

## IAPS OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON RUGBY U8 – U13 RUGBY

As many of you will be aware IAPS have been engaged in a consultation process with the RFU over the last 18 months where we were able to express the views of our member schools and offer our opinions on how we felt the game should be played. The process of consultation about the New Rules of Play has now passed and the RFU have made their decisions about how the game of rugby will be played under their laws in both clubs and schools.

An Age Grade Competition Review has taken place since 2011 looking at the competitive offering in the game at various age grades as well as the recommended Implementation Plan. The group were tasked to look at clarifying the age bands to fit in with the school model, looking at how the New Rules of Play should be introduced into schools and considering how the competition structure of the game should be arranged to reduce the conflict of school, club, county and beyond.

### **Playing Format Progression**

The grid below shows a very simplified summary of the progression in numbers, format changes and positional transitions at each age group in the NROP.

Age Group	Numbers	Format Progression	Positional Transition	Split
<u><a href="#">Under 8</a></u>	5 or 6 a-side maximum	Tag		
<u><a href="#">Under 9</a></u>	7 – side maximum	Introduce Contact – Tackle		
<u><a href="#">Under 10</a></u>	7 or 8 a-side maximum	Introduce maul and ruck, contested contact area 2 vs 2, introduce scrum	Introduce 3-player scrum	3/5
<u><a href="#">Under 11</a></u>	8 or 9 a-side maximum	Introduce Tactical and restart kicking, contested contact area (3vs3)	Introduce additional 'back'	3/6
<b><i>The Under 12 and 13 Rules continue to be developed in the RFU pilot counties but will be close to the following:</i></b>				
<b>U 12</b>	11 or 12	Contested contact area (unlimited numbers)	Introduce second row and additional back	5/7
<b>U 13</b>	13-a-side	Contested Scrum -	Introduce No 8	6/7



All schools will be obliged to follow play by the NROP once it has all been ratified by the RFU Council which is likely to be in April 2015 with a view to have mandatory implementation in September 2016.

**IAPS is strongly recommending that from September 2015, all IAPS schools move across to the NROP in the U8, U9, U10 and U11 age groups.**

It will be mandatory for *all* schools to comply with these changes in 2016 and we will therefore take the opportunity to phase them in and implement a transition year. There is still some work to be done on the U12 and U13 rules to make them work for schools and clubs where Year 7 & 8 are combined and the additional year will allow enough time for this to be done.

In 2016 U12 and U13s will be required to move to the new rules, by which stage the final adjustments to the laws will have been ratified.

A summary of the practical impact of the changes on the children for 2015/16 compared to what they played in the 2014/15 season is as follows.

- The Under 8 age group will only have played tag (if anything) so they will be unaffected.
- The vast majority of the Under 9 age group will only have played tag so they will be unaffected.
- The Under 10 group will play a very similar game to the previous year but without lineouts and with limited contesting at the contact area.
- The Under 11 age group will have lost the contested scrum\* and line out, and will have limited ability to contest the contact area compared to the previous year.
- There will be no change to the U12 or U13 rules until 2016 by which stage the RFU will have looked at ensuring that the issues with the scrum have been resolved.

\*The RFU are reviewing the uncontested 3 man scrum for U11s as we feel that a contested 3 man scrum could build a better progression from U10 rules and some preparation for the contested scrum.

## Playing Regulations

Regulation 15 is a very important resource in understanding what is and is not permissible in terms of playing rugby from next season. It is important that all Headmasters and Heads of Sport are aware of the regulations and adapt their programs accordingly. Failure to comply with the terms of Regulation 15 may invalidate your insurance.

[Regulation 15](#) clearly states what schools can and cannot do in terms of players playing out of age group and the rules they are allowed to play. It is continually reviewed by the RFU. **From September 2015 there will no longer be any IAPS dispensations as Regulation 15 covers the game in both club and school.**

### Key points to Note

Under 8s are not allowed, under any circumstance, to play contact rugby.

**15.3.2** U7s and U8s can train and play together in fixtures and festivals if recommended by the Club or School. *U7s and U8s are not permitted to play contact rugby.'*

**15.3.3** The following age grades are permitted to participate together in contact rugby training (which includes playing contact internal training matches):

- (a) U9s with U10s;
- (b) U10s with U11s; and
- (c) U11s with U12s.

**15.3.4** In respect of Schools and Clubs with an *insufficient* number of players,

- a) U9s can train and play with U10s,
- b) U10s can train and play with U11s, and
- c) U11s can train and play with U12s,

in fixtures and festivals subject to satisfying the following conditions:

- (a) the School does not have a sufficient number of players to make up a team in the single age grade;
- (b) the School's CSU ( County Schools Union)... provides written approval (such approval to be valid for up to one season only);
- (c) No more than half the players on the pitch at any time should be from the older age grade; and
- (d) The team plays to the rules of the younger age grade.

For U12 and U13 players Regulation 15 addresses the issue of playing combined age groups with

**'15.3.5** U12s to U15s can train and play up one age grade if recommended by the player's Club or School provided that:

- (a) in respect of club rugby, consent is obtained from the parents, guardians or carers of the player;
- (b) in respect of Schools' rugby, consent is obtained from the School's Head Teacher; and
- (c) in each case an appropriate assessment is carried out.

Best practice on carrying out an appropriate assessment is set out in the Guidance [www.rfu.com/Regulation15Guidance](http://www.rfu.com/Regulation15Guidance).'

The RFU have also addressed the issue of players playing down an age group in **Regulation 15.4**.

Duration of Matches, Coaching and Training Sessions in **Regulation 15.14**

**A comprehensive guide to all the new rules, regulations, pitch sizes and player numbers can be accessed by going to the RFU Governance page.**

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/regulations/>

### **Next Steps**

A formal announcement from the RFU to all schools will come out once the process has gone through the necessary committees. It is inconceivable that there will be any objections or changes whilst it goes through the committees therefore we should take the opportunity to implement the changes in a controlled manner to enable the smoothest transition for the pupils. One of the benefits of the process has been that the lines of communication with the RFU have been opened and they have a review structure in place to fine tune the rules in the years to come.

The RFU have also committed to a communication and education programme providing access to workshops, coaching/refereeing courses and support resources to enable teachers and coaches in Prep Schools to familiarise themselves, their pupils, senior management and students with the NROP.



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