End of Year Report

As we approach the end of season we wanted to thank you for your ongoing work in the Age Grade game at your club, school or college. Players tell us they are having more fun and that more of them want to continue to play. Your role in creating an environment that fosters a love of the game is vital, so on behalf of the players – thank you!

This issue of our Newsletter includes important and useful information to help you think about the off-season and your plans to make the game even better for the players next season. Finally, we wish you an enjoyable and well-earned summer break to recharge the batteries ready for September!

Half Game Rule

Players tell us being part of the team is the most important thing to them. Being on the pitch is a major driver on their enjoyment and retention in sport. From September 2019, the RFU intends to introduce the Half Game Rule to ensure that all match day squad players play at least half a game.

This has been successfully implemented in New Zealand and Wales in the last 3 years with really positive feedback and results on player retention. Many clubs, schools and colleges in England already do this but unfortunately most don't.

To help Age Grade clubs, schools and colleges prepare for the Half Game Rule we now encourage all involved with the Age Grade game to implement this rule within your own teams and competitions. Let's make rugby union stand apart in its commitment to every player. Wouldn't it be great if this didn't have to become a regulation from 2019 because the whole Age Grade game did the right thing anyway?!

In the coming months, keep your eyes open for more information and a range of supporting materials. Please do take a lead in implementing this and help us spread the word, to ensure all our Age Grade players are playing at least half a game. Include it, apply it and shout about it!

Avoiding player conflict and overplaying – Can you help?

The National Rugby Survey shows that 40% of players who play for more than one team, tell us that they are often put in conflict and are asked to choose who to play for. Players on the pathway also report playing on average 2½ games a week – in addition to training and other commitments.

Each county has now submitted their local Age Grade Playing Calendar. This is the tool to help players to prioritise, avoid conflict and balance their rugby programme. You should have received this 2018/19 calendar from your Constituent Body or County Schools Union.

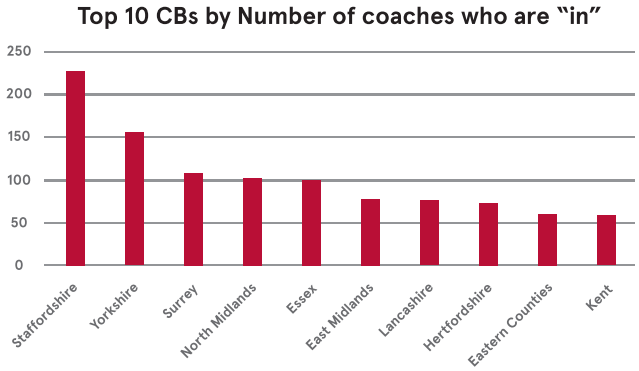
You can help players, particularly those who have a foot in a number of camps, by having a conversation with other coaches or teachers to agree what's in the best interests of the player. This dialogue will also help further develop mutually beneficial club to education links. Our counties are looking at ways to help this dialogue happen and will welcome your ideas.

We want to hear the best examples of these conversations. Let us know about yours and the positive impact on players to be in with a chance of a special England Rugby prize!

Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice – Are you in?

Thanks to the 2,000 coaches and teachers who have signed up to the Codes of Practice. This is an outstanding commitment right across the country to putting players first. So far Staffordshire lead the way with a great 18% of all those across the country who are in; Fullerians RFC (Herts) and Shiplake College (Oxon) have the biggest club and school commitment to the Codes respectively. Come on, who will knock them off top spot?!

To find out more and to download and commit visit: www.englandrugby.com/codesofpractice



Summer Activity

Ahead of summer, a reminder of the updated regulation concerning "Out of Season" activity. Further detail can be found in Regulation 15 and on the Age Grade Codes of Practice.

Remember, out-of-season activities are NOT aimed to provide additional training or competitive opportunity for those players who have had a full season with their club, school/college, CB, DPP or Academy. Indeed, these players should have a break from rugby activity during the summer months; the research shows it is really good for their rugby development and future in the game.

A summary of the changes are:

At U13 and below:

- Contact training, matches, competition and outgoing tours are not permitted
- At U11 and below, no matches or competitions are permitted
- U12 and U13 non-contact matches or competition (if approved by the CB or CSU) are permitted.

At U14 and above:

- Contact training out of season is not permitted
- XRugby7s contact matches and competition (subject to CB, CSU approval) are permitted
- 7-a-side contact matches and competition (subject to CB / CSU approval) are permitted at U17 and U18 only

Age Grade Playing Survey

Hearing from Age Grade Players on their wants, needs and perceptions of the game is critical to help us understand and shape the Age Grade game to their motivations.

Please do all you can to help us hear from the players across the game by asking them to complete the next round of the National Rugby Survey found on www.englandrugby.com/survey.
This survey opened on 19th April and closes on 15th May.

Coach and Referee Training

Summer is a great time to develop our skills ahead of the new season, especially for those who will be coaching a new age group from September. The RFU have a series of Age Grade specific training courses from U7 though to U14 along with other coaching and refereeing courses relevant across all the age groups. Many counties offer subsidies for this. Find out more on: www.englandrugby.com/olcb.

For more information on Age Grade Rugby, please visit www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby and to sign up to Old Mutual Wealth Kids First, go to www.englandrugby.com/kidsfirst

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