

A GUIDE TO RUGBY LEAGUE U18



RUGBY LEAGUE. It's a whole different ballgame®

www.rfl.uk.com



A GUIDE TO RUGBY LEAGUE

Why should I play Rugby League?

- It's fun
- It's an exciting fast team game that everybody can play
- You'll make new friends
- Playing will help to make you fit and healthy
- It'll help you develop leadership skills, confidence and self esteem

How do I find a club?

- The Rugby League website www.rfl.uk.com has a Club Locator section just type in your postcode to see a list of local clubs.
- Ring the clubs to see if they run a team at your age level
- If you can't find a local club ring Rugby League Services on **01484 448 000** who can help



What do I do now?

- Find out when you can go down to see if it looks fun and enjoyable
- Ask any questions that will help you to feel confident about the club and its coaches (you and your parents will find helpful advice in the RFL Parent's Leaflet - available from the club or the RFL website www.rfl.uk.com)

Attend your first training session - if you like it then:

- Complete a registration form & get it signed by your parent or guardian - the club can give you a leaflet for your parent or guardian to tell them about Rugby League
- Your parent or guardian will also have to complete a form with emergency contact numbers and other details
- Provide two photos for your ID card which needs to be shown at every game

I have a disability or individual needs can I still play?

We are committed to welcoming everyone and Clubs will work with you and your parents to ensure that if possible your needs are met so that you can play Rugby League. If you need to discuss your requirements first you can contact the RFL Equality & Diversity Officer - see contacts inside the back cover of this booklet.





What equipment do I need?

- Your club will provide playing kit for matches but its worth having comfortable sports wear and a rugby league shirt for training - shirts need to take lots of tugging and pulling
- Take a drink to training sessions to keep you well hydrated
- You should get a gum shield either fitted by your dentist or a “boil in the bag” variety that you can make soft and put in your mouth to mould to the shape of your upper teeth
- Boots are very similar to football boots and many young people prefer to play in football boots - rugby boots give more support to your ankle - see www.rfl.uk.com/community for more advice on choosing boots and safe studs
- Some players wear head guards and/ or upper body protection - it's important that these fit properly. Remember wearing a guard or protection doesn't mean you are invincible!!

What happens at clubs?

- Most clubs run teams at several different age groups
- Teams usually train once or twice a week and play a game at weekends either in a League or Cup game or perhaps a friendly or a festival
- Many clubs also run social events for their young players such as Christmas parties or end of season trips
- In some areas younger young people only play during the summer months
- Some clubs run touch, tag or wheelchair Rugby League

Can girls play Rugby League?

Yes girls can play Rugby League and more and more clubs are running girl's teams who compete in festivals across the country. For more details see the Female RL section at www.rfl.uk.com/community. There are also a lot of girls teams in the Champions Schools competition and there is a Performance Pathway for talented girls.



What is Champion Schools?

Champion Schools is the largest Rugby League knock out tournament in the world. It is played between school teams of girls and boys from years 7 to 11. The tournament starts on a regional basis and the finals are played the day before the Challenge Cup Final in London. Over 400 schools compete in the competition with 1300 boys teams and 185 girls teams playing in 2008. If you play Rugby League, why not ask your PE teacher to enter a team in next year's competition?

What is the Performance Pathway?

Most young people and young people play Rugby League to have fun with their friends but those players who show special talents may be selected onto the Performance Pathway. This starts with selection for local Service Area teams and can end up in playing for your country at U15s. You can get more information about the Performance Pathway from the RFL Performance Department on 0844 477 7113.





How can I learn to be a Match Official?

Not everybody who wants to be involved in Rugby League wants to play and another good way to be involved is to join a Match Official's Society. All societies have junior sections and you can qualify as a match official from the age of eleven. To find your local Match Officials Society see the Match Official's section at www.rfl.uk.com or contact Rugby League Services on 01484 448 004.

What about other opportunities to get involved in Rugby League?

If you don't want to play or be a match official but still want to get involved you could become a young volunteer and help to organise your club or learn to coach. There are also opportunities to get involved through Step into Sport and Junior RL Organisers Awards. More information please contact your local Club and Coach Development Officer.


What is a Club Welfare Officer?

Every club should have a Club Welfare Officer - their role is make sure that you are happy and safe at the Club. If you are worried about the way a coach, team manager, referee or anybody else at the club - adults or young people - is behaving towards you the Club Welfare Officer is there to help.

What is RESPECT?

Rugby League has a code of conduct for everybody in the game which sets out the behaviour expected of everybody. Your club can give you a RESPECT brochure or you can download it from www.rfl.uk.com.



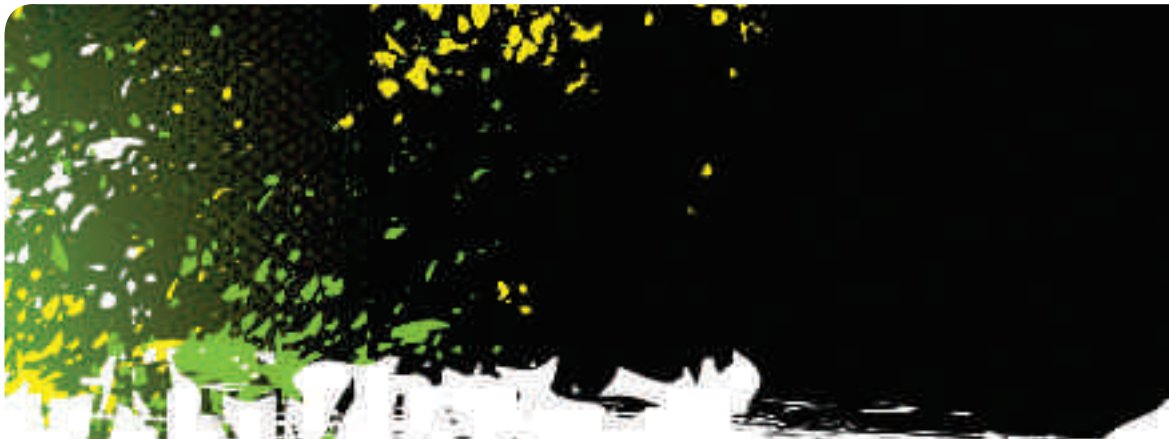


Rugby League is fair and inclusive - what does this mean?

Rugby League is a fair sport where everybody is welcomed and given RESPECT whatever their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social or cultural background.

Rugby League will not tolerate racist, sexist or homophobic abuse or harassment of any type in the game from players (young or old) or volunteers or spectators involved in the game.

Young people who have individual needs such as a disability, or anything related to religion, diet or any other requirements should speak to the Club Welfare Officer so that the club can make sure their needs can be given proper consideration and every effort made to support their involvement.



What is the Young Person's Code of Conduct?

The RFL asked young people what they wanted to see from others in the game. This is what they said:

- Keep training and games fun - winning is not the main aim for young people playing the game; having fun is
- Everyone makes mistakes. There should be no undue criticism of any player who makes a mistake - encouragement reaps more benefits
- Coaches should not lose their temper
- All adults should be role models in everything they do - do not swear, abuse officials, show unsporting behaviour, encourage foul play, enter the field of play or drink or smoke when around young people and young people
- Report any incidents of bad behaviour

They also agreed that young people should:

- Try your best at all times in training and games
- Go to training if possible & let your coach know if you can't
- Keep the changing rooms clean
- Dress smart, i.e club polo shirts etc
- Bring the right equipment and clean your boots
- Shake hands with the opposition after the game. Even if you've lost and are upset
- Respect other players - No retaliation, don't abuse them, check they're ok if injured, look after each other
- Respect the Match Officials - Respect all decisions, no arguing back
- Don't swear or use abusive language
- Play fair - Don't fight or be a dirty player, try and keep your temper under control



- Don't make racist comments
- No bullying
- Respect the Coaches - Accept the Coach's decision when not selected or substituted - work on becoming a better player
- Listen to your Coach - he/she is trying to make you a better player
- Don't take advantage of coaches if they are your parent
- Respect your captain
- Welcome and encourage new players
- Encourage your team-mates - When mistakes happen, pat them on the back and say "next set is for you" "keep your head up" or other encouragement
- Don't take your social life issues into games/training, i.e if you're angry or upset
- Play as a team - Share out the work on the field

What is bullying?

- People calling you names
- Making things up to get you into trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from you
- Damaging your belongings
- Stealing your money
- Taking your friends away from you
- Posting insulting messages on the internet or by instant messaging programmes (cyber bullying)
- Spreading rumours
- Threats and intimidation
- Being racist or calling someone gay
- Making silent or abusive phone calls
- Sending you offensive text messages
- Frightening you so that you don't want to go to the club, so that you pretend to be ill to avoid them



What should I do if somebody is bullying me?

If you take part in Rugby League you have a right to have fun and stay safe. Rugby League clubs are all TELLING clubs and bullying will not be accepted. Talk to your Club Welfare Officer or your parents or your coach. This is the best way to make it stop.

If you don't want to talk to anybody at the club then there are websites and help lines that you can use to get help at the end of this leaflet.

What happens if somebody misbehaves in Rugby League?

Rugby League is a contact sport but you are not allowed to hit, punch or kick another player. Tackling must be safe and never round a player's head or neck. You must never be rude to the referee or disagree with his decisions.



You must also RESPECT the other players and must not swear or abuse other players or use racist or homophobic abuse. Spitting at people and biting are banned.

Players who break the rules may be sent from the field and may be prevented from playing for one or more matches. Players who behave very badly or act in a way that may hurt another player may be prevented from playing for several weeks. Players who are proven to be bullies may be suspended from the club for a time and if they don't change their behaviour may be excluded permanently.

If you are accused of misbehaving either on the field or around the club you will be given an opportunity to give your point of view so that this can be considered as well before any decisions are made.



What if I'm offered drugs in Rugby League?

Medicine is allowed in Rugby League - you can take drugs that the doctor has given you such as asthma inhalers or injections and insulin injections for diabetes. However, it is very important that your Coach and Welfare Officer know if you are taking any medicine. If you have a cold you should talk to your parents and/or your coach to see if you are well enough to play. Don't just take cold cures and hope you will be alright.

Rugby League has Zero tolerance to performance enhancing and social drugs which are banned in Rugby League and all sports. If anybody offers you drugs at the club whether it's a team mate or an adult you should tell the Club Welfare Officer. Players are not allowed to take stimulants (such as ephedrine), social drugs or steroids. If you are worried about drugs you can use one of the contact numbers below such as Ask Frank or ring the RFL. There is also useful information on UK Sport's website www.100percentme.co.uk If you want more information about drugs

the RFL produces a leaflet which is available from the Safeguarding team or on www.rfl.uk.com

Steroids stimulate muscle tissue, however they may have severe side effects, including acne, shrinking of the testicles, infertility, liver damage, heart damage and increased mood swings including anger and depression.

Stimulants are substances which act on the central nervous system by speeding up parts of the brain and body's reaction. They can be very dangerous for a player's heart amongst many other dangers. Common stimulants are cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines and ephedrine - these and all other stimulants are banned in Rugby League.

"Social" drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana and ecstasy, have many health risks and are also against the law. Having or using these drugs can get you into trouble with the Police.

Many drugs are injected into the body and this is especially dangerous as needles can contain diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis. If you ever see a needle, tell someone at the club straight away.



What if an adult doesn't treat me properly?

Rugby League should be fun for young people. Most coaches and volunteers know this and give up huge amounts of their time so that you can play Rugby League.

Unfortunately occasionally some coaches may train players too hard or have favourites or pick on some young people or ignore safety rules or fail to behave with RESPECT or fail to stop bullying.

If this happens to you or somebody in your team you should speak to the Club Welfare Officer or to your parents. Alternatively you can tell the RFL Safeguarding Team if you have any concerns on 0844 477 7113 option 6 or at safeguarding@rfl.uk.com.

What is child abuse?

Rugby League should be fun but for a few young people the fun is spoilt by adults who do or say things which may be abuse which can be physical, sexual or emotional abuse or bullying or neglect. And they may feel they have no one to talk to about it. Or that no one will listen to them or believe what they say.

It is very important to remember that the abuse is not your choice and is not your fault.

Don't Keep It to Yourself

If you think you are being abused, or have been in the past, it's really important to tell an adult you trust. This isn't easy but don't let any this stop you getting help. By telling someone, you can stop the abuse. The RFL is committed to the welfare of young people and young people and will support you appropriately.



Getting help

- Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. This could be: a parent or someone else in your family; a member of staff at the sports club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.
- We know that many young people prefer to tell a friend when they are distressed about abuse. If anyone shares information about abuse with you then it is essential that you encourage and support them to tell an adult who can help.
- Contact one of the organisations listed at the end of this leaflet. They will know who can help you in your area.
- Your club will have a Club Welfare Officer. Find out who they are and tell them about your worries.
- Make sure you are not alone again with the person who has tried to harm you.

If the Club Welfare Officer at your club cannot or does not help you or if you don't want to speak to them or your parents you can contact the RFL Safeguarding Team on 0844 477 7113 option 6 or at safeguarding@rfl.uk.com.

Alternatively you can contact any of the specialist organisations listed at the end of this booklet.



Welcome to Rugby League we hope you have many years of enjoyment playing, watching and supporting Rugby League

Contacts

RFL Safeguarding Team

safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

telephone - 0844 477 7113 option 6

RFL Equality & Diversity Manager

inleaguetogether@rfl.uk.com

telephone - 0844 477 7113 option 6

Rugby League Services

rugbyleagueservices@rfl.uk.com

telephone - 01484 448 000

Bullying Online

www.bullying.co.uk

ChildLine

www.childline.org.uk

telephone - 08001111

Kidscape

www.kidscape.org.uk

Kidszone

www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone

textphone - 0800 056 0566

NSPCC

www.There4me.com

www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk

(aimed at 12 – 16 year olds)

Talk to Frank

www.talktofrank.com

telephone - 0800 776600

UK Sport

www.uksport.gov.uk/pages/drug_free_sport/



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