EAPI Help sheet for Rugby

**Section One – Skills**

Remember you will **need to identify three skills that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three skills that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

Skills within rugby could be:

Tackling (front) Side tackle Pop passing Long passing side step offloading rucking Mauling Grubber kick Chip kick Swerve attacking space Hand off

Common weaknesses within these skills are highlighted in yellow – these should often be easier to spot than others! Think about the timing of these techniques as any moment where they mis-time would mean that this could be a weaker area e.g. mis-timed tackle, mis-timed pass which doesn’t draw a player.

Once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Think about the phases of the technique:

* Preparation (was the ball in the correct place prior to the execution?)
* Execution (what was the actual technique like in terms of action – flowing, jerky etc.)
* Recovery (what happened with the follow-through of the technique action?)
* Result (Did the technique end up exactly like it was supposed to e.g. did they step the player?)

**E.g.** *A strength was the hand off. They moved the ball under the correct arm the preparation phase and then extended their arm into the opponent’s chest which gave them an excellent platform to push of in the final phase of the skill. This was performed quickly and effectively.*

Or

**E.g.** *A weakness of the full back was their hand off. They had the ball under the wrong arm in the preparation phase and ran directly towards the player. The hand off was performed in the correct place (the chest) however, the arm was bent so struggled to produce any real force. The player then struggled to maintain balance as they tried to move away as previously stated the ball was under the wrong arm, therefore they were unbalanced.*

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**Section Two – Tactics**

Remember you will **need to identify three tactics that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three tactics that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

Tactics within rugby could be:

Pressing in a line in defence Calling of pillars and guards Moving forward as a pivot as a back three.

 Dropping back after a kick has been completed. Calling for the ball as a back three

Knowing when to joining a ruck Knowing when to attack wide Knowing when to kick into space.

Knowing when to kick for the line Cutting back inside Running as a dummy player

(Common weaknesses are highlighted in yellow)

Again, once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Try to think of how the tactic relates to the individual first, and then how this could affect the team performance.

**E.g.** *A weakness of the fullback was his inability as to when to join the line. As the move was played the player hesitated between the attacking line and defending the counterattack ball. This left the centre exposed when they went into contact. If the fullback had read the play better they could have been in the attacking line and supported the centre when tackled.*

***E.g.*** A strength of the centre is his ability to run a dummy line. He can read the defence and recognise where the space is. He then carries out a realistic running line that manipulates the defence into thinking that he is going to get the ball. This impacts on the team by allowing other players to run into space. From this the player is now set up to complete an effective support line as he knows where the ball is going.

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**Section Three – Physical Attributes**

Remember you will **need to identify three physical attributes that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three physical attributes that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

**Physical Attributes for rugby could be:**

Isometric strength in the scrum or line out when holding the player. Power in tackling Agility to avoid players Agility to tackle players Power in a hand off.

Speed in finishing a try or chasing down a player. Hand eye co-ordination in passing Balance when preparing to tackle or avoid a tackle

Cardiovascular fitness to sustain a high tempo for 80 minutes. Muscular endurance to sustain a high tempo for 80 minutes.

(Common weaknesses are highlighted in yellow)

Again, once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Try to think of how the fitness relates to the individual first, and then how this could affect the team performance.

**E.g.** A weakness is the player’s ability to change direction quickly when avoiding a tackle. The player approaches the opposition but fails to excerpt force in one direction or another to change his direction. The large body mass and lack of agility force the player to move into contact and not avoid the opposition. This could be due to limited power in the abductor muscles as well as the gastrocnemius. This impacts on the team’s ability to keep the play alive, other player will now have to ruck or maul. This can reduce the speed of the game.

**E.g,** A strength is the player’s power in contact situations. The player is able go into a contact situation and through dynamic movement of the legs and arms, maintain momentum. This shows strong rotator cuff muscles as well as others, e.g., pectorals, deltoids to name a few. He is able to rotate the shoulders to free them from the opposition and then offload the ball. This is due to the explosive power when going into contact. The impact on the team is keeping the ball alive. This in turn can increase the speed of the game and allow the team to maintain the attack.

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**Section Four – Designing a Training Programme**

Once you have identified ALL of the strengths and weaknesses from your observation, you must highlight what you feel is the biggest weakness of the areas you have discussed.

THINK! **Don’t just select something that you are comfortable with** – you must show that you have considered all of the weaknesses and prioritised the most important one to the performance that you watched. The best thing to do is justify your choice – **make the EAPI examiner understand why you have selected this**.

E.g. *I watched the performer and I felt that there were three major weaknesses. However,* ***the most important weaknesses*** *was their lack of ball control within the game as without this they could not become effective as part of a successful team and would lack basic technical ability to support their performance.*

Once you have identified the biggest weakness, you then need to create a training plan for this. The examiner will observe your use of the following principles:

**FITT** – Frequency, Intensity, Time, Type

**SPORT** – Specificity, Progression, Overload, Reversibility, Tedium / Variance / Variety

**WIMP** – Warm-up and Cool-down, Individuality, Moderation, Periodisation

**TESTING** – What test will you use to assess the performer to start with, what test will you use halfway, and what test will you use at the end of the programme?

Don’t forget to also discuss:

**Aims and Objectives of the Programme** – what are they? Explain them!

**Targets you have set for the Performer** – use the SMARTER principle!

The best way to start this is to write down a simple plan regarding how you would develop the main weakness. As a rough guide:

* **To improve a skill weakness, this can be 8 weeks in duration**
* **To improve a tactical weakness, this can be 8 weeks in duration**
* **To improve a fitness component weakness, this can be 8-10 weeks in duration**

You must discuss this with the EAPI examiner before you start to discuss your specific plan. It is always best to begin with the Frequency component of FITT and outline this to the examiner as it shows your basic thinking.

Before deciding on your plan – THINK! They may already be doing lots of training, so you may just need to plan around this. This can save you some planning time **if you explain this to the EAPI examiner**.

**E.g**. *I have decided to focus on the fitness component of muscular endurance. In order to develop this for my performer,* ***I have created a 8 week training programme****, which will initially be one session per week but progress by week 3 to two sessions and by week 6 to three sessions. This is added to his / her regular football coaching sessions each week and every session will last no longer than thirty minutes.*

**Training Plan – Coaching Points**

**BEFORE** you start to plan your training plan, you will need to think about specific coaching points as your training plan needs to show that you have understood how to develop these.

For skills, think about the perfect skill being performed to identify the coaching points.

E.g.

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| Skill for Football | Coaching Points |
| Dribbling | Head upLaced area of the footClose controlDribble at speed |
| Shooting | Laced area of the footBody over the ballHit the centre of the ballFollow-throughNon-kicking foot next to the ball |
| Passing | Inside of the foot for controlNon-kicking foot next to the ballFollow-throughHit the centre of the ball |
| Lofted Passing | Non-kicking foot next to the ballHit the bottom of the ballUse the laced area of the foot, or inside for swerve / spinFollow-throughLean back slightly as you connect |

If you have selected a **component of fitness** for your weakness to improve, this is often more difficult. Try to think about how you could **include coaching points within any of the specific drills** you would be using.

This table may help you with this on this particular area:

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| Component of Fitness to Improve | Specific drill or method used to improve this that you might discuss  | Coaching Points in relation to specific technique within the drill used |
| Strength, Power | Bench Press | Whilst on the bench, ensure your feet are flat on the groundExhale when pushing the bar upwardInhale as the bar is brought downward2 secs to push up, 2secs to bring the bar down again. |
| Speed | Interval Running | Running technique whilst performing the drill should be:Head uprightArms bent at 90 degreesRelaxed handsLand on balls of the feetKnee drive should be between 45 – 90 degrees |
| Muscular Endurance | Repeated press-ups | Whilst performing the press-up, back should remain level Bring the chest as close to the ground as possibleArms bent at 90 degrees on downward phaseFully extend arms in upward phaseBreathe correctly during upward and downward phases |

With regards to improving a tactical weakness – this is by far and away the most difficult aspect to discuss. If you wish to attempt this, **please see a member of staff for assistance with this**!

**Designing the Training Programme**

The last part of this section requires you to actually design the programme.

**Remember to use the principles of training** mentioned above when constructing – especially progression, frequency, intensity, moderation and tedium / variety.

Each training plan will be independent to each person designing it, but as mentioned before a good way to start is to **think about the amount of training the performer may be doing already and base your training programme around this initially**. This would mean that your sessions could then be shorter initially, and gradually expanding.

**Do:**

* Read and research specific drills for the main weakness - e.g. explore how to improve dribbling, turning, speed, strength etc.
* Plan a rough outline of your training plan and check it with a member of staff
* Think about drills you have participated in during previous training sessions and explore how they could be used or adapted to meet the needs of your specific weakness for the performer

**Don’t**

* Just ‘wing it’ and create a plan based on previous experiences in being weak in that area
* Create a random plan that does not address the weakness you have identified. **Check your drills or activities actually improve the weakness you have selected!**
* Create plans that do not adhere to the principles of fitness – again, if you need help with this see a member of staff for support

Remember – you will actually have to SPEAK about the training programme in the EAPI. You cannot just show the EAPI examiner your plan as the exam does not work like this.

Take time and practice explaining your training timetable to friends, family and staff members. **A good way to do this is to speak to individuals who know absolutely nothing about training or your sport – if you can explain it clearly to them, you have a good base to start your EAPI discussion.**

**Psychological and Physiological Justification of the Training Plan, including Adaptations**

For this final section **you will now need to think about how theory** (that you have learned throughout your A-level PE lessons) **applies to the programme you have created.**

You must aim to cover both psychological points and physiological points in as much detail as possible. There must be a clear link between what you are discussing and the training programme that you have created.

Some helpful topics that could apply to netball would be as follows:

**Do it in Stages!**

The best way to do this is do it in blocks (think of weeks rather than sessions, as otherwise it will take too long).

Therefore, think about this:

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| **Week 1** | **Week 2** | **Week 3** | **Week 4** |
| Look at the practices you designed. **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed. **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed. **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed. **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory |

**You could then do the same for weeks 5-8**. This is the best way to start, and try to think about at least one physiological or psychological point per week as a good starting point.

If sessions are the same across the training timetable, **don’t repeat your justification**…just justify it once. For example, if you had circuit training from week one to week four, juts justify why you used circuit training as opposed to other methods of training for this performer etc.

**Use the table below** to help you to think about different ways you could justify what you have planned – remember you don’t need everything on the list, but make sure you can talk about a few of these things confidently. Start by discussing areas you feel the most confident about!

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| **Psychological Aspects to help Justification** | **Physiological Aspects to help Justification** |
| Goal-setting | Dietary aids / ergogenic aids |
| Types and Methods of Practice | Training Principles – MRS VOPP Testing WC |
| Transfer | Periodisation |
| Group Dynamics / Cohesion | Heart Rate Training Zones |
| Social Facilitation | Strength Training Methods – Circuit / Free Weights / Machine Weights / Plyometrics |
| Reducing stress / increasing stress | Aerobic Capacity Training Methods – Interval / Fartlek / Continuous |
| Zone of Optimum Functioning | Flexibility Training Methods – PNF / Static / Dynamic / Ballistic |
| Guidance |  |
| Transfer |  |

**Example of Justification**

For example, if we planned for a performer to improve their chest pass in netball:

A **basic psychological answer** would be:

*Within week one, I have mainly focused on isolating the skill of the chest pass by using massed practice in both sessions. This would help them to groove the skill of the chest pass and so making it a correct dominant response in a game.*

Whereas **a good psychological answer** would be:

*Within week one, I have mainly focused on isolating the discrete skill of the chest pass by using massed practice in both sessions. As the performer is in the associative phase of learning, this would help them to groove the skill of the chest pass and so making it a correct dominant response. This would mean that, when under pressure or aroused in a competitive game the chest pass skill is likely to remain consistent and technique should be better.*

A **basic physiological answer** would be:

*Within week one to three, I have decided to use circuit training using free weights to increase the size of their arms. This would help the muscle hypertrophy and assist their chest pass in a game.*

Whereas **a good physiological answer** would be:

*Within week one to three, I have decided to use circuit training as a method to develop the performers upper body strength, particularly focusing on the deltoids, bicep brachii and tricep brachii. By using 65% of their 1 rep max resistance, for 3 sets of 8 reps, this should allow for hypertrophy of the said muscles and therefore would support the performer in enabling her chest pass in netball to be thrown both further and more consistently.*

**Remember that you need to justify:**

The training programme itself AND any methods of testing (e.g. why have you used a MSFT or Step Test to evaluate aerobic capacity)?

**Explaining Adaptations**

Finally, you will also need to state any adaptations that could or should have occurred through your training programme – how has the athlete changed psychologically or physiologically in any way?

Again, the best way to **do this is in TWO stages**:

**Discuss any potential adaptations after weeks 1-4**

AND

**Discuss any potential adaptations after completing the whole training programme (by the end of week 8)**

You MUST **discuss both Physiological AND Psychological adaptations**. Here are some that may help you:

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| **Psychological Adaptations** | **Physiological Adaptations** |
| Increased control of arousal levels  | Venous return levels increase  |
| Increased concentration and focus | Cardiovascular adaptations (blood pressure, heart size, cardiac output, stroke volume, resting heart rate etc.) |
| Change in group dynamics between group members (if part of a team or working in small groups) | Respiratory system adaptations (strength of intercostal muscles, tidal volume, minute ventilation, gaseous exchange rates, alveoli etc.) |
| Potential phase of learning changes (associative to autonomous etc.) | Musculo-Skeletal adaptations (hypertrophy, motor units, muscle spindles, reduced osteoporosis etc.) |
| Personality changes (longer term only) | Aerobic Capacity adaptations (cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and neural system adaptations) |
| Attitude changes towards exercise / health / lifestyle / training | Strength training adaptations (muscular, neural and connective tissue adaptations) |
| Motivational changes for the performer | Flexibility training adaptations (muscular and connective tissue adaptations) |
|  | Reduced impact of lifestyle diseases (CHD, Angina, Asthma, COPD, stroke, Heart Attack) |

**For example**, if we planned for a performer to improve their explosive power in basketball:

*At the end of the first four week period, there should be a few adaptations taking place for the performer. Psychologically, the performer may be learning to control their own arousal levels by the end of week four. This is because as they have practiced different isolated skill practices such as shooting and slam dunking, they can recognize when they may need to psych themselves up in order to generate a more explosive jump towards the ring. By psyching themselves up, it would mean that they can move themselves “into the zone” and therefore jump higher.*

*Secondly, their attitude may be changing towards training and exercise. To begin with, they may have had a poor attitude towards increased training but at this point, especially if they have gained an increased test result score on the vertical jump, their cognitive component of attitude may have changed as they may see the results and know that the work they are doing has improved their own vertical jump ability.*

*Physiologically, after four weeks the brain may start to activate muscles faster as by regularly working on vertical jumping there should be increased neural pathways connecting the CNS to the muscles via an increased amount of motor units being developed. This would gradually be increasing the speed of information transmission from the brain to the muscles involved in jumping.*

*Finally, physiologically after four weeks there may be an increased range of movement around the knee and hip joints involved in the vertical jump. This may be because the joint is starting to secrete more synovial fluid, and therefore becomes more flexible for the performer and may start to help to develop more power each time the vertical jump is performed.*

You then need to **repeat this for the end of the training programme too** (What has happened by the end of the 8 week period?)

**Remember!**

**As a minimum, try to have at least TWO Psychological and TWO Physiological adaptations for the end of the four week period, followed by TWO Psychological and TWO Physiological adaptations for the end of the eight – ten week period for a top-band (A –A\* grade) answer**.