

***A GUIDE TO
RUGBY LEAGUE***

Under 11





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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 communication skills, confidence and self esteem

HOW DO I FIND A CLUB?

- The Rugby League website
- www.rugby-league.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

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

- Get your parents to find out when you can go and see if it looks fun and enjoyable
- Ask any questions that will help you to feel happy about the club and its coaches.
Your parents will find helpful advice in the Rugby Football League Parent's Booklet available as a download on the Rugby Football League website www.rugby-league.com

ATTEND YOUR FIRST TRAINING SESSION - IF YOU LIKE IT THEN:

- Complete a registration form & get it signed by your parent or guardian.
- 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 Rugby Football League Safeguarding Team - see contact 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 clothes 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 children prefer to play in football boots - rugby boots give more support to your ankle.
- Some players wear head guards - it’s important that these fit properly. Remember wearing a guard doesn’t mean you are invincible!! Only wear one if you want to.

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
- Different variations of the game such as tag or touch rugby may be available

DO GIRLS PLAY RUGBY LEAGUE?

Yes girls do play Rugby League and more and more clubs are running girls’ teams who compete in festivals or leagues across the country.



WHAT IS A CLUB WELFARE OFFICER?

Every club should have a Club Welfare Officer - their role is to 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 children - 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.

RUGBY LEAGUE IS FAIR & INCLUSIVE - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Rugby League is a family sport and we pride ourselves on welcoming people from all backgrounds and RESPECT people's differences in religion, disability, social or cultural background. All we ask is that you enjoy taking part and treat everyone with RESPECT.

Rugby League will not tolerate any abuse that might upset others in the game. Treat everyone as you'd like to be treated.

Children who have individual needs such as a disability, religion, diet or any other requirements should inform the Club Welfare Officer so that the club can make sure their needs can be met.





WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S CODE OF CONDUCT?

The RFL asked children what they wanted to see from others in the game. This is what the children 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 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 children and young people.
 - Report any incidents of bad behaviour.
- Children also agreed that children 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 okay, 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 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 social media
- Spreading rumours
- Threats and intimidation
- Daring people to do things they don't want to
- 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.

ChildLine telephone - 08001111





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 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 removed 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.

MEDICINE & ILLNESS

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 Club 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.

CONCUSSION

Concussion is where you get a bang on the head. If you get a bang you should stop playing or training for the day and you must tell your coach and parents so they can look after you.

WHAT IF AN ADULT DOESN'T TREAT ME PROPERLY?

Rugby League should be fun for children and the vast majority of 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 children 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 Rugby Football League or Childline.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Rugby League should be fun but for a few children the fun is spoilt by adults who do or say things during sporting activities that hurt or frighten them. What these children are experiencing may be abuse. 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 this stop you getting help. By telling someone, you can stop the abuse.

GETTING HELP

- Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. This could be: a parent or someone else in your family; another member of staff at the sports club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.
- Contact one of the organisations listed at the end of this leaflet. They will know who can help you in your area.
- You 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 Rugby Football League Safeguarding Team safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

Alternatively you can contact any of the specialist organisations listed on the next page.

ChildLine telephone - 08001111

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

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