

Bridgwater & Albion RFC Training Policy

This policy covers all age grade rugby at Bridgwater & Albion RFC up to the age of eighteen years old and covers both girls and boys teams.

TRAINING PRIORITIES

As a general principal, the Men's, and Colts/U17, girls' teams train during the week and play at the weekends. Junior teams may train mid-week subject to the conditions set out below and without interfering with senior training and in liaison with other Junior teams. There will be no mid-week training for the Minis/Midis.

All Training must be mindful of and adhere to relevant guidance e.g. RFU continuum, structured season. More importantly all training plans must be player centred with all aspects being appropriate to the capacities of the participants. These capacities are Physical, Tactical, Mental, Technical and Personal / lifestyle.

The Long-Term Athlete Development (LATD) Model further underpins the appropriate priorities for each training stage.

Overview of Junior Rugby (U12 To U16)

The Training for Junior Rugby should wherever possible be undertaken on a Sunday morning with the RFU Youth Structured season being adopted with suitable training days being made available in the fixture diary. It must be the joint responsibility of the coach of each age group along with the fixture secretary to ensure adequate training days are available.

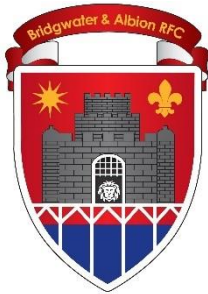
The RFU structured season indicates an approximate but negotiable balance of 17 training weeks and 17 match days. Mid-week training can take place as indicated below but no matches should be played on a training week i.e. mid-week training must not take the place of Sunday training to fit in another match. For example:

Week 1	Train Wednesday	Match Sunday
Week 2	Train Wednesday	Train Sunday
Week 3	Train Wednesday	Match Sunday

Any mid-week training that does take place is non-compulsory and non-selective. If any training takes place off site it must be with the knowledge and agreement of the Chairman of Youth Rugby and Club Safeguarding Officer. All training that takes part during the week must have the approval of the Chairman of Youth, The Rugby committee and the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Coaches must bear in mind the conditions and time of day e.g. an evening session on a muddy pitch after a long day at school is different from a Sunday morning on a dry surface. The temperature on an evening is most often colder than during the day it is your duty of care to look after those who are in your group – Be sensible and considerate.

Coaches must also bear in mind that the players in these age groups are going through their growth spurt and often at different times so sessions should be adjusted accordingly.



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All managers should keep a record of player's game time to avoid over playing/training the best players.

Coaches must ensure that all players have suitable warm clothing for training and a change of clothes.

The U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 teams may train for one 1½ hours session during the week subject to the availability of space and the condition of the grass. The teams will be able to train at times as agreed with the Club Director of Rugby. The mid-week training sessions will not be available as a right and will be subject to cancellation with short notice (particularly between 1st November and 1st March) should the condition of the pitches deem this necessary. Youth sessions should if possible be over before older age groups start their sessions (normally 7pm).

Training may be cancelled at very short notice due to pitch conditions and weather implications!

MINI – MIDI RUGBY (U6 – U12)

All mini-midi rugby coaching and playing takes place on a Sunday and there is no provision for mid-week training except prior to festivals and during September with the agreement of the Junior Chairman, Club Safeguarding Officer and Club Director of Rugby.

The Mini-Midi Rugby season usually starts on 1st Sunday in September each year in line with the RFU calendar. Fixtures and Festivals may only take place during the period commencing on the 5th Sunday of the season and ending on the early Mayday Bank Holiday. Outside this period, players may only participate in recruitment initiatives e.g. club registration events.

Club policy in respect of playing up age groups (1 or 2) is not permitted between U7's and U12's unless a squad is short for a match and the player is deemed physically able to do so by the coaches. Note: U7s and 8's cannot play up at any time due to the tackle regulations at U9 and above.

Each player is limited to playing in not more than –

(a) 17 Club Fixtures and/or Festivals during a season in addition to any Fixtures and/or Festivals played by them for their Schools;

(b) 1 Festival during the same weekend, during which teams are only permitted to play in a maximum of 5 games (as per the RFU Regulations).

Fixtures, coaching and training sessions (including time devoted to match play) must last no longer than the following:

Under 7 and Under 8: 60 minutes;

Under 9 and Under 10: 90 minutes;

Under 11 and Under 12: 120 minutes.



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INSURANCE

All coaches and Managers must be aware that the Club insurance only covers them and their players if these policies are followed and if all training and match arrangements follow RFU Regulations and guidelines.

AUTHORITY TO CANCEL TRAINING SESSIONS and DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If there is doubt by any person as to the grass being in a suitable condition for safe use or will cause damage to the playing surface the Team Coach should obtain the permission to use the grass from the Club Safeguarding Office (or her/his delegate).

If the Team Coach still believes he is being unreasonably prevented from training his team he is to present his findings to the Director of Rugby for a full and final decision on the matter. If the Club Director of Rugby makes a decision on pitch use this is final and not open to change. Complaints concerning the Director of Rugby's decision can following the event be raised with the Clubs Steering Group by making an incident report to the Club (not Youth) Secretary.

RFU Playing Calendar for U12 TO U18

The playing calendar provides a model which supports inclusivity of all players, guards against overplaying and underplaying and limits conflict between club and school/college rugby maintaining choice for players to play with their peer groups. Link to RFU playing calendar below – Fixture Secretaries, Team Managers and Team Coaches should ensure the correct age group guide is followed. It supports a dialogue between clubs and schools at a local and county level in the interests of player.

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/playing-calendar>

The 2020/2021 Plan is at <https://www.englandrugby.com/dxdam/74/74453dac-1b37-49e3-baf3-7f1f2b99a9ee/Age%20Grade%20Rugby%20Playing%20Calendar%202020-21%20v1.1%20Male%20U12-U16.pdf>

RFU AGE GRADE RUGBY KEY ELEMENTS

The key elements of the Under 7s Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: a maximum of 4-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 20 metres x 12 metres
- Ball Size: 3
- Maximum minutes each half: 10
- Scoring: Players not permitted to go to ground to score tries
- Play can continue from a knock-on
- No tackling
- No kicking, scrums or lineouts

The key elements of the Under 8s Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: a maximum of 6-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 45 metres x 22 metres
- Ball Size: 3
- Maximum minutes each half: 10
- Scoring: Players permitted to go to ground to score tries
- No tackling
- No kicking, scrums or lineouts



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The key elements of the Under 9s Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: a maximum of 7-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 60 metres x 30 metres
- Ball Size: 3
- Maximum minutes each half: 15
- Introduction of the tackle only but no rucks, mauls, lineouts or scrums

The key elements of the Under 10s Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: a maximum of 8-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 60 metres x 35 metres
- Ball Size: 4
- Maximum minutes each half: 15
- Introduction of uncontested scrum
- Nearest 3 players in a scrum (all players trained, late specialisation)
- Contest for the ball (1 player v 1 player)
- Introduction of Maul
- Introduction of Ruck

Further details can be obtained from the following link:

<https://www.englandrugby.com//dxdam/08/0882fbc2-5069-4b69-b1f6-4dec9bf94385/Regulation%2015.pdf>

RFU AGE GRADE OUT OF SEASON GUIDELINES KEY ELEMENTS

- Permitted Rugby Specific Activities:
- TAG Rugby Touch rugby Specific rugby activity i.e. skill zone
- Passing specific activity 2 v 1 3 v 2 Evasion
- The maximum rugby specific training per day is: U7 – U8 = 60 mins U9 – U11 = 90mins U12 – U13 = 120mins
- These rugby specific activities must not exceed these maximum training times

Further details can be obtained from the following link:

<https://www.englandrugby.com/dxdam/51/51d782e8-7117-4b85-a869-aaaf843fe62c/Age%20Grade%20Out%20Of%20Season%20Activities%20Guide.pdf>

Bridgwater & Albion RFC expects all coaches to follow the best practice laid out in annex A and the appropriate website links.

Policy adopted February 2020. Signed on behalf of Bridgwater & Albion RFC

Geoff Sluman
Director of Rugby & Vice Chair Person
Bridgwater & Albion RFC

Ruth Habberfield
Club Safeguarding Officer
Bridgwater & Albion RFC



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Annex A – Compulsory Coaches Best Practice

From RFU AGE RELATED CODE OF PRACTICE

Section Training

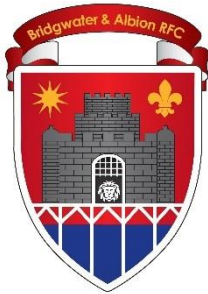
- Coaches should be aware of the Activate Injury Prevention Exercise Programme designed by the RFU in conjunction with the University of Bath. Injuries fell by 72% when players completed these new exercises at least three times a week and concussion injuries were reduced by 59%.
- Coaches should ensure that the parents/guardians and coaches/ teachers from other teams are aware of any injury or concussion the player has suffered.
- Coaches should consider the child's Rugby Playing Week (i.e. how much rugby activity across all settings they do in a week) so that coaches consider their training and playing demands within their own environment as well as other sporting settings (not just rugby).
- Coaches should be aware that technical development is not best achieved by full contact practice
- Coaches should attend the face to face training session and sign up to the supporting online resource. More information is on: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe

Further information can be obtained by the following link:

<https://www.englandrugby.com//dxdam/83/8375ce67-40ff-4b70-a28f-fbbae518009a/AGR-CoP-Aug2019-final.pdf>

GOOD PRACTICE KEY POINTS

- Where a player plays in multiple environments (i.e. club and school/college) and suffers any injury or concussion, the coach should ensure that the parents, and other appropriate coaches or teachers, are made aware. This lessens the mistake of allowing the player to train or play when injured. It ensures a joined-up approach to their return to play.
- Think of the Rugby Playing Week in terms of training sessions that allow for rest days before and after intense activity (particularly contact sessions) or matches. Research from Leeds Beckett University using academy rugby union players, suggests **that following contact or non-contact training**, players are not fully recovered at 72 hours. Ensuring sufficient rest allows the child to recover and reduces the risk of injury.
- Always consider the duration, intensity (workload), physicality (contact level) of the session in relation to the child's physical development, their Rugby Playing Week and level of competition.
- Consider applying a training to match ratio to manage the duration, intensity and amount of time spent playing.



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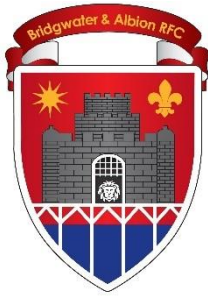
- As a guideline, the recommended maximum duration of a training session in a day is:
 - U7 - U8 = 60 mins.
 - U9 - U11 = 90 mins.
 - U12 - U18 = 120 mins.

Remember that hot or cold weather will reduce the duration.

- Playing frequency - There is a tendency for players who are perceived to be better, or who are more physically mature, to play more frequently and in more important matches than those who are considered less able.
- Those players who are often not selected and have less game time tell us that under-playing is one of the factors which make them leave the game. Under-playing also results in a lack of opportunity to develop skills and confidence in a game or match environment. It is our intention to put inclusivity, welfare and player development first.
- Children who play in several environments tell us they are often forced to prioritise and play two full, intense games in a week.
- Organise activities so that all your players have an equal opportunity to play.
- Plan an appropriate programme of development that takes into consideration the player's Rugby Playing Week.
- If you have a child playing for both club and school/college, talk to their parents to understand the player's level of involvement and discuss development opportunities or potential issues before they arise.
- Do all you can to develop partnerships with the local club or school in the interests of the player. Share with parents the requirements of the half game rule and assure them that players will get half the available game time.
- Take into consideration that the physical demands of a sevens tournament can require a similar recovery period to that of a 15-a-side game. ☐ Ensure that any competitive activity is arranged in accordance with the playing calendar and competitive menu (www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby). This ensures a balance of competition, addresses over and under playing and ensures that competition is in line with the wants and needs of players.

Coaches should be aware:

- England Rugby players are only permitted to play 32 full matches in a season – 20% of Age Grade players reported playing more than 30
- 20% of Age Grade players report being asked to choose between playing for a club and a school on the same day.



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Coaches ask yourself:

- Have I made a conscious effort, with other coaches, to strike a balance between games, matches and training and factored in a rest period during the rugby playing week?
- Do I rotate players so that all members of the squad have an equal chance to develop their skills as well as acquire an enthusiasm and confidence for the game?
- Am I aware of the Half Game regulation in which all players in a match day squad must play half a game? This addresses the potential issues of over and under playing and focuses attention on the individuals not the team.

Best Practice (Coaches & Referees)

- Coach / Referee who is a member of the English Rugby Coaching Association (ERCA) or English Rugby Refereeing Association.
- Qualified, Active and Engaging in annual CPD, including refereeing (if relevant)
- Has completed the RFU Play It Safe safeguarding training, or comparable training for teachers in a school environment
- Has completed a relevant first aid course Best Practice is what most coaches and referees should aspire to.
- All those who work as a coach or referee should be qualified, up to date with current methods, confident in their knowledge of the rules and have completed safeguarding and first aid training. They can then best meet the needs of all players
- Have the players and parents seen and understood the RFU animated concussion awareness video? englandrugby.com/headcase