



September 2016

## **CHANGES TO AGE GRADE RUGBY UNION**

Dear Parent and Guardian,

This September Rugby Union in schools, colleges and clubs will undergo changes to the way the game has been delivered in previous years. The programme will now be based on the principles of a player centred approach that is development driven, with a competition offer to support these principles. Age Grade Rugby puts the wants and needs of all young people at its heart with player enjoyment above all else to keep more young people enjoying the game for longer and into their adult years. As such, from September, there will be changes to the competition calendar, competition offer and the rules of the game.

### **Competitive Menu and Competition Playing Calendar**

September 2016 will see the introduction of a national playing menu and calendar which will increase inclusivity, clarify player priorities and will dovetail club, school, college competitions into a consistent playing calendar. It will also help the integration of the England Rugby Developing Player Programme (DPP) and the representative pathway offered by Constituent Bodies (CBs). These changes will avoid the overplaying and underplaying of players and avoid conflict between school/college, representative and club rugby.

As part of Age Grade Competition Review, young people told us that, above all else, they wanted to have fun playing rugby with their friends. Age Grade Rugby will put inclusivity and each player's skill development first, with the increasing intensity of competition evolving as the player continues their journey towards adult rugby. Young players will start with triangulars and festivals and progress to knockouts, tournaments and leagues as they get older and develop their game. There will be no outright winners based on results until U12's / Year 7 with the emphasis now on the competitive experience, opposed to the competitive outcome which is aligned to the player's motivations.

### **Rules of Play**

The principles behind the Rules of Play are to provide a playing format with building blocks to the 15-a-side game that allows players time to get to grips with the fundamental skills of Rugby Union before contact and specialism are gradually introduced. Previously at Under 9, players were expected to tackle, ruck, maul, scrummage and lineout all within a very small window for coaches/teachers to teach the basic techniques of the game. With the new Rules of Play, these elements will be gradually introduced over a number of seasons allowing players, coach and teachers to build children's technical knowledge and confidence.

For more information on these changes, please visit [www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby](http://www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby) or please email [agegraderugby@rfu.com](mailto:agegraderugby@rfu.com).

Thank you for your valuable support and for taking the time to read this and we hope you enjoy what will be a fantastic season.

Kind Regards

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