and plan a next step. Each pupil names a rugby skill they used and one respectful action they showed. Keep the review moving.	• Accept and name feelings without blaming. • Thank the opposition and support teammates. • Choose a constructive next step.	**Support:** Allow spoken, signed, pointed or demonstrated responses; offer private reflection. **Challenge:** Explain how an unhelpful reaction could be changed.

Safety and game rules

No tackling, pushing, diving, hand-offs or grabbing clothing. Remove one tag and return it directly, or use a gentle two-hand hip touch. After a tag, stop; return the tag directly; defenders retreat five walking steps facing attackers. The carrier **passes, then reattaches** the tag. Defenders advance on the pass. After a try, the other team restarts. Attackers support behind the ball; defenders remain in front. See the OS onside visual. Mark a safe viewing area outside each pitch and a clear corridor for the teacher. Disputed calls: stop, listen, agree or ask the teacher; restart quickly.

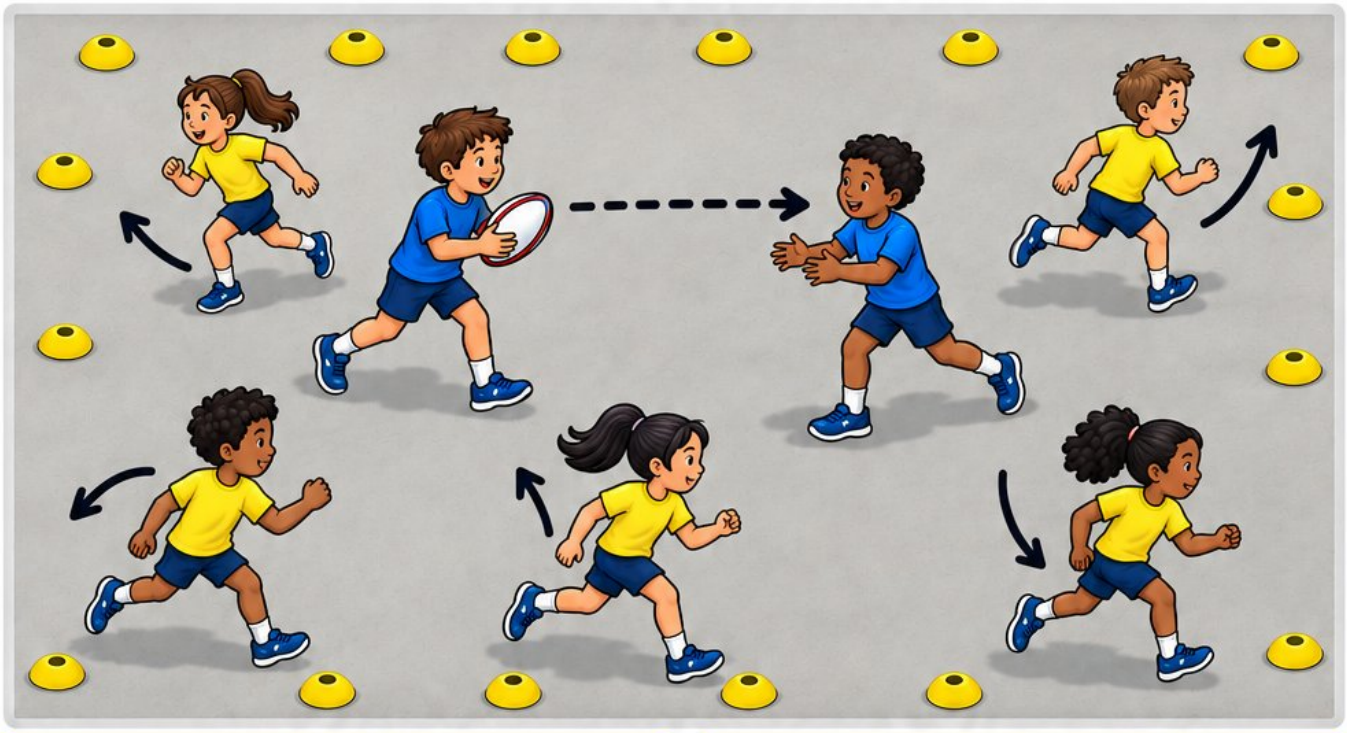
Inclusive delivery

Use teams of up to six, adjusting team numbers, pitch sizes and simultaneous games to the available space, equipment and pupils. Give all pupils fair playing time; any viewing role is brief and purposeful. Allow walking, wheeling, shadow defending, shorter passes, adapted balls or an agreed touch. Model a handshake and offer an alternative agreed greeting. Let pupils share feelings without requiring a public disclosure. Competition is optional where a final would reduce access.

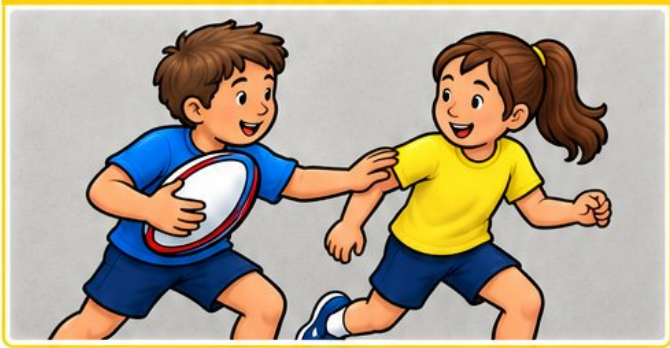
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L4.1 – BOMB TAG

0–10 minutes | Years 3–4



GENTLE TAG



TAGGED RUNNER REJOINS



1. Choose two or more taggers to suit the group. They share one rugby ball: the 'bomb'.
2. Taggers pass and move as a team. Only the pupil holding the ball can tag, using a gentle hand touch.
3. Tagged runners touch an outside cone, then rejoin immediately. Rotate taggers every 60–90 seconds.

VARIATIONS:

- Add taggers.
- Limit the ball carrier to five steps.
- Introduce more balls when ready.

TEACHING POINTS:

- Look up
- Pass to a teammate in a better position
- Move after passing
- Find space

SUPPORT:

- Walk or wheel; use a larger area and fewer taggers.

CHALLENGE:

- Five-step limit; add taggers or another ball.

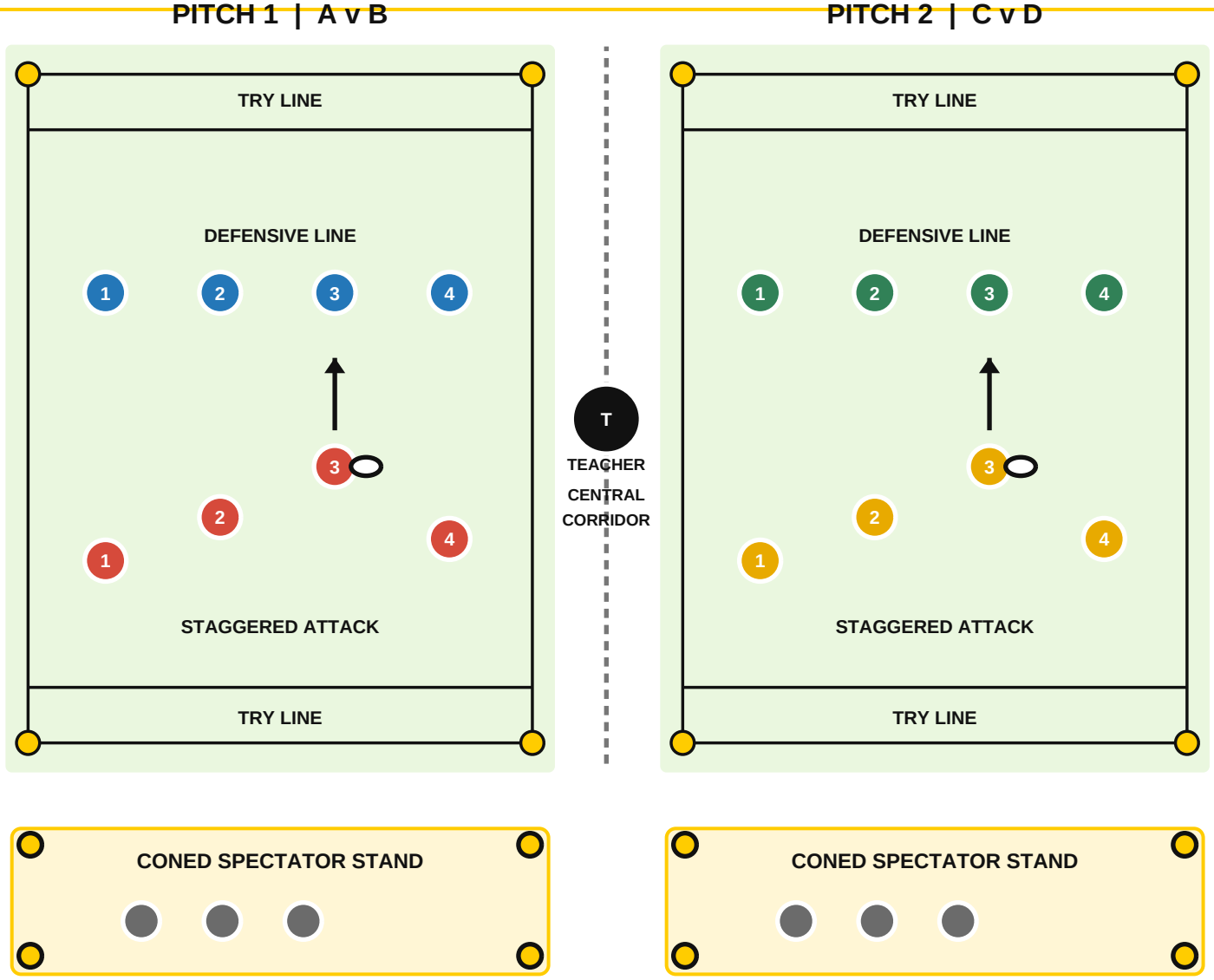
Carry the ball; never throw it at a runner. No pushing, grabbing or ball strikes.

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L4.2 / L4.3 TWO PITCHES AND VIEWING AREAS

Lesson 4 | 10 to 35 minutes | Years 3 and 4



Viewing is brief; rotate fairly and keep spectators outside the touchlines.

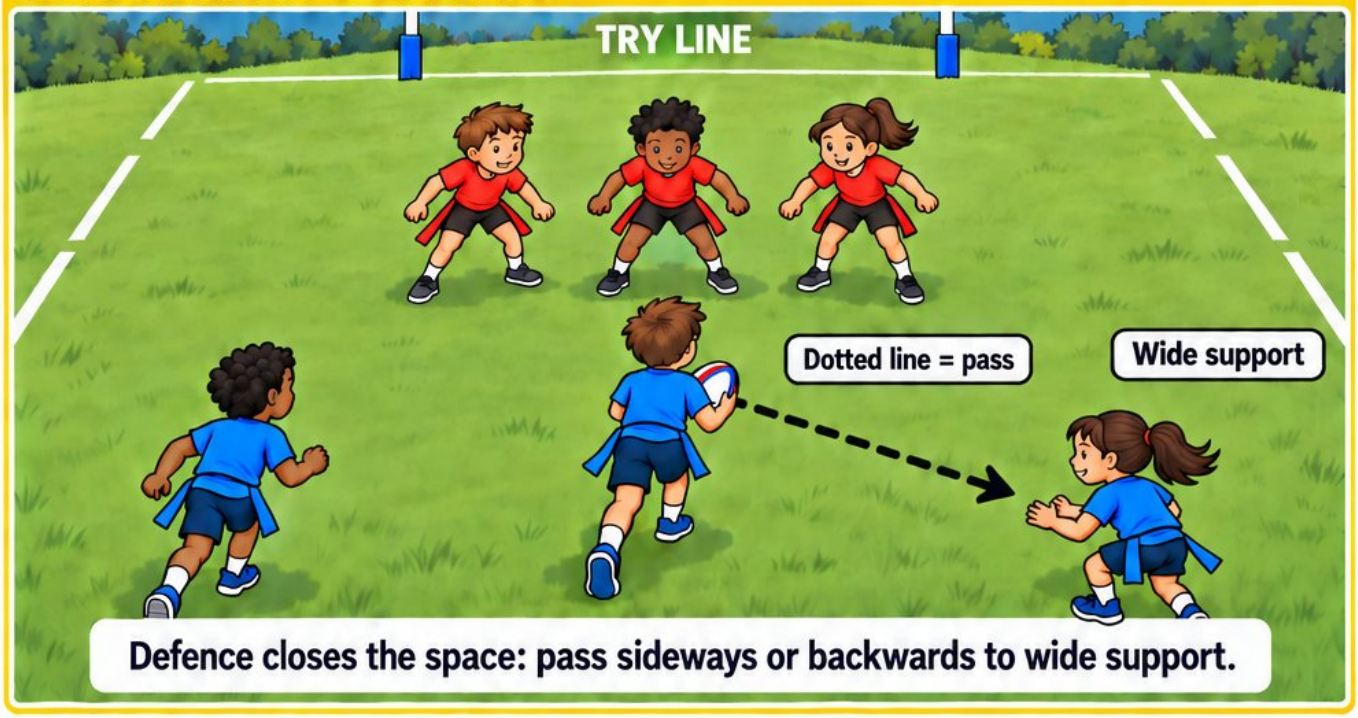
SETUP: Two games at once where space allows. Each team has up to six pupils; four per team are shown. Pupil referees call tag, try, out and restart. Spare balls support quick restarts.

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L4.4 – WHEN TO PASS OR CARRY

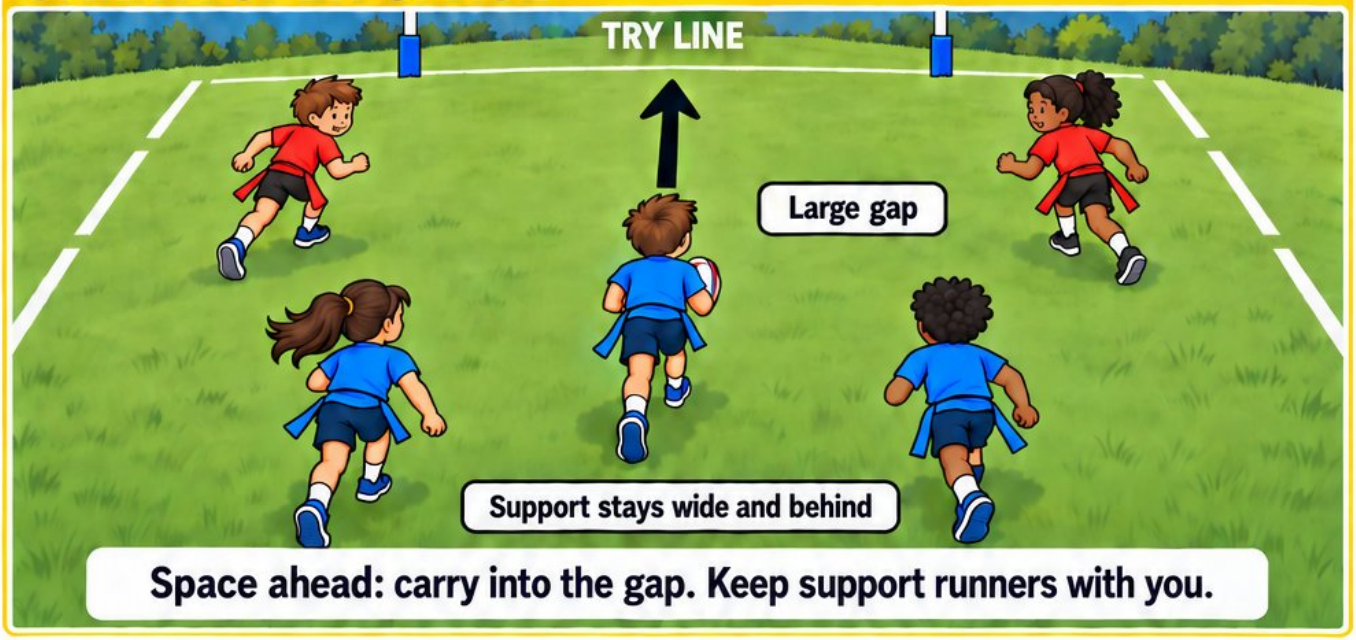
Demonstration / coaching point | Years 3–4

PASS: TIGHT DEFENCE



Defence closes the space: pass sideways or backwards to wide support.

CARRY: OPEN SPACE



Space ahead: carry into the gap. Keep support runners with you.

KEY MESSAGE: THE CARRIER ALWAYS NEEDS SUPPORT

- Support runners stay wide, behind the ball and ready to receive.

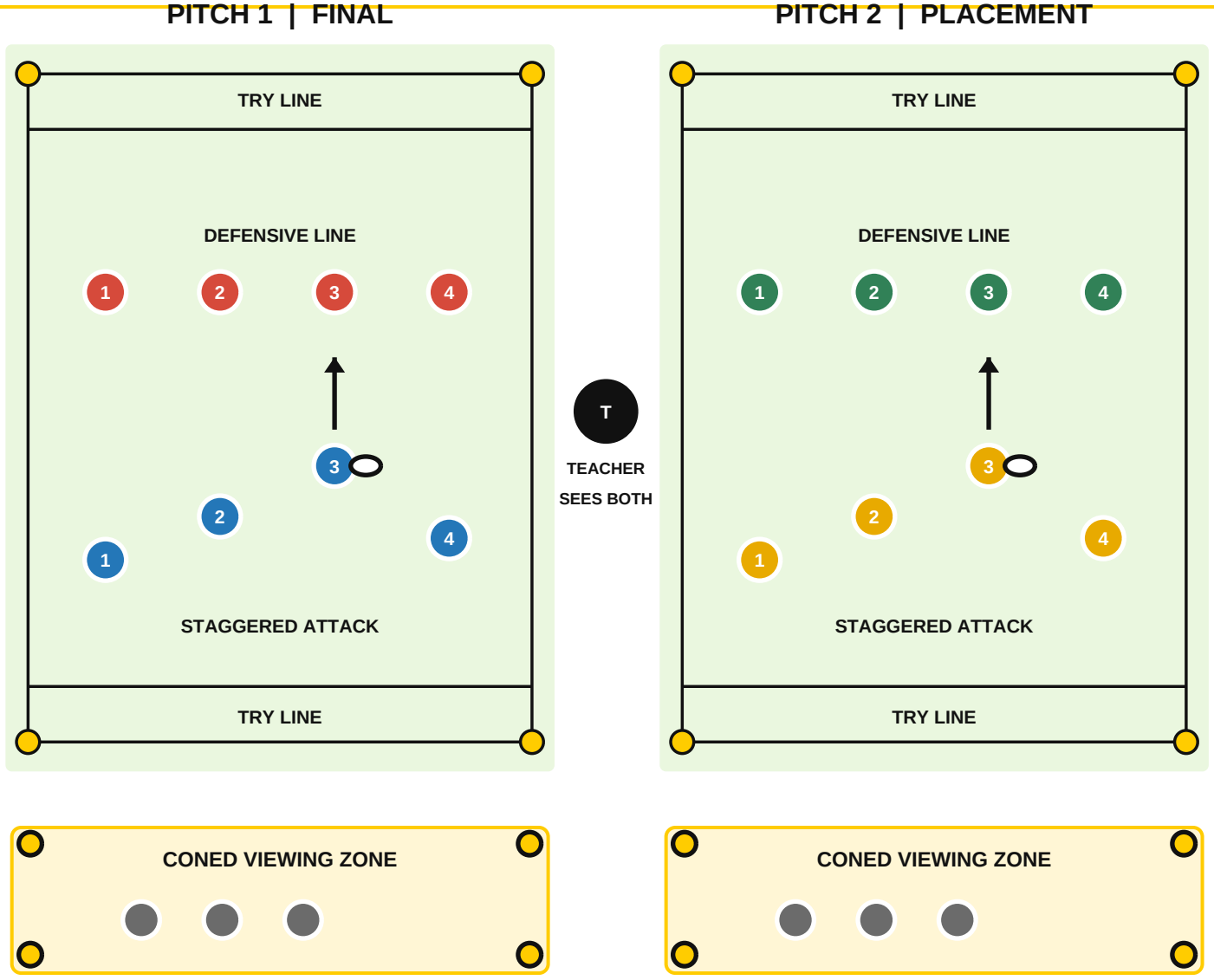
Look up • Run into space • Pass when space closes

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L4.5 FINAL AND PLACEMENT GAME

Lesson 4 | 38 to 53 minutes | Years 3 and 4



Both games run together. Everyone gets a match.

Fifteen-minute games where suitable. Teams of up to six. Pupils referee with the teacher nearby. A final is optional when pupil numbers or space call for mixed games instead.

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L4.6 – GREETING AND MOVING REVIEW

53–60 minutes | Years 3–4





1. After every game, wish the other team well. Offer a handshake or agreed greeting.
2. In threes, walk and pass gently. Discuss how you felt when you won or lost.
3. Everyone names one rugby skill they used and one respectful action they showed.

DISCUSS:	TEACHING CUE:	SUPPORT:	CHALLENGE:
• What helps when we feel disappointed? • How do gracious winners behave? • How can we support teammates and opponents?	Breathe • Name the feeling • Congratulate opponents • Thank teammates • Choose a next step	Demonstrate, point or use supported communication. Walk or wheel.	Explain how to change an unhelpful reaction.

Everyone takes a turn • One ball per trio • No contact during play

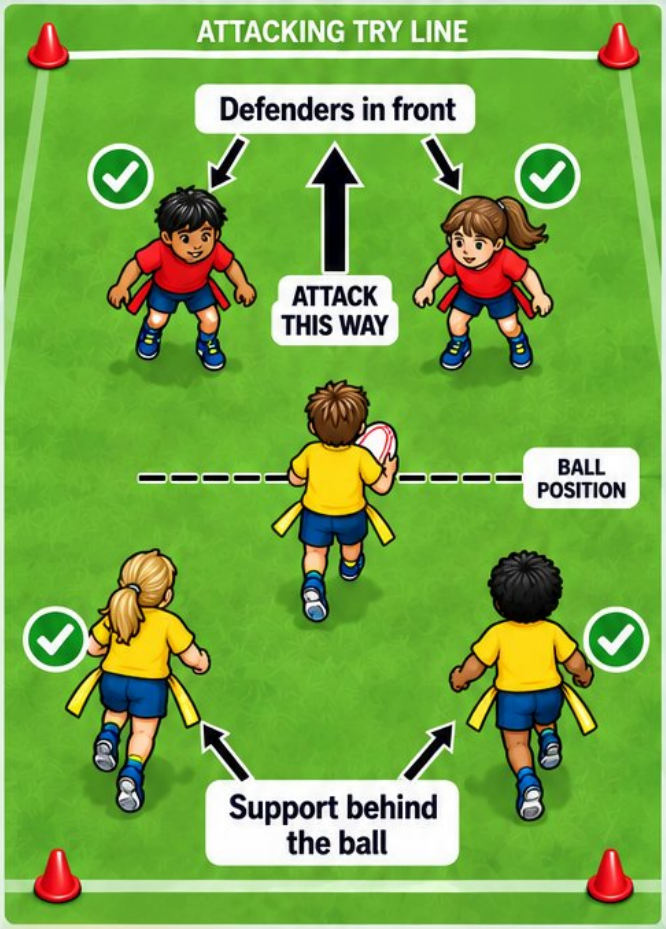
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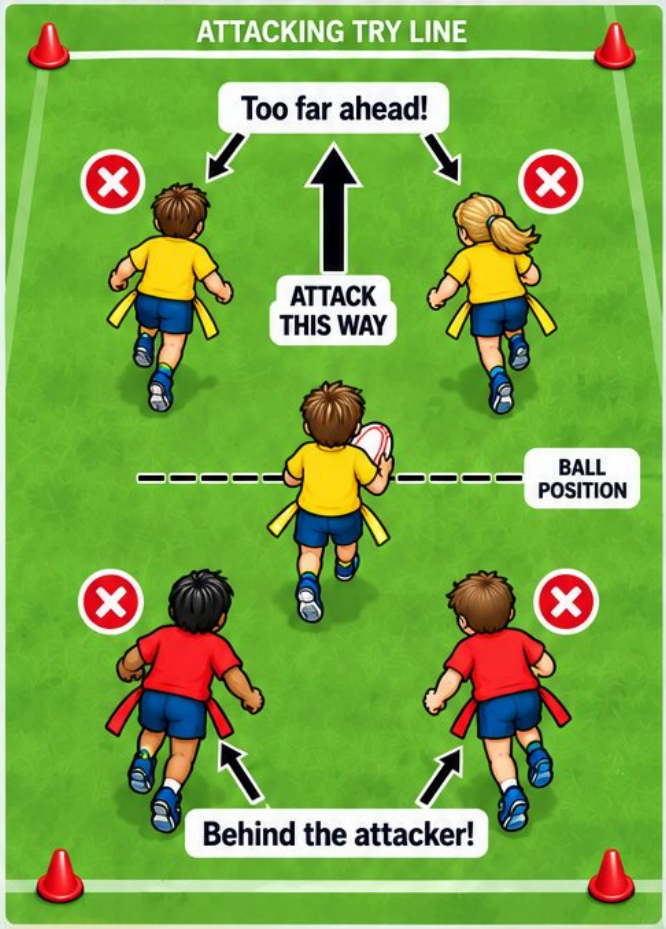
STAY ONSIDE

Our small-sided tag rugby games

✓ RIGHT



✗ WRONG



ATTACKERS

Stay behind the ball carrier.
Keep wide and ready to receive.

DEFENDERS

Stay in front of the ball carrier, towards your own try line.
Face the attackers.

WHEN POSSESSION CHANGES, SWAP ROLES.

The new attackers support behind the ball. The new defenders get in front.

After a tag: step backwards facing the attackers.

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