

HSBC 

ROOKIE RUGBY

PRESENTED BY **HONDA**

EVENT GUIDE



www.rookierugby.ca

EVENT GUIDE

Rookie Rugby is Canada's youth rugby program that offers non-contact rugby to boys and girls of all ages across the country. The game is played in schools, community organizations, and rugby clubs in every province. A great introduction to the game is through Rookie Rugby events such as Try Rugby Days and Jamborees. Rugby Canada has designed this book to enable parents, coaches, teachers, and volunteers with best practice information on how to gain the most out of these events.

WHY RUGBY?

Rugby is a diverse sport for men and women, boys and girls. It builds teamwork, understanding, cooperation, and respect for fellow athletes. In an era where many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, rugby is proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and fair play.

BENEFITS OF STARTING RUGBY

There are many benefits to starting a rugby program in your area and here are a few.

Recruitment

Starting a rugby league, camp, clinic, or team in the community means a new crop of players interested in the game. This program quickly develops into a sustainable feeder program for many other teams in the area.

Revenue Generation

Starting a program in your community helps generate revenue for your organization. Parents invest a lot for their children to participate in other sports – why not add rugby to that list?

Fans

For every child that plays rugby there is a whole family that adopts the game. A local program helps grow the rugby fan base, which means more spectators in seats at local games and events.

Growing The Game

Community programs increase the number of rugby players in Canada and decreases the age at which they are introduced. This of course helps the growth of the sport overall.

CHALLENGES TO STARTING RUGBY

As with anything, there are challenges with growing the sport of rugby. Being aware of them makes it easier to overcome.

Resources

Many groups find that they lack the appropriate resources to start a rugby program such as balls, flag belts, uniforms, etc.

Participants

Marketing is not an easy task and groups feel that they will not get enough kids to sustain a program.

Volunteers

Finding people to donate their time is not easy.

Negative Stereotype

Rugby often comes with a negative stereotype of being a dangerous game.

WHY IS THIS EVENT GUIDE AWESOME?

We're glad you asked! We have put together everything that you will need to know in 5 easy steps for running a successful Rookie Rugby event. By the end of this manual you will have strategies for addressing your challenges and be prepared to take your first step.

5 Steps to Running Rookie Rugby Events

STEP 1 **PLAN YOUR EVENT LOGISTICS**

Pick the type of event you want to do and plan the timeline, budget, and overall logistics for making it happen.

STEP 2 **MARKET YOUR EVENT**

Promote your event online and in the community in order to recruit more participants.

STEP 3 **EVENT PREPARATION**

From start to finish, plan your event by gathering resources, recruiting and training volunteers, covering safety information, etc.

STEP 4 **MANAGE YOUR EVENT**

Be ready to manage the event smoothly by preparing beforehand.

STEP 5 **EVENT FOLLOW UP & REPORTING**

Finalize your event by doing proper reporting and thanking everyone involved.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: CONNECT LOCALLY

You are not in this alone! Connect with your local rugby Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) for support with your Rookie Rugby event. The PSOs are responsible for the sole purpose of growing and sustaining rugby within their provinces at all levels. Many of these groups have paid, dedicated staff ready to work with you on your events. We want you to know that you are not alone in this process as you begin your planning. Locally there are lots of great people dedicated to helping out and working with you to be successful.

To connect with your local PSO representative, visit www.rookierugby.ca/en/contact.

STEP 1

PLAN YOUR EVENT LOGISTICS





STEP 1: PLAN YOUR EVENT LOGISTICS

PICK YOUR EVENT

ASK YOURSELF THE 5 W'S

No matter what program you choose, be sure to consider the most important questions of **Who, What, Where, When, and Why** during the planning process. We suggest meeting as a group and brainstorming all the questions you have about the program. Then, work together as a group to answer them.

5 W's of Youth Rugby Events

WHO

Identify the target audience for the event and who will help support you. Identify who is responsible for each task in the event planning process.

WHAT

Use outcome-based planning to help your efforts. What do you want this event to look like?

WHERE

Location is key – where is a place central to your target audience? Try to reduce travel time as much as possible. Consider indoor locations in case of inclement weather.

WHEN

Timing is key for when you host your event. Consider other events happening and when your exit strategy programs begin. Place a deadline on every event task to stay organized.

WHY

Understand your motivations for hosting this event. What drives you to make this event a success? The answer to this will help guide your efforts.

Picking the right event is the most important thing to do before you even begin the planning stages. Youth rugby means many different things; be sure to choose the right option that works with your end goals. We have highlighted two main programs that can easily increase rugby participation in your community.

YOUTH RUGBY CAMPS*

A youth sports camp is a great way to introduce rugby to a community in a shorter time frame. Many communities run multi-sport or single sport camps for every season of the year. Check out some foundational components for youth sports camps:

- **Try Rugby Day (1 Day)** – The shortest timeframe for camps is a one-day camp called a Try Rugby Day that focuses on introducing skills in a few hours. These camps can be as short as one hour or as long as an entire day. These are best run as a recruitment effort for a league beginning within a couple weeks from when the Try Rugby Day is held.
- **Week-Long Camp** – Depending on the season, camps run as a morning or after-school three-hour timeframe.
- **Multi-Week Camp** – This camp is similar to a week-long format, but it is spread out over a set number of weeks. An example of this camp would be a one to two days a week for four weeks.

BENEFITS

- **Planning** – Try Rugby Days and camps take less time to plan and are still very successful.
- **Cost** – Camps tend to cost less than leagues and more extensive programs. With a smaller number of participants, costs for equipment and other materials are lower.
- **Replicable** – Camps are a format that can be replicated multiple times each year. Once the format is perfected, the execution is easy!

CHALLENGES

- **Smaller Pay-offs** – Camps can have a smaller number of participants and a lower fee for attendance, making the overall funds less.
- **Retention** – Participants in camps require a sustainable program to funnel into following their introduction to rugby. Without a local league or team to play for, children will find other activities to do.

*Partnering with Community Organizations

Many community organizations run multi-sport camps or youth sports camps like the formats listed above. Try partnering with these organizations to slot rugby into their existing programming. This will allow you to take advantage of their facilities, marketing, and membership. Examples of community organizations include parks and recreation centers, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, etc.



YOUTH RUGBY LEAGUES

Hearing the word “league” can be daunting when running your first youth rugby program, but it is much easier than you might think. Leagues are great ways to introduce and retain players in the sport and keep the game growing in your community. Check out some basics of running your own league:

TIMEFRAME

Leagues can run as many weeks as you want. We recommend running a four to six week program to be sure you are providing enough rugby for the participants to develop their skills, but not too much where they are getting bored. Run the program for one hour a day for 1-2 times a week.

BENEFITS

- **Sustainable, Feeder Program** – Leagues serve a great part in the retention of players in the community. Leagues take the place as a feeder program for other teams and leagues in the area.
- **Revenue Generating** – Leagues are a great way to bring in significant revenue and raise funds for your program.

CHALLENGES

- **Planning** – Leagues take more planning and training of volunteers to be successful.
- **Cost** – Leagues require more materials and equipment than camps, increasing your overall investment.

SAMPLE LEAGUE

The goal for the league would be a 4-24 team league. Ideally, teams will play flag rugby on game days that would involve multiple teams in a festival atmosphere, similar to a Try Rugby Day. This allows for teams to share players, coaches, referees, and resources.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week	Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week	Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week	Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week	Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week	Rugby Instruction 60 minutes Mid-Week
	Optional Competition Day	Optional Competition Day	Optional Competition Day	Optional Competition Day	Optional Competition Day



Below is an example of a one-day competition in the second week of the program. League play models can be structured as the following:

Week 2 Example (E.g. Saturday Competition Day)

GAME 1	Team 1 v Team 2	Team 3 v Team 4	Team 5 v Team 6	Team 7 v Team 8
GAME 2	Team 1 v Team 3	Team 2 v Team 4	Team 7 v Team 7	Team 6 v Team 8
GAME 3	Team 1 v Team 5	Team 2 v Team 7	Team 3 v Team 6	Team 4 v Team 8
GAME 4	Team 1 v Team 7	Team 2 v Team 3	Team 4 v Team 6	Team 5 v Team 8



A game day will include multiple games for each team involved. Tournament or festival play should be utilized. Multiple locations will encourage more teams for participation and allow for easier access in communities.

Allow each team to play through the league without a penalty for loss. League season games are meant to teach players the basics and acclimate them to flag rugby. Your sixth week of games could be tournament style, crowning a champion team and rewarding those players.

PLAN YOUR TIMELINE

No matter which format you pick, proper planning is key. A timeline is a preliminary step to being successful. We have provided a sample timeline to model your program after and keys to success.



High Level Planning: 4-6 Months Ahead of Program Start

- ☐ Establish program goals and objectives
- ☐ Select date for start of program
- ☐ Identify venue and negotiate details, book if possible
- ☐ Develop Program Master Plan
- ☐ Get cost estimates (e.g. equipment, space rental, t-shirts, stickers, administrative items, etc.) and create a budget
- ☐ Recruit Rookie Rugby Captain and volunteers
- ☐ Create and launch publicity plan and brand your program (ensure staff and/or volunteers are identified to manage specific tasks)
- ☐ Identify and contact sponsors/partners



3-4 Months Ahead of Program Start

Financial/Administration

- ☐ Registration fees
- ☐ Set up/enable online registration if applicable
- ☐ Sponsor levels/amounts

Venue/logistics planning

- ☐ Investigate need for any special permits, licenses, insurance, etc.
- ☐ Determine and arrange all details regarding menu, A/V equipment, registration set-up, parking, signage, etc.

Publicity

- ☐ Develop draft program
- ☐ Develop publicity pieces – e.g., newsletter, online articles
- ☐ Request logos from corporate sponsors for online and printed materials
- ☐ Develop and produce invitations, programs, posters, tickets, etc.
- ☐ Create event page on your website
- ☐ Enable/create email event notifications
- ☐ Create a Facebook event page
- ☐ Develop a promo video and post on YouTube and Facebook pages
- ☐ Register your event on a variety of online event calendars
- ☐ Create some buzz on your blog or member forums



2 Months Ahead of Program Start

- ☐ Send reminders to contact list regarding registration/participation

Sponsorship

- ☐ Follow up to confirm sponsorships and underwriting

Publicity

- ☐ Release press announcements
- ☐ Post your initial event news release on your website and circulate to all partners, affiliated organizations, etc.



1 Week Ahead of Program Start

- ☐ Have all committee chairs meet and confirm all details against Master Plan – and ensure back-up plans are developed for any situation (e.g. back-up volunteers, additional volunteers for registration or set-up, etc.)
- ☐ Finalize Program Script
- ☐ Touch base with all volunteers on their roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Send reminder emails to attendees



1 Day Ahead of Program Start

- ☐ Ensure all signage is in place
- ☐ Ensure registration and media tables are prepared and stocked with necessary items (e.g. blank name badges, paper, pens, tape, stapler, etc.)
- ☐ Ensure all promo items, gifts, plaques, trophies, etc. are on-site



Event Day

- ☐ Ensure you have copies of all instructions, directions, registration lists, etc.
- ☐ Check-in with each Committee Chair to ensure their team is on track



Event Follow-Up

- ☐ Update budget with final receipts and documentation
- ☐ Send thank-you's and acknowledgement letters to: Sponsors, Volunteers, Participants
- ☐ Post-event publicity on website and social media
- ☐ Conduct a Post-Event Survey – to learn what people enjoyed about your event, and where you have room to improve
- ☐ Follow-up Communication with Event Participants
- ☐ Reach out to event participants – thank them for participating and promote your ongoing programs and how they can support you throughout the year by joining, volunteering or making a sustaining donation
- ☐ Conduct a thorough evaluation

PLAN YOUR BUDGET

When constructing your own budget, outline all of the costs that you foresee based on the number of participants you plan on having. This will help you determine how much you should charge for the program. The sample budget provided outlines a **Try Rugby Day** and all costs associated. You can use this as a good starting point for creating your own budget.

In this example, the projected revenue is \$20 higher than the expenses, meaning the money made from the event is \$20. With the addition of sponsors and fundraisers, the revenue generation from the event will increase significantly. Costs for things like marketing materials and t-shirts for participants are attractive selling points for sponsors.

When completing your budget, start with projected expenses first. This will outline the total number you need to recuperate with registration costs and sponsorship. You can potentially allow participants free registration if you are able to cover costs through other means.



Sample Budget for Try Rugby Day

Projected Numbers

Kids	60	Assume that each team will have 7-10 kids
Coaches	6	Assume that each team will have 1 coaches
Total Teams	6	Use this target to guide your overall process

Projected Revenues

Item	Per Item	Total Revenue	Notes
Registration Fees	\$25	\$1,500	\$25 per participant
Sponsorship			A great way to offset costs.
Donations			A great way to offset costs.
Fundraising			Run a small fundraiser to raise funds.

Revenues \$1,500

Projected Expenses

Item	Per Item	Total Expense	Notes
Starter Kits	\$220	\$440	Plan for one kit per 30 participants
Rookie Rugby T-shirts	\$10	\$660	T-shirts for Coaches/Players
Rookie Rugby Stickers	\$0.50	\$50	100 Rookie Rugby stickers
Printing	\$0.50	\$50	100 fliers, posters, etc.
Banner	\$100	\$200	Two banners for event marketing
Medical Kit	\$50	\$50	One for event administration
Whistles for Coaches	\$5	\$30	One for each coach

Total Expenses \$1,480

STEP 2

MARKET YOUR EVENT



STEP 2: MARKET YOUR EVENT

Marketing an event is made easy now with modern technology and social media. We have a very easy way of accessing a lot of people in a short amount of time. The key is to make sure we are accessing the right people and in the right way. Here are a few ways that you can market your event.

HIT THE WEB

- **Get it Online:** Everyone goes to websites now to get more information. If you have a website already, be sure to include information on your **Rookie Rugby** event in an easily accessible spot from your front page. If you do not have a website, one is easily created through a variety of free website servers you can utilize. We suggest blogger.com or wordpress.com. Both are easy to use and free!
- **Get it on Facebook:** The world lives and communicates through social media. Be sure to jump on the Facebook train by creating a Facebook page and event. A page is a great way to advertise your program to friends and friends of friends at no cost. An event is a great way to post updates to everyone planning on attending. It can also easily be shared around.
- **Create other Social Media Accounts:** Twitter, Instagram etc: Expand your social media presence by creating other accounts such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. This helps expand your reach in a variety of ways. Take advantage of the chance to blast important announcements about your events. Use hashtags to track your trends!



HIT THE STREETS WITH POSTERS AND FLIERS

Old-fashioned marketing strategies such as putting fliers and posters around town are still effective. Be sure to include this effort into your plan to help maximize your reach for those that are not as connected online. Utilize simple marketing fliers and posters that get your message across and have a place for more information. **Rookie Rugby** has an editable flier that you can download at www.rookierugby.ca.

When selecting areas to hang up fliers/posters, select areas that help reach your target audience. You'll want the flier to be seen by parents and kids, which means you need to research where they spend the most time. Parents frequently visit the grocery store, the gym, coffee shops, and community centres. Most of these places have community bulletin boards that you can hang up information. Do not forget to ask local businesses and supporters of youth sports – many are happy to help you advertise at no cost.

YOUTH RUGBY OUTREACH

Youth rugby outreach is the most effective way to recruit kids to your event because they are four times more likely to participate in a sport if they experience it in P.E. class first. Youth rugby outreach is the act of physically going into the community and teaching rugby in schools and community organizations through P.E. classes and after-school programs. Outreach is often done at no cost and is used to promote local programs. Many PSOs are already doing outreach in their provinces. Be sure to connect with them first to see how you can partner.

Below is a sample set-up for how you can do outreach in your community.

STEP 1

Identify where your event will be held. This should be a location central to a lot of schools and community organizations. Be sure to have enough field space/indoor space to accommodate your target number of teams and participants.

STEP 2

Take a look at the city limits and identify schools that are close to your event location. You will want to look at schools that are within 30 minutes in order to keep it convenient for players and parents. There will be schools that will be within 60 minutes that you will not target.

STEP 3

Once you have your schools identified, it is time to make contact. P.E. Teachers are a great connection into schools. Educators are constantly looking for new material for their classes. Present flag rugby as a new option to teach the students and promote your event. Try to avoid higher level administrators (i.e. Athletic Directors and School Board members). These individuals tend to be very busy and won't connect to the program like an educator will.



STEP 3

EVENT PREPARATION



STEP 3: EVENT PREPARATION

Resources can mean a lot of things depending on the scale of your event. Consider some of the following things that you will need to get your hands on for making the program successful.

ROOKIE RUGBY KITS

Rookie Rugby kits provide you with everything you need for running a rugby event. The kits contain six balls of either size 3 or size 4, flag belts of two different colours for up to 30 participants, boundary cones, and a bag to carry it all.

Rookie Rugby kits can be purchased online at www.rookierugby.ca/store.



EVENT T-SHIRTS OR PINNIES

Uniforms are a more expensive cost and less important for what you are doing. T-shirts or sport pinnies are a good, low-cost option when having multiple teams. We recommend splitting teams up by colour and screen printing t-shirts for the players and coaches. You could also print all of one colour t-shirt and use sport pinnies to differentiate teams. Cost will vary based on the number you are producing and the cost of the shirt. Many schools will already have these sport pinnies that you can borrow for the event.

Recommendation: A sponsor who wants the t-shirts branded with their name/logo can offset this cost. Seek out a local business to purchase the shirts for the program.

PRINTING

Branding and marketing your event will be the most important factor for recruitment. The best fliers include important information about the program such as what it is, when it is, where it is, and who to contact for more information. Use sample templates from Rookie Rugby or create your own.

Recommendation: Create a flier that can fit on half a page. Print two at a time in black and white and cut in half. When conducting outreach, put a flier in every kid's hands.

OTHER MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Depending on your program and events, you may want to consider other materials or resources to make your program successful. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Coaches and Referees** – Whistles, Lanyards, Clipboards, T-shirts/Polos
- **Teams** – Signage such as Banners, Posters, etc.
- **Tournament/Event** – Signage, Handouts, First Aid Kit, Refreshments, Paper and Pens, Merchandise to sell, etc.

RECRUIT AND TRAIN YOUR VOLUNTEERS

The success of an event is measured by the quality of the volunteers behind it. There are many different roles filled by volunteers that are best prepared with some hands-on training. Check out the following volunteer roles and training that we recommend:

COACHES

Volunteers looking to coach can be current or former players, parents, or teachers. A basic flag rugby training can absolutely prepare someone to lead a team through various activities and prepare for game play.

OUTREACH INSTRUCTORS

These individuals travel to various schools for a 1-2 day instruction of flag rugby for P.E. classes. No rugby experience is needed to teach introductory games. A basic flag rugby training will prepare them for success!

PARENTS

Parents are the best volunteers and it is important to utilize them for any role that you need. Host a parent meeting prior to the start of your event and recruit parents to help.

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

A successful event takes a lot of help in different areas. Consider the following positions for volunteers helping out: Marketing/Public Relations and Social Media, Event Day Staff, Outreach Staff, or Coaches and Referees.

FLAG RUGBY INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

Rookie Rugby is the flag rugby program that works as an introduction to the sport for school-age children. This training is an overview of the games and skills of flag rugby and how to teach others. After participating in the training, instructors can:

- Understand the basic rules of flag rugby
- Become familiar with the **Rookie Rugby Games and Curriculum**
- Be able to instruct others (kids or adults) on basic rugby skills and game play
- Understand the full transition to flag rugby
- Familiarize themselves with available resources and materials

WHO CAN RUN A FLAG RUGBY TRAINING?

There are many people across the country that are trained instructors for Rookie Rugby. Connect with your local PSO or with **Rugby Canada** to find someone in your area that can lead a training for your team and volunteers.



PREPARE FOR THE BIG DAY

It is time for all your hard work to pay off with your main event. At this point, you have already marketed your program and had interested players sign up. Try to cover all your bases to make sure you are prepared:



Event Day Preparations

- ☐ **Program Organizer** Be sure that one person is in charge of the event in case any emergencies happen.
- ☐ **Team Assignments** Be sure to have team assignments figured out prior to the first day. Try to split teams based on ages, schools, or experience level. Be prepared to mix teams if you do not have enough on any team.
- ☐ **Coach Assignments** Make sure each coach knows their team, team colours, players, format of the day, etc.
- ☐ **Location Logistics** Double and triple check that everything is set for your location including conflicts in scheduling, permits, insurance, field checks, and Emergency Action Plans.
- ☐ **Equipment** Prepare the location with all equipment needed.
- ☐ **Check-In Table** Prep a registration area with waivers, paperwork, cash box, etc.
- ☐ **Branding and Signage** Make the location look awesome with tents, banners, etc.
- ☐ **Volunteers** Be sure your volunteers are ready to go and prepared to problem solve in any situation. Check in with all your volunteers to make sure they fully understand their role in the process.
- ☐ **Team Meeting** Try to gather everyone together a few days before the big day to cover any last minute questions or issues.

There will always be unforeseen circumstances that arise on the day of the big event. The more organized you are, the better prepared you will be.

STEP 4

MANAGE YOUR EVENT





STEP 4: MANAGE YOUR EVENT

Managing your event is all about making sure everything is going according to plan. In order to make this run smoothly, it is all about the **Master Binder**.

Master Binder – Place everything in one spot so you can easily check for information and solve issues as they come up. We recommend having a **Master Binder**:



Master Binder Checklist

- ☐ **Registration Information** Names and contact information of participants
- ☐ **Volunteer Information** Names, contact information, and assignments for all volunteers
- ☐ **Coach and Referee Information** Names and contact information for all coaches and referees for the event
- ☐ **Schedule of Events** A line-by-line schedule outlining how the day will run. This is important to make sure things are happening when they are scheduled to happen.
- ☐ **Emergency Contact Information** Have a list of emergency contacts and your Emergency Action Plan in case something goes wrong.
- ☐ **Extra Copies** Keep extra copies of insurance forms, permits, media waivers and other important information.

You will likely have a lot more information to include in the binder such as receipts and other items of importance. The **Event Coordinator** or **Rookie Rugby Captain** should keep the **Master Binder** with them at all times. The more organized you can be, the better your program will run.



STEP 5

EVENT FOLLOW UP & REPORTING



STEP 5: EVENT FOLLOW UP & REPORTING

After the event concludes, it is important to follow-up on any important items. These items can include registrations, payment of invoices, returning of equipment, etc. Most importantly, acknowledge the hard work and dedication of your volunteers and others involved. A Thank You note and/or a small gift is a great token of your appreciation. Be sure to send notes to the following:

- Sponsors
- Donors
- Coaches
- Referees
- Schools for Outreach
- Volunteers
- Parents and Participants
- Other Important Personnel

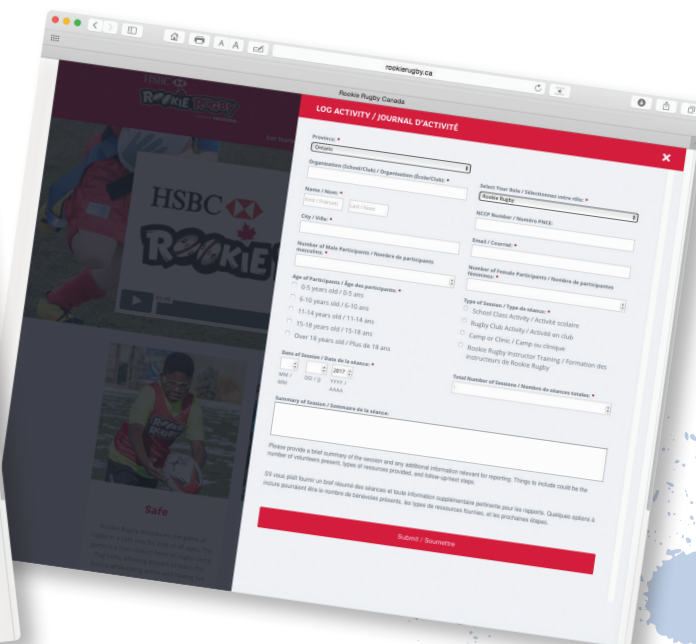


REPORT YOUR RESULTS

Rookie Rugby wants to share the great work that you have done for growing the game in your community. Please be sure to share the results with us so we can promote it to the greater rugby community.

- **Pictures, Videos, Write-ups** – send to rookierugby.ca@rugbycanada.ca.
- **Tracking the Numbers** – Log your event at www.rookierugby.ca and click 'Log Activity' at the top of the page.

Log Activity





Congratulations! You have now successfully planned and executed a youth rugby event in your community. You are responsible for giving the gift of rugby to many young children across the country. From all of us here at **Rugby Canada**, we thank you for your hard work and dedication. Together we can work to make rugby the number one sport in Canada.

For more information on Rookie Rugby, please visit www.rookierugby.ca

