

**AGE GRADE RUGBY
PLAYING CALENDAR GUIDE 2020-21**

This section provides a guide to the Calendar for Organisers of competitions and representative rugby. It is strongly recommended they read this sheet before accessing the calendar itself. This provides context and helps the reader understand what they are looking at

Role of Competition, Representative Rugby and Pathway Organisers

The structure of the Calendar is governed by RFU regulations. Organisers will be expected to operate their competitions and representative rugby activities within the parameters of Regulation 15 - Age Grade Rugby. This entails organising competitions and representative rugby programmes within the defined weeks and windows - please read the following section for further guidance. Regulation 15 supports this and includes the requirement for CBs to submit their programme to the RFU for approval annually

Age Grade Playing Calendar 2020-21

The introduction of a more defined and consistent playing calendar was a key outcome of the Age Grade Competition Review and endorsed by the RFU Council for implementation from September 2016. This replaces the former Youth Structured Season. The calendar for 2020-21 has been shaped with input and feedback from Organisers across the country and the wider game and based on feedback from previous calendars

The national Playing Calendar is the template for CB, CSU, Rep Rugby, Centre of Excellence and Academy personnel to complete, working together to put their activities in the appropriate slots. It then becomes an instrument indicating to clubs and schools/colleges where conversations are necessary about the playing programmes of young players, particularly those with feet in more than one camp. The calendar does not dictate how those conversations must resolve themselves (the principles of the Age Grade Review to put the player first will guide the conversations) but it indicates where and when these need to take place

Key Calendar Ingredients - Essential Reading

There are nationally consistent windows when competitions will be arranged. The alternate window model ensures season-long involvement and fair/equal impact of poorer weather and representative rugby on clubs and education

The windows have been implemented to reduce competition clashes and to balance the quantity of higher intensity rugby during the season. They will help to limit the amount of selection/deselection and resulting overplaying/underplaying in Age Grade Rugby as well as reduce the intensity of matches that has started to negatively affect player welfare management and particularly, adult behaviour in the game

The 2020-21 calendar aims to drive core participation in club, school and/or college before Christmas with the majority of Rep Rugby taking place in the post-Christmas period.

CLUBS, SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES CAN STILL PLAY IN ALL THE WEEKS OF THE SEASON

What it does not mean, for example, is clubs can't play rugby in schools windows. However they will know that their club players who also play school rugby will have potentially their more intensive school matches that matter most to them in particular weeks. They can adjust their selections to fit with the priority in conversation with the school. This same principle exists of course for schools during the clubs windows

There are three sets of windows - for clubs competitions, for school/colleges competitions and for representative rugby. It is in these windows and specific weeks of the season that competition and rep rugby organisers will need to plan for their activities

The windows will help players and those who support their development to prioritise and plan their season with less conflicts and duplications

The windows also mean that competitions themselves will need to be more focussed/shorter and the number of high intensity matches where the competitive outcome becomes the focus will reduce. This will drive greater inclusivity of all players getting on the pitch and a return to more block fixtures by clubs and schools rather than fragmented club fixture lists

Male rep rugby is planned at specific times to provide opportunity for the talented player. This is balanced to limit impact on both the talented player himself and those team-mates left in the core club, school and college playing programme

Female rep rugby (U15/18) consists of a CB programme in the second half of the season to ensure that club and school/college rugby is strengthened before Christmas. The Centre of Excellence for a small number of talented players identified through CB rugby is delivered by the ten Tyres Premier 15s clubs.

Format of the Calendar

