



Essex County RFU Ltd.

**U15 - U18 Youth League
and
U13 - U18 Waterfall Cup Competition
Season 2021/22**



AGE GRADE RUGBY AND COMPETITION PHILOSOPHY

Age Grade Rugby was introduced by the RFU in September 2016.

Age Grade Rugby is the game for all players aged 6-18. It incorporates the rules of play, regulation, competition format and structure of the season. It is based on the **principle of player centred, development driven, and competition supported.**

The competition formats at various ages ensures that young players play the right rugby at the right time and the regulations support the various formats. The regulations and rules of play are found in RFU Regulation 15 and are further supported by various codes of practice.

The competition menu provides various formats that may be played that are appropriate to player's ages and development, moving from friendlies and festivals at a young age to cup or league competition, as they get older.

The playing season is structured to allow for certain competitions to be played at certain times that try to avoid clashes with school or county competitions or events.

In support of this Essex County RFU offers and administers various competitions for the following age groups:

- **U6 - U12 Festivals**
- **U13 - 18 Waterfall cup** where all teams remain in the competition rounds throughout
- **U15 - U18 Leagues**

All competitions are **optional** for teams and clubs to participate in, and entrance will be via an entry form.

There are NO League competitions at U13 and U14

Essex RFU are happy to support club fixtures secretaries and will organise Essex Supplied Friendly fixtures at U13 and U14 - **No results from these fixtures will be submitted or recorded by Essex rugby.**

Essex RFU contacts clubs in order to ensure fixtures are arranged between reasonably similar strength sides to prevent one-sided games.

Essex County RFU provides the competitions to support the development of the game in Essex and the aims of Age Grade Rugby. Teams enter the competition to support those aims and not be driven by the competition results. With that in mind any team, coach or club member acting in a manor that is detrimental to the aims of Age Grade Rugby may result in the team being disqualified from the competition. Examples would include reported aggressive touchline behaviour, attempts to manipulate rules and/or rearrange games to gain competitive advantage, evidence of clubs enticing players away from existing clubs and failure to comply with the competition rules below.

There have been a number of changes to the competition rules put in place from the start of 2019/20 season in support of the Age Grade Rugby philosophy

Format of the U15 – U18 League Competitions

The Competition shall be organised by age group, in leagues where each team plays each other. The Competition Manager shall specify the number of teams per league division, for each age group, according to the number of teams entered.

If there are two or more leagues then there will be promotion and relegation between the leagues at the end of each season, to be determined by the Competition Manager. Normally 2 teams will be promoted and relegated from each league into the next age group in the following season.

Competition results will be published on the Essex RFU Pitchero website and the RFU GMS system.

Format of the U13 – U18 Waterfall Cup Competitions

The Competition shall be organised by age group. Teams will be randomly allocated according to a competition matrix that shall be published on the Essex RFU website. All teams shall remain in the competition through to the final rounds.

Competition results and an updated matrix will be published on the Essex RFU website and the RFU GMS system.

Competition Dates

The Competition Manager shall determine the dates upon which the games are to be played, based on the R.F.U. Structured Season, and shall publish the schedule of matches as soon as practicable. Dates are designed not to clash with Developing Player Pathway (DPP) weekends or County fixtures.

All games are to be played on the prescribed dates, except when the pitches are unfit due to bad weather in which case the game must be rearranged according to the rules below.

Entry to the League and Waterfall Cup Competitions

The Competition shall be open to all Clubs allocated to the Essex County RFU, and that are operating a Youth Section. To participate in The Competition, clubs are required to complete an Entry Form. The Entry Form must be lodged with The Competition Manager by the closing date specified by The Committee. The Committee may refuse entry to Clubs who have had teams disqualified from The Competition in previous seasons.

If a club age grade team has insufficient players for an age group to field a team then they may join with players of the same age group from another club, to enable them to field a team. All joint teams must be approved by the Competition Manager, and no registered player in a joint team may switch and register with the other team in the merge during a season

Player Eligibility – Playing up or down

Before participating in any Competition match, all players (whether as participants or replacements) must, for the current season be a paid-up member of the club they represent and be registered on the RFU Game Management System (GMS) Player

Registration Scheme. Players must play within the correct age group as determined by RFU Regulations.

Players are permitted to play up or down an age group, but only in accordance with RFU Regulations, as provided for in RFU Regulation 15.

If an ineligible player is found to have participated in any Competition match, the result is void and the non-offending team shall be awarded a 39 – 0 win.

Poaching of Players

No player, club member, team manager, coach etc may 'poach' players from another club. All circumstances will be reported to the County Disciplinary Committee with the ultimate sanction of having that club's junior section banned from all competitions for a time period determined by the committee.

Player ID Cards

For the purpose of confirming if players are playing in the correct age grade each club side will complete a player manual or hold player identification cards that must be made available at each match if requested. This manual will consist of the printout of the RFU Game Management System (GMS) registration document and must include the names of the players in the squad, the player's date of birth, a photograph of the player and their RFU registration number. Alternatively, the RFU GMS player registration system can produce a player identification card that includes the player's name, date of birth, RFU registration number, and a photograph of the player

Failure to produce either a player manual, or player identification cards when requested, or if an unregistered player has been found to have played will result in the match being forfeit and a score of 39-0 registered to the non offending team

Responsibilities of the HOME team

The home team shall be responsible for all organisational matters relating to League and Waterfall Cup matches, including:

- Supply of an ELRA qualified referee
- Confirmation with visiting team (at least seven days before the match);
- Condition of the pitch
- Change of colours in the event that both teams are similar
- Supply of the match ball
- Notify the Competition Manager of any changes to arrangements of the match
- Notify the Competition Manager of the final score after the game

In the event of bad weather or unplayable pitches

In the event that pitches are unfit due to bad weather, the home team must immediately notify the opposition, the Competition Manager and the Referee. The respective team managers must, within 48 hours, agree new arrangements for the game to be played. If the team managers are unable to agree, the game shall be played on the next available Sunday that is not a DPP or County date.

In the event that both teams mutually agree to alter the date, or venue, or kick-off time of a league or waterfall cup match, they must seek the permission of the Competition

Manager. The Competition Manager may refuse permission if, in his/her opinion, the proposed date is unsuitable or contrary to the spirit of The Competition. All rearranged games must be played by the end of April.

If no acceptable date can be found, the side that cannot meet the original date will forfeit the game 39-0.

Unable to fulfil a fixture

If a team fails to fulfil a fixture for any reason other than bad weather or unfit pitches, the coach must, in writing and within seven days, notify the Competition Manager and give the reasons. The non-offending team may be awarded the game by a score of 39 points to nil.

If a team concedes a game due to insufficient players' coaches are encouraged to keep the fixture and play an adapted version of the game for the remaining available players.

Team Sheets and Results

Both teams are required to produce a team sheet for each game - recording the players in the squad, RFU ID and the game result. The team sheets should be signed by coaches from both teams and the game referee.

Please ensure that the result on each team sheet is the same and a copy is sent via email, from both teams, to the Competition Manager by 5pm on the Tuesday following the game. The Home Team is responsible for notifying the Competition Manager of the result by 8.00pm on the day of the match, with results and team sheets for both League and Cup competitions being emailed to: essexyouthresults@gmail.com

Failure to notify the result in the timescale may result in the home team forfeiting the game or being docked a league point.

Numbers of Squad Players and the Half Game Rule

For both Cup and League competitions up to 7 substitutions are allowed, and in accordance with the Half Game Rule, all squad players must play at least half a game.

The competition allows for rolling substitutions.

Rules of Play

The rules of play shall be those in accordance to the relevant RFU Age Grade Regulation 15

In the event of a one-sided game - Maximum score line

Should the point's difference reach 39 points or more then the game shall be stopped. The result shall go to the winning team at that point.

There shall be NO OPTION to continue the game to an even higher score line. At this point coaches should then consider using the remaining time to play a more developmental game modifying the rules to make the game more competitive

Ideas on how to vary the rules are given later in this document

Drawn Cup Games

In the event of a draw at the end of a Waterfall Cup game the team that scored the most tries shall be awarded the win. If this is also a draw, then the away team will win.

League points and positions

League positions shall be determined on a point's basis: two points for a win and one point for a draw. In the event of tied league points, positions shall be decided on the following basis:

1. Greater match points difference between the clubs;
2. Greater match points scored.

If the above does not separate winners and runners up of a league competition, the teams concerned shall be declared joint winners.

If the above does not separate those teams involved with promotion and relegation issues of a league competition, both teams will be promoted / relegated.

First Aid

It is the responsibility of all teams to carry an adequate first aid kit, and have somebody qualified, and present at the match. It is the home team's responsibility to ensure there is immediate access to an emergency telephone.

Child Safeguarding

All clubs participating in the Essex RFU Competition should comply with current safeguarding best practice. Any examples contrary to such safeguarding practices shall be reported to the Essex Rugby Safeguarding Manager and could result in the team or the whole club being withdrawn from competitions.

Suggestions to create a more competitive, developmental environment once game "won" by more than 39 points.

- **Team Challenges:**
 - Mix the teams.
 - Swap positions of dominant players or units (forwards/backs).
 - Must make at least x number of passes before scoring.
 - The losing team may ask for a specific player to be substituted or set their challenges.
 - Allow an offside player for the losing team.
 - Create different scoring zones, e.g. dominant team must score between the posts without using the dead ball area as a run in.
 - The winning side must kick on the last phase of play before scoring.

- In defence the stronger team may not contest possession.
- In attack the stronger team may only have 1 or 2 players in a breakdown, encouraging offloads.
- The stronger team after x number of rucks, the ball must be box kicked away.
- Any line breaks by the stronger team must have a x number of passes before a player may score.
- For the stronger team restrict where line breaks may be made.
- **Player Challenges:**
 - Swap player positions.
 - Player x may only hold the ball for 5 seconds.
 - Swap individual player positions.
 - Dominant player may be touch tackled.