



Girls Rugby

Supporting Information for Schools



**RUGBY
FOOTBALL
UNION
WOMEN**

Girls Rugby - Schools

Update

The RFUW board recently approved the introduction of an additional age band at Under 13 from the 2011-12 season. This will be driven by the new Transitional Contact variant of the game and follows on from the impact of the Year 7&8 Girls programme delivered in schools last season.

Background

The U15 and U18 Girls 3 year age bands were introduced in 2007-8 to cater for the increase in players at youth levels and provide sufficient competitive outlets at Under 15 and Under 18.

As women's and girls' rugby has continued to grow and develop, the framework at youth level has remained largely unchanged with minor amendments made to take into account changes within the schools environment and the need to develop competitions to cater for girls within education.

Many clubs presented the RFUW with evidence that their U15 Girls Squads were struggling for numbers, reflected by more clustering of clubs and lack of players in many CB squads.

Finally, we provide and encourage 'girls only' rugby for the U12 age-band at schools and yet in the club environment, the only provision is mixed contact with boys.

The above demonstrated there was a clear need to address this.

U13s Age-Band – this age-band will be brought in from **1st September 2011**

- Girls players must be Aged 11 and 12 on the 1st September 2011
- The format will be Transitional Contact (please see rules and regulations attached)

U15s Age-Band

- Girls players must be aged 13 and 14 on 1st September 2011
- The format will be full contact 13-side rugby as per the current rules and regulations

U18s Age-Band

- Girls players must be 15, 16 or 17 on 1st September
- The format will be full contact 15-side rugby as per the current rules and regulations, other variations will be permitted with reduced numbers where necessary
- Once a player has their 18th birthday, they are permitted to play senior rugby as well as continuing to play U18s rugby. Please ensure the welfare of the player is considered



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NB: Flexibility should only be viable to grow and develop the game for critical mass. This is not to be reflected within national competitions but can be applied to locally run comps and tournaments at the following age-bands:

- Top year of U15s (Yr 10) and bottom year of U18s (Yr 11) can play together for the reasons below:
 - They are a GCSE age-group
 - Many schools do not have a 6th Form which leaves the Yr 11s at a disadvantage

Approval to play the above variation at local level is to be requested by the teacher in charge, through the RDO by use of **RFUW Form 21**. Please contact your local RDO/CRC for more information.

All other school age-bands must comply with the RFUW clubs age-bands. There is no flexibility for other age-bands to play contact rugby together. Tag or Touch Rugby should be encouraged where other age-groups need to play together to make a team. For further advice please contact your local RDO or CRC, or WRDM.

If you have any queries at all please contact your Women's Rugby Development Manager (WRDM):

South West: Catherine Spencer: catherinespencer@rfu.com / 07841 367392

South: Richard Major: richardmajor@rfu.com / 07850 982229

London & South East: Clare Cooper: clarecooper@rfu.com / 07779 266060

Midlands: Claire Antcliffe: claireantcliffe@rfu.com / 07841 367447

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| Girls School Rugby | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----|--|---|--|------|------|
| Age group | U11 | U12 | U13 | U14 | U15 | U16 | U17 | U18 |
| School Year | Yr6 | Yr7 | Yr8 | Yr9 | Yr10 | Yr11 | Yr12 | Yr13 |
| | | | | | | 6th Form/FE College | | |
| Game Format | Tag | Transitional Rugby (6/7-a-side) | | Full contact rugby (7s, 10s or 13-a-side) | | Full contact rugby (All variations up to 15-a-side) | | |
| Competition | Yazoo (Local, Regional, National) | Emerging Schools (Local, Regional, National) | | (Local and Regional) | | (Local and Regional) | | |
| Notes | | | | | Year 10&11 can play in local competitions together if there is a local need. Form 21 to be submitted by School to RDO/CRC | | | |

| Girls Club Rugby | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---|-----|--|------|--|------|------|
| Age group | U11 | U12 | U13 | U14 | U15 | U16 | U17 | U18 |
| School Year | Yr6 | Yr7 | Yr8 | Yr9 | Yr10 | Yr11 | Yr12 | Yr13 |
| | | | | | | 6th Form/FE College | | |
| Game Format | As per Continuum | If U13 Girls team: Transitional Rugby (6/7-a-side) If no U13 Girls team: As per Continuum | | Full contact rugby (7s, 10s or 13-a-side) | | Full contact rugby (All variations up to 15-a-side) | | |
| Competition | Club matches | Club matches (Local) | | Club matches (Local and Divisional Tournaments) | | Club matches (Local and Divisional Tournaments) | | |
| Notes | | Girls aged 11 can gain dispensation to remain in U11 for one year as per the RFU Continuum | | Only change is that it is now a 2 year age band | | | | |
| | | In season 11/12, girls aged 12 who have been registered with a club and played through the continuum can play in U15s. Applications are being processed through RFUW | | | | | | |

U13 Girls

Game Overview:

- 6 or 7 players
- Size 4 ball
- Pitch size 60m x 35m
- Tackle, ruck and maul – 1 v 1
- Uncontested 3 'man' scrums
- No line-outs, kicking or hand-offs

Transitional Game Rules and Regulations 2011.12

9.5 Girls U13s Rugby

This age band takes into account girls who are aged 11 and 12 on the 1st September 2011

For the 2011/12 season any female players aged U12 and **registered** with a club on RugbyFirst in 2010/11 season can play within the U15 age band.

All players must be 12 years of age on the 1st September 2011 and have played club rugby during the 2010/11 season under the RFU Continuum, only players that were registered on Rugby First before the season closed on the 2nd May 2011 will be approved to play U15 Girls rugby.

How does it work?:

1. All clubs that have affiliated girls sections at U15s can apply to the RFUW to allow those U12 girls previously registered (in season 2010/2011) on RugbyFirst to play in their U15 team.
2. Clubs must follow [U13 Player Application Form](#) link and supply the required information, which in turn can be checked against Rugby First before approval is granted.
3. Any application needs to be with the RFUW no later than 16th September 2011.

U13 Transitional Game

Players and match officials must endeavour to ensure the iRB Law of the Game, modified by the following playing rules, are observed when playing rugby at U13 Girls:

9.5.1 Object of the game:

- i) The object of the game is to score a try (5 points) by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line. A penalty try will be awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for foul play by the defending team.
- ii) When a try is scored, the game is restarted by a free pass from the centre of the pitch by the non-scoring team.

9.5.2 Teams:

Under 13 Girls Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, containing no more than seven and no less than six players. Each side can have an agreed number of substitutes. Substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is "dead" or at half time and always with the referee's knowledge.

9.5.3 Pitch size:

The maximum pitch size is

- i) 60 metres by 35 metres, plus 5 metres for each in-goal area.
- ii) Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable provided this is agreed between the referee and coaches, and if the smaller pitches do not materially increase the risk of injury to players.
- iii) Adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 metres

9.5.4 Duration of matches:

- i) Fixtures which have 2 Clubs present : 20 minutes each way, 1 game = 40 minutes
- ii) Fixture which have 3 Clubs present: 15 minutes each way, 2 games = 60 minutes
- iii) Festivals: 7 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 70 minutes (total playing time)
- iv) No extra time is permitted in any match except that added for injury time.
- v) If the try difference rises to more than six coaches should be encouraged to find solutions to challenge the players (eg the winning team may have a "tackle number restriction" – 4 tackles lose possession etc). Where this is not possible/ is agreed the game must not continue.

9.5.5 Passing:

The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air, not handed to another player who is front of the ball carrier. If the ball is handed to another player in front of the ball player or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents' goal-line) then a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever possible.

9.5.6 Free Passes:

A free pass is used:

- i) To start the match at the beginning of each half from the centre of the pitch
- ii) When there has been foul play
- iii) Where the ball has been ripped by an opponent
- iv) Where more than one person from each side joins the contact
- v) At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 metres back from the mark. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the passer. At a free pass, the player must start with the ball in both hands and, when instructed by the referee who will call "PLAY", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, no player may run until the pass is made. The player taking the free pass must pass the ball when the referee calls "PLAY".

9.5.7 The Tackle:

- i) Only the ball carrier can be tackled. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential opponents but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off) or the ball. The ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands at any time.
- ii) A "TACKLE" is deemed to be:

Any contact below the shoulders of the ball carrier which results in a grip, by the opponent of the ball carrier. Where the ball carrier remains on their feet the referee must call "TACKLE" (allow approx 2 secs to establish whether ball carrier held). Where ball carrier is taken to ground, the referee must also call "TACKLE"

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iii) ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER in the tackle:

The ball carrier if on their feet, and on hearing the word “tackle” from the referee can pass the ball to a supporting player from their own team, continue to drive or make the ball available to a team mate.

The ball carrier if taken to ground and on hearing the word “tackle” from the referee, can pass the ball to a supporting player from their own team, roll or place the ball towards their own team.

Once forward momentum has been stopped the ball must be played immediately and away from the contact area. (Free pass to opposition)

If the ball carrier drives over their opponents try line and touches the ball down over the try-line, a try should be awarded

iv) ACTIONS BY THE TACKLER:

The tackler must grasp the ball carrier below the shoulders, on the shirt, shorts or around the legs.

If the tackled player is on the feet the tackler may contest the ball by grabbing it or blocking the pass.

If the ball carrier is brought to ground, the tackler should get to their feet as soon as possible, and can contest the ball or block the pass and must endeavour to get in an on-side position (between their own try line and the tackled player)

v) ACTIONS BY THE ATTACKING TEAM:

When the tackle is made the ball carriers team should support from behind the tackle player.

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on their feet ONE supporting player, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line) may assist the ball carrier by ripping the ball or driving forward.

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, ONE supporting player may join from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line)

a) Drive over the ball, taking their immediate opponent away from the ball

b) Pick up the ball and pass away from the contact area

A supporting player may rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate.

Support players must not deliberately stand either side of and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.

vi) ACTIONS BY THE DEFENDING TEAM:

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier remains on their feet, ONE additional defender, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line), can join the tackle

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier goes to ground, ONE additional defender, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line) can contest the ball.

The tackled player represents the off side line and defenders must endeavor to retreat to stay between their own try line and the tackled player until the pass is made, players who fail to do so are offside.

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When an infringement occurs, a free pass will be awarded. The referee will make a mark for a free pass. The opposition will retire quickly to 7 metres from the mark. If the pass is taken so quickly that opponents have no opportunity to retire, they will not be penalised for this. However, they must continue to retire without interfering with the game until they are either 7 metres from the mark or a team mate who was standing 7 metres from the mark has run in front of them. The opposing team must not do anything to delay the free pass or obstruct the passer or receiver. Any infringement by the opposing team results in a second free pass 7 metres in front of the mark for the first free pass. On the second occasion the free pass will not be taken until all opponents have retired 7 metres. No free pass can be taken within 5 metres of the goal line.

9.5.8 Offside:

- i) Occurs at the time of the Tackle where the offside line is the hindmost part of the tackled player. When a Tackle is made, all the other players from the tackler's team must attempt to retire towards their own goal-line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player. If a player, in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or slows down a pass from the tackled player to a team mate, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side. A player can, however, run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass before it reaches the intended receiver.
- ii) Where players are in front of the kicker at the kick off
- iii) Where players are in front of the kicker in open play and/or within 7 metres of the receiver

9.5.9 Obstruction:

- i) The ball carrier can run and evade potential tacklers but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off).
- ii) The tackler can only make contact with the ball carrier below the shoulders.
- iii) If such contact is made the game must be stopped, the offender spoken to, reminded of the contact rules and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side.
- iv) If the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp, a free pass is awarded to the ball carrier's side.

9.5.10 Ball on the Ground:

- i) Players play Rugby on their feet, with the ball in hand. If the ball goes to ground, players should be encouraged to pick it up. If they dive to recover the ball they must either get up or play the ball (pass) immediately & be allowed to do so by their opponents.
- ii) Penalty: free pass to non-offending side and the following rules will apply:
 - (a) If the ball was lost forward, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side.
 - (b) If the ball is passed other than forward and goes to ground play will continue and either side may pick up the ball. If the passed ball rolls into touch a scrum will commence from the touchline to the non-passing side.

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9.5.11 Scrums:

- i) The scrum will be made up of one row of three players from each team, ie a prop on either side of the hooker. They will be the nearest 3 players from either side, with the 4th nearest acting as scrum half.
- ii) At Under 13 girls, the scrum is uncontested by both sides: the team awarded the scrum will throw the ball into the scrum and must be allowed to win it without contest. Opponents cannot push or strike for the ball. If they do, a free pass restart is awarded to the team throwing the ball into the scrum.
- iii) The players from each team will bind together approximately half a metre apart. Each prop will touch the upper arm of his opponent and then pause before the engagement. The referee will talk the players through the engagement procedure in the sequence "Crouch, Touch, Pause, Engage". On the grounds of safety, it is important that the referee manages the engagement of every scrum in this way.
- iv) Front rows must not be allowed to charge at each other. If they start to engage too close together and with their necks and backs bent, they must be stopped and the scrum reformed. Props' body positions must be parallel to the touchline (not boring in). There must be no downward pressure exerted by hands or arms. Shoulders must always be above the level of the hips.
- v) If the scrum collapses, the whistle must immediately be blown and the appropriate penalty awarded or the scrum reset. If a player is persistently involved in collapsing or illegal binding they must be replaced. If a player's lack of technique or strength is a danger then they must be replaced. All players, including replacements, should be suitably trained and experienced.
- vi) Any player at any stage in a scrum who has or causes an opponent to have her shoulders lower than her hip joint must immediately be penalised by awarding a free pass. The object of this rule is to prevent the collapse of a scrum. It is to help the coach to teach good technique and the referee to penalise bad technique. Any player who has her shoulders lower than her hip joint can only move downwards unless she has very great strength. The force through the shoulders should be directed forwards and upwards; all players should remain on their feet, thus preventing a pile up and possible injury.
- vii) The back line of both teams must remain 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the opposing scrum half places his hand on it. Until this happens, their scrum half must remain directly behind his scrum, in the pocket edged by the two props.
- viii) If a scrum is awarded within 5 metres of the goal line, the scrum is to be taken at a mark such that the middle line of the scrum is 5 metres from the goal line. In this case the defending backs must stay on or behind the goal line.
- ix) **Referees** should pay particular attention to ensure that the scrum half putting the ball into the scrum is not "feeding" her own players: the scrum half must hold the ball with both hands, with its major axis parallel to the ground/the touchline, midway between her knees and ankles. The scrum half must release the ball from outside the tunnel so that it lands midway between the two front rows and beyond the width of the nearer prop's shoulders.

9.5.12 Prohibited Play:

- i) The tackle game places the emphasis for the attack; on running with the ball, evasion, running in support of the ball carrier and passing; and for the defence: on running to tackle the ball carrier, prevent them going forward, and to get back into the game. In Transitional Rugby :
 - a) no contact above the shoulder
 - b) no line-out;
 - c) no kicking
 - d) no hand off/fend off (a hand off being the placing of an open palmed hand by the ball carrier against an opponent's face or body while a fend off is an outstretched arm by the ball carrier towards an opponent to discourage that person making a tackle);
 - e) no more than the tackler, tackled player plus one other from each team in contact.

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