



MINI/MIDIRUGBY DIRECTIVE FOR 2001/2002 SEASON

All coaches are recommended to attend a Mini/Midi Foundation or Level 1 Rugby Football Union (RFU) Course. Please contact your nearest Constituent Body Rugby Development Officer. If intending to referee, coaches are recommended to attend a Mini/Midi Refereeing Course - please contact your nearest Constituent Body Referee Training Officer.

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & OBJECTIVES The Rugby Football Union and the Rugby Football Union for Women are most grateful to the many who are organising and encouraging the game of Mini/Midi Rugby in England. The Unions are also anxious to emphasise that the game is intended to be a means of coaching and encouraging children with the objective of their playing 15-a-side rugby at the age of 13. In order to achieve this objective, and the correct balance between coaching and competition along the way, the Rugby Football Union sets out below its intentions for the organisation and control of this aspect of the game.

2. THE PURPOSE The Rugby Continuum should be viewed as a coaching pathway through which each youngster acquires, by gradual degrees, those skills required to participate in the full 15-a-side game by the age of 13. The emphasis should be geared towards the improvement of individual skills through purposeful and enjoyable activity. In order to allow for the testing of these skills in game situations, a limited number of competitive fixtures and festivals / tournaments might be introduced.

In order to achieve the correct balance between coaching and competition, the maximum number of fixtures and festivals are listed at each age group. Where clubs have large squads, additional fixtures may be arranged, provided that no player plays in more than the maximum number. In festivals and tournaments, no player is to play in more than five games. Games should be shortened if one side is scoring too freely (i.e. if the points difference rises to more than 30).

A game format is introduced at each age group in order that young players might progress towards the 15-a-side game, through stages that are compatible with the development of their own physical and conceptual abilities. It therefore should not be considered that Mini and Midi Rugby are the end-product games.

3. THE SEASON (a) The season runs from 1st September to 30th April inclusive. The playing of Mini/Midi rugby matches in England by, or between, clubs outside the season (as defined by these dates) is forbidden, except in special circumstances approved in writing by the Rugby Football Union. (b) The first Sunday in September should be registration day. (c) There should be no fixtures during September, fixtures should commence on the first Sunday in October. (d) Clubs should attempt to move towards numbered Sundays - 1 : 2 : 1 : 2. Clubs should have flexibility to construct their fixture lists as appropriate.

4. DEFINITIONS For the purpose of this directive, the following definitions apply:

(a) Fixture / Triangular Fixture: The playing of Mini Rugby between teams of different schools / clubs, not more than three schools / clubs being involved together on any one day.

(b) Festival / Competition: The playing of Mini Rugby between more than three teams of different schools / clubs on a league basis, normally to establish a winner, all games taking place being part of one event.





5. NUMBERS OF FIXTURES / FESTIVALS PER SEASON (a) Players must be limited to playing in not more than:

• Under-7/8 12 fixtures and 3 festivals • Under-9/10 12 fixtures and 3 festivals • Under-11/12 14 fixtures and 3 festivals.

(b) Where a club enters more than one festival, one should be within their own Constituent Body and the remainder may be elsewhere in the country, though clubs are advised to keep travelling to a minimum.

Tours are defined as fixtures or festivals according to the number of teams involved, and must be counted with the restriction as stated in 5(a) and (b) above.

Note 1: Number of minutes to be played at each age group level

Under 11 / under 12 Fixture: 20 minutes each way • 1 game = 40 minutes Triangular: 15 minutes each way • 2 games = 60 minutes Festival / tournament: 7 minutes each way • Maximum of 5 games = 70 minutes

Under 9 / under 10 Fixture: 15 minutes each way • 1 game = 30 minutes Triangular: 10 minutes each way • 2 games = 40 minutes Festival / tournament: 7 minutes each way • Maximum of 5 games = 70 minutes

Under 7 / under 8 Fixture: 10 minutes each way • 1 game = 20 minutes Triangular: 7 1/2 minutes each way • 2 games = 30 minutes Festival / tournament: 5 minutes each way • Maximum of 5 games = 50 minutes

In all age groups matches must not be consecutive. A minimum period of 15 minutes should elapse after a game prior to a team playing again. Note 2: Where clubs have large squads, additional fixtures / festivals may be arranged, provided that no player plays in more than the maximum number.

Note 3: Games should be shortened if one side is scoring too freely (i.e. if the points difference rises to more than 30).

Note 4: In all cases, these regulations cover maximum numbers. These should not be exceeded. Where clubs have limited numbers, space and time available, fewer games involving reduced numbers of players should be considered, the emphasis always being on the gradual development of skill.

Note 5: Clubs should maintain records giving details of how many games each Mini/Midi team plays over a season, together with information on how many games are played by each player, to ensure that individual players are not exceeding the Rugby Continuum limits.

6. CONTROL (a) Administration: Constituent Bodies and County Schools Unions are asked to oversee the administration of Mini Rugby and ensure that all affiliated clubs and schools comply with the Rules, Laws and playing restrictions laid down by the RFU.

(b) Rugby for children: Every club and school which runs non-contact rugby, Mini Rugby or Midi Rugby must accept full responsibility for its proper administration, adhere to the Rules, Laws and playing restrictions laid down by the RFU and provide an adequate standard of coaching.





(c) Festivals / competitions: Before running festivals or competitions, application for permission to run such an event must be made, giving at least two months notice, as follows:

- Where schools only are involved, to the County Schools Union
- Where clubs, or schools and clubs are involved, to the County Constituent Body

Constituent Bodies and County Schools Unions should monitor all fixtures. Prizes and/or cups may given only to teams, and not to individuals.

7. REGISTRATION Registration for all youth players was made mandatory in 1998. Clubs should ensure that all Mini/Midi players complete and return registration forms to the Constituent Body Youth Registration Official. Team managers may, in future, be required to produce for inspection, registration cards for each player, when participating in fixtures and festivals.

8. DEVELOPMENT In order to equip coaches to lead youngsters through the progression of Mini/Midi rugby, it is essential that Constituent Bodies, Clubs and Schools run courses leading to qualification at Mini/Midi Foundation or Level 1, thus encouraging Mini Rugby helpers to acquire a greater understanding of how they should introduce the game to beginners. This will ensure that the game is enjoyed by all concerned. Coaches and helpers should all be encouraged to attend a Mini/Midi Referee Training Course in order that they are able to referee games in a safe manner.

9. AGE GROUPINGS The age grouping of players described in this document is taken at midnight on 31st August / 1st September at the beginning of the season in which matches are to be played.

10. SAFETY If a player appears injured, the referee must stop play immediately. They should not wait for the ball to go dead, or for anything else. The whistle should be blown at once. It's better to be safe than sorry! Obviously the referee must use judgement - players don't want to stop for every slight knock - but it is usually possible to tell when a child is hurt. Take no chances. Act fast - but act with caution. An injured player should not be moved. Essentially, other people / players must be stopped from rushing in and hauling the player to his / her feet. They may mean well, but they could make the damage even worse.

If you find yourself in the situation, concentrate on the vital things. Is there difficulty in breathing? If so, ensure the player hasn't swallowed their tongue. If they have, hook it out at once. Do they seem stunned? They may be concussed - if so, they must leave the field and have a medical examination. Is there bleeding? If so, the player must leave the field for treatment. But still do not move the player. Invite him / her to get up. If it hurts them to move, let them stay where they are and send for expert help.

11. DANGEROUS PLAY Dangerous play can cause injury. Coaches and referees should be particularly vigilant to prevent it.

- High tackling (above the armpit) is dangerous - penalise it!
- Collapsing a ruck or maul is dangerous - penalise it!
- Sloppy scrummaging leads to collapsed scrums - keep the heads no lower than hips
- Hand-offs and fend-offs are dangerous - penalise them!
- Tripping with the foot is dangerous - penalise it!
- Hanging onto the ball while lying on the ground is dangerous (to the holder) - penalise it!





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There will always be knocks and bumps in Mini Rugby, but if dangerous play is eliminated, then many serious injuries will never happen. After a stoppage for injury, restart play with a free pass or a scrum to the team that had possession of the ball immediately prior to the stoppage.

12. MEDICAL PROVISION The RFU strongly recommends that clubs have suitably qualified first aiders present to provide immediate assistance to any young player who is injured, whether during training sessions or during competitive play against outside opposition.

13. DISCIPLINE If the referee decides to send a player off, he / she should stop the game, call the individual player aside from the other players and invite the coach of that player on to the field. The referee should explain to the coach and the player why he / she feels that the player's behaviour is unacceptable, and instruct the coach to provide a substitute. That player is to take no further part in that tournament or festival. It is the responsibility of the coach to speak to and educate the player as to why he / she was sent off.

Recommended pitch size for under-7s and under-8s is 40 metres x 30 metres, plus 2 metres for each in-goal area, if played with 7 players on each team. The pitch is to be reduced by 5 metres each way for every player less than 7 in each team (i.e. if 6 are playing, the pitch size should be 35 metres x 25 metres).



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