

# Important announcement re Rams Youth Section

25<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## Youth Membership Capped with Immediate Effect

We have seen fantastic growth in the Rams youth section over recent years, but whilst we have done our very best to accommodate every girl and boy who wants to play rugby at Old Bath Road, as membership has soared to over 500 it has become extraordinarily difficult to maintain playable grass surfaces. Even Rod and Amanda Vaughn, both of whom are volunteers and give their time freely and tirelessly to maintain our pitches, have been thwarted by recent weather conditions. As Rod pointed out this week, the additional playing numbers have coincided with adverse rainfall. Between September to November 2021 inclusive, 170mm of rain fell on Old Bath Road. Between September 2022 to November 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, 270mm has fallen already and that doesn't include the torrential downpour of last Wednesday.

The problem with playing on wet pitches is that it destroys the grass and so the surfaces become muddier and muddier. As they deteriorate, even a moderate shower can result in the area becoming unplayable with obvious consequences for cancellation of games and training. To optimise both training and games at OBR we have to keep our grass.

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate the current size of our youth section, especially as some age groups are now huge, one of which has been fielding 3 teams. The Executive Committee has therefore decided to immediately suspend all new memberships of the Rams youth section, which includes minis, juniors and colts. No new memberships will be accepted from this point forward.

The club is aware that some parents have completed registration forms but for whatever reason have not paid their subscriptions. These parents will have 7 days to finalise payments and should speak to Janette Tichband, our Membership Secretary, immediately.

Any other players that have failed to register should be excluded from training immediately.

I'm naturally disappointed that we have had to take this action but those that head up Rams' youth section, and the Executive Committee, believe we have a duty to our existing young players to ensure that they get the quality of experience that they deserve. If we don't protect our pitches that experience will be ruined.

In the longer term the Executive Committee hope that we will be able to move to a new, much larger ground nearby. In the interim we will all have to work closely together to make the most of what we have.

Gary Reynolds, **Rams CEO**