

SHAPING THE GAME

You will recall that at the end of last season we undertook to review the RFU proposition for the introduction of "Shaping the Game". Over the summer representatives of Kent RFU Mini Rugby committee have attended a seminar and we are now able to explain Kent RFU's position and proposals for the forthcoming season and beyond.

In the first instance, Kent RFU has decided NOT to accept the RFU's invitation to migrate to the new code of mini rugby for the 2012-13 season. The rationale is that in our view the changes to the game will require considerable forward planning and preparation on the part of clubs and we felt it unrealistic to ask you to undertake this over the summer break. Kent schools will not embrace the New Rules of Play this season and we believe it would be helpful to understand the position of both state and independent sector schools so that you are fully aware of any differential between club and schools' codes of play.

Surrey and Middlesex RFUs have adopted the same position as Kent; Sussex will introduce the New Rules of Play for U7 and U8 only in 2012/13. If your club intends to play fixtures and matches from CBs (like Sussex) who have adopted the New Rules, you will be expected to play to the new code in their "territory", and vice versa if these clubs come to your ground in Kent. It is likely (but not yet confirmed) that some of the "national" festivals will be organised according to the New Rules too, and clubs should check with organisers before committing to tours.

As suggested in previous correspondences there will be no choice but to embrace the changes - the 2012-13 season should therefore be seen as a period of preparation for the 2013-14 season and beyond. Kent RFU, supported by the RFU will be organising a series of presentations to clubs, the first of which will take place on the 1st October 2012 at the Kent Club Support Evening at Well Hall (further details of more events will be circulated shortly). In the meantime, attached to this message, are the details of the new codes of play for mini rugby together with documentation which supports the RFU's rationale for what will be called the "New Rules of Play".

The New Rules of Play will become mandatory for Under 7 to Under 9 inclusive with effect from 2013; Under 10 Rules will be introduced in 2014, and Under 11 Rules from 2015. Under 12 rules have still to be established by the RFU.

Reg. 15 - AGE GRADE REGULATIONS

Importantly, other changes to Regulation 15 - Age Grade Rugby WILL come into immediate effect. The new regulations and guidance have been revised in order to assist in developing children and young players in the most appropriate and safest way, with long term development and retention being the ultimate aim.

Summary of regulation changes:

The below information is a summary of the changes that will come into effect for the 2012-2013 season:

- Clubs with a small number of players will continue to be able to apply to band the following age grades together: U7s and U8s, U9s and U10s, U11s and U12s and will also be permitted to play those combined age grades in competitive fixtures and festivals. Previously these dual age bands were only permitted to train together.
- There will be much more flexibility for U6s to U8s to play and train together.
- U12s will be permitted to play up one grade with the relevant consents. Previously U12s were not permitted to play up.
- There is more flexibility in relation to playing down all ages. Players will be permitted to play down one age grade if they are in the younger academic year or small in stature, rather than having to rely solely on showing a developmental or physical disability. At U12 level and below, Kent RFU will now be able to make this decision.
- More responsibility and power to issue certain dispensations have been delegated to Kent RFU so that informed decisions can be made at our local level with knowledge of the full facts rather than remotely from the RFU.

The Consent procedure is as follows:- Once the player, parent/guardian, Club Section Chair and Club Safeguarding Officer have all agreed to the change, then all relevant information is passed to the Kent CB Minis/Midi Section Chair for consultation with the Kent CB Safeguarding Officer for final assessment and approval if appropriate. A full copy of the regulations and the accompanying documents are attached but also available at

[http://rfu.com/thegame/~media/Files/TheGame/Regulations/RFU%20Regulation%2015%20\(1213\).aspx](http://rfu.com/thegame/~media/Files/TheGame/Regulations/RFU%20Regulation%2015%20(1213).aspx)

and I encourage you to ensure that all relevant personnel within your clubs become familiar with the new regulations as soon as possible.

Raj Khanna

Chair Kent Minis/Midis