



2014/15

Youth Structured Season



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Introduction

The Youth Structured Season (YSS) is established at National, Divisional & CB levels to assist all involved in the planning of development programmes and fixtures for the 2014/15 season.

This will assist in preventing fixture and programme clashes and raise the awareness of the demands on players and so avoid the sort of conflicts which often leave the player with torn loyalties and/or exposure to excessive physical demands. It is important that those responsible for making fixtures, and also coaches and teachers, are aware of these pressures on the players and take appropriate actions to ensure they are not over playing or training.

The overriding purpose of the YSS is:

To provide Youth Rugby with a simple framework together with rules which reflect RFU policies and best practice to assist planning and implementation, governed by the following underpinning principles:

- It is player centric, it plans for the development (and rest) of players – player centred, development driven and competition supported
- It balances demands on players between all rugby providers and takes account of education pressures
- It is supported by a communication and education programme

The overwhelming majority of players participate in rugby at club and school. It is essential, to help retain players, that the club and school game is not frequently disrupted, whilst at the same time providing for those with the potential and desire to participate at higher levels the opportunity to do so.

The full calendar, which is a working Excel document can be viewed on rfu.com/ManagingRugby/YouthStructuredSeason

Competition Review & Blueprint Road-Shows

As part of the Rugby Blueprint, the Age Grade Competition review has been given responsibility for evaluating the current competitive playing provision in England for players from Under 7 through to Under 19. The aim is to create competitive structures which will reduce contention for players between all clubs and schools/colleges at U13 to 18 as part of the Youth Structured Season.

We need to develop a competitive framework for players in clubs, schools and colleges that:

- Enhance the Core Values of rugby union: Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline, Sportsmanship
- Increases participation
- Supports player development

The Blueprint Road-shows have been taking place between October and December at 27 venues throughout the country. Constituent Body representatives, clubs/schools/college representatives, coaches, referees, players and parents have been given opportunity to consider, discuss and feedback on the game format, playing opportunity, and competitive framework for Under 7 to Under 18 players. The findings from this will be collated and recommendations made from early spring 2014.

As a consequence of this, although there are unlikely to be major changes for Youth Rugby in September 2014, the dates provided in this document should be considered as provisional dates for season 2014/15

Club & Schools

Clubs & Schools provide the foundation of rugby at all levels. This is where the majority of players are introduced to and developed within the game. Clubs and schools coaches and teachers will be aware of the demands on their players and should arrange training and fixtures which comply with the principles stated. Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive concerning the occasional conflicting demands from clubs and schools on players, it is expected that these issues will be resolved by the CB at a local level, again in accordance with the YSS principles outlined.

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National

These dates are set at National level. They consist of the following programmes and competitions:

- National fixtures and preparation dates - Under 16, Under 18 (aspirational and performance)
- Divisional fixture, festival & trial dates (Under 16 and Under 18)
- National competitions/development programmes
 - Under 15 (schools) NatWest Cup (week days)
 - Under 15 (performance) 12-a-side
 - Under 16 Divisional preparation and trials
 - Under 17 (clubs) National Cup (Sundays)
 - Under 17 (performance) National training camps
 - Under 18 (schools) Natwest Cup

Divisional Matches

The purpose of Divisional Rugby is to provide a higher level of representative rugby for talented players, and an opportunity to progress within the Aspirational Pathway to National level. However this should not detract from the tremendous achievement and pride players have in representing their Division. It is important to prepare players sufficiently to ensure they find the experience rewarding and are afforded the opportunity for selection to the next level.

Inter-Divisional games will take place over a festival weekend, and there should be no more than two or three preparation sessions before the festival.

These dates are set at Divisional level. They consist of the following:

- CB Match dates (U16, U18 C&S) that lead to divisional selection
- Inter-region & area competition dates

These dates should be set by the appropriate Divisional committees taking account of the nationally-set dates and submitted to the Divisional Forum Chair and Coach and Player Development Officer as soon as they have been agreed.

Constituent Body (CB) and County Matches

The purpose of County and CB rugby at this age is to provide further opportunities for talented players to represent their County and/or CB.

Inter-County and CB matches also provide an opportunity for Divisional selection for some players; however this must not be allowed to detract from the achievement, pride and honour of representing the county. It is important to prepare players sufficiently to ensure they find the experience rewarding and are afforded the opportunity for selection to the next level.

Therefore there should be no more than two or three preparation sessions before each match – preferably mid week to avoid clashes with club and school commitments. With this in mind it is recommended that the assessment of players for representative rugby should not take place prior to October which will enable players to engage and reintegrate into school and club rugby, and become ‘rugby fit’.

These dates are set at CB level. They consist of the following:

- Inter County matches (Under 14 and Under 15)
- County and CB preparation sessions (Under 14 – Under 18)
- County and CB development programmes
- Developing Player Programme (DPP)
- EPDG dates
- County age group competitions

These dates should be set by the CBRDPs taking account of Divisional arrangements and submitted to the Divisional Forum Chair and CPDO as soon as they have been agreed.

**Further information can be found at rfu.com/coaching

Demands on Players

The majority of players are involved in rugby for recreational purposes and remain involved because they see rugby as an outlet where they can have fun, be challenged and enjoy competition. It is therefore imperative that the training, playing and competition programmes established as part of the YSS at all levels are constructed with the enjoyment of the players as a major consideration. This will then assist in promoting the development of fitness and in turn will prolong the participants’ involvement in sport.

The emphasis must be on player development, with schools and clubs providing a balance of coaching and playing. It is recommended that there are two coaching sessions for development prior to each match.

Some players are given the opportunity to pursue a representative/performance development pathway in rugby.

Their need to have enjoyment is complemented by their need to receive structured training in progressively greater doses and to acquire the sport-specific skills necessary to reach higher competition levels. This will include Schools of Rugby, County, CB, Divisional and National representative programmes.

Whatever the motivation for participation, it is important to recognise that young players have a number of demands placed upon them both from within and from outside rugby and all involved must be sympathetic to the pressures these place on the players’ time. The table below provides an illustration of some of the demands on players.



An illustration of some of the demands on Players

Age Group	Rugby	Other
Under 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club & school commitments • DPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School work • Other sports & activities (to be encouraged) • Family commitments • Growth spurts
Under 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CB or County Squads • EPDG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above plus • GCSE Options choices
Under 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club & school commitments • NatWest Cup • DPP • County or CB programmes • EPDG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family commitments • Weekend/evening employment • GCSE studies begin - increase in course work & homework • Other sports & activities
Under 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club & school commitments • County • CB • EPDG • Divisional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family/friends commitments • Weekend/evening job • Coursework deadlines • GCSE Mock examinations leading to GCSE examinations
Under 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club/school /college commitments • National Cup • AASE Leagues • County • CB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First year of employment • Working weekends • Working evenings • New school/college/courses • AS Levels
Under 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club & school commitments • AASE Leagues • Adult rugby • NatWest Cup • National Colts Cup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working evenings • Working weekends • Course work • UCAS applications • A2 Mocks/AS Repeats/A2 Modules



Compliance

In consultation with representatives from Divisions and CBs at the YSS conference, it was agreed, in recognition of geographical and demographic variations across the country, to devolve responsibility for defining the scheduling of local representative activity to the individual Divisions and CBs, subject always to the limits on preparation time and number of matches played set out above.

It is the fervent hope of those responsible for the preparation and circulation of the YSS that colleagues across the country will recognise these constraints on representative activity as being in the best interests of both the young players and then of the wider game in the ultimate, and will consequently prepare their local programmes accordingly.

The application of the processes will be monitored by the Divisional Forum chairmen who will report to RFU Player Development Sub-Committee. Failure to comply may lead, among other things, to a withdrawal of RFU funding to the programmes in question.

Month	Week Begins	Sunday	Under 13		Under 14		Under 15		Under 16		Under 17	
			Midweek	Sunday	Midweek	Sunday	Midweek	Sunday	Midweek	Sunday	Midweek	Sunday
September	1	7		Club Registration		Club Registration		Club Registration		Club Registration		Club Registration
	8	14										
	15	21					NatWest Rnd 1					
	22	28										
October	29	5					NatWest Rnd 2 (1)					
	6	12										
	13	19					NatWest Rnd 3 (2)					
HT - Leicester	20	26										
HALF-TERM	27	2										
November	3	9										
	10	16					NatWest Rnd 4 (3)					
	17	23										
	24	30					NatWest Rnd 5 (4)					
December	1	7										
	8	14					NatWest 6 (5)		Divisional Trial (Sat & Sun)			
	15	21										
Christmas	22	28										
New Year	29	4							EXAMS			
January	5	11							EXAMS			
	12	18					(NatWest Plate Rnd 6)		EXAMS			
	19	25							Divisional (Sat & Sun)			
February	26	1					NatWest Rnd 7		Divisional (Sat - Sun)			
	2	8										
	9	15					NatWest QF					
HALF TERM	16	22							Nat Training Camp			
March	23	1									NC Divisional QF	
	2	8							Nat Training Camp			
	9	15						NatWest SF			NC Divisional SF	
	16	22							Nat Training Camp			
	23	29					NatWest Final				NC Divisional Final	
Easter	30	5							Wellington Week (4th - 11th)			
April	6	12							International Match		NC National SF	
	13	19										
	20	26										
May	27	3									NC National Final	

- National Club Competition
- NatWest Schools Cup
- Aspirational Divisional Activity
- Aspirational International Activity
- Performance Activity
- Girls CB Activity

			Under 18			Girls U13	Girls U15	Girls U18	Month	Week Begins	Sunday
			Midweek	WEEKEND							
				Club Registration		Club	Club	Club	September	1	7
						Club	Club	Club		8	14
			NatWest Rnd 1			Club	Club	Club		15	21
				Nat Cup Round 1		CB Activity	CB DEV / TRAINING DAY / TRIALS			22	28
			NatWest Rnd 2 (1)			CB Activity	CB TRAINING DAY / TRIALS		October	29	5
						CB Activity	CB FESTIVAL			6	12
			NatWest Rnd 3 (2)			Club	Club	Club		13	19
				Nat Cup Round 2		RFU CLUB FESTIVAL			HT - Leicester	20	26
						Club	Club	Club	HALF-TERM	27	2
						CB Activity	CB		November	3	9
			NatWest Rnd 4 (3)			Club	Club	Club		10	16
				Nat Cup Round 3		Club	Club	Club		17	23
			NatWest Rnd 5 (4)			CB Activity	CB			24	30
				Nat Cup PLATE Round 1		Club	Club	Club	December	1	7
			NatWest 6 (5)			Club	Club	Club		8	14
				Nat Cup PLATE Round 2		Club	Club	Club		15	21
									Christmas	22	28
				Divisional Final Assessment Weekend		Club	Club	Club	New Year	29	4
				Nat Cup PLATE Round 3		Club	Club	Club	January	5	11
			(NatWest Plate Rnd 6)			Club	Club	Club		12	18
						Club	DIVISIONAL TRIALS			19	25
			NatWest Rnd 7			Club	Club	Club	February	26	1
						Club	Club	Club		2	8
			NatWest QF			CB Activity	DIVISIONAL PROGRAMME			9	15
						Club	Club	Club	HALF TERM	16	22
						Club	DIVISIONAL PROGRAMME		March	23	1
				NatWest SF		Club	Club	Club		2	8
				Nat Squad Training WK	Round 6	CB Activity	DIVISIONAL PROGRAMME			9	15
				National Squad Training Weekend		Club	Club	Club		16	22
				Int Tournament (Eng)	NatWest Final	Club	DIVISIONAL PROGRAMME			23	29
				International Tournament (England)		EASTER - Tours and Festivals			Easter	30	5
				Nat Cup PLATE Round 7		Club	DIVISIONAL PROGRAMME		April	6	12
						RFU CLUB FESTIVAL				13	19
						Club	Club	Club		20	26
						RFU Endorsed Tournaments Only			May	27	3
				Nat Cup & PLATE Day Monday			National 7s			4	

- Provisonal
- Provisonal

* Suggested dates from National Delivery

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The Rugby Football Foundation is a charity set
up to support community participation in rugby
and as part of its work is keen to support
player development.

