

***A GUIDE TO  
RUGBY LEAGUE***  
*Under 18*



# ***A GUIDE TO RUGBY LEAGUE UNDER 18***

## ***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](http://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?***

- Find out when you can go down to see if it looks fun and enjoyable
- Ask any questions that will help you to feel confident about the club and its coaches (you and your parents will find helpful advice in the Rugby Football League Parent's Leaflet - available on the Rugby Football League website [www.rugby-league.com](http://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 - the club can give you a leaflet for your parent or guardian to tell them about Rugby League
- 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 contacts 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 wear 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 young people prefer to play in football boots - rugby boots give more support to your ankle
- Some players wear head guards and/ or upper body protection - it’s important that these fit properly. Remember wearing a guard or protection 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
- Some clubs run touch, tag or wheelchair Rugby League

## ***DO GIRLS PLAY RUGBY LEAGUE?***

Yes girls do play Rugby League and more and more clubs are running girl’s teams who compete in festivals and league across the country. There are also girls teams in the Champions Schools competition at all age groups.

## ***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.



## ***HOW CAN I LEARN TO BE A MATCH OFFICIAL?***

Not everybody who wants to be involved in Rugby League wants to play and another good way to be involved is to join a Match Official's Society. All societies have junior sections and you can qualify as a match official from the age of eleven. To find your local Match Officials Society see the Match Official's section at [www.rugby-league.com/get\\_involved/match\\_officials](http://www.rugby-league.com/get_involved/match_officials)

## ***WHAT IS A CLUB WELFARE OFFICER?***

Every club should have a Club Welfare Officer - their role is 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 young people - is behaving towards you the Club Welfare Officer is there to help.

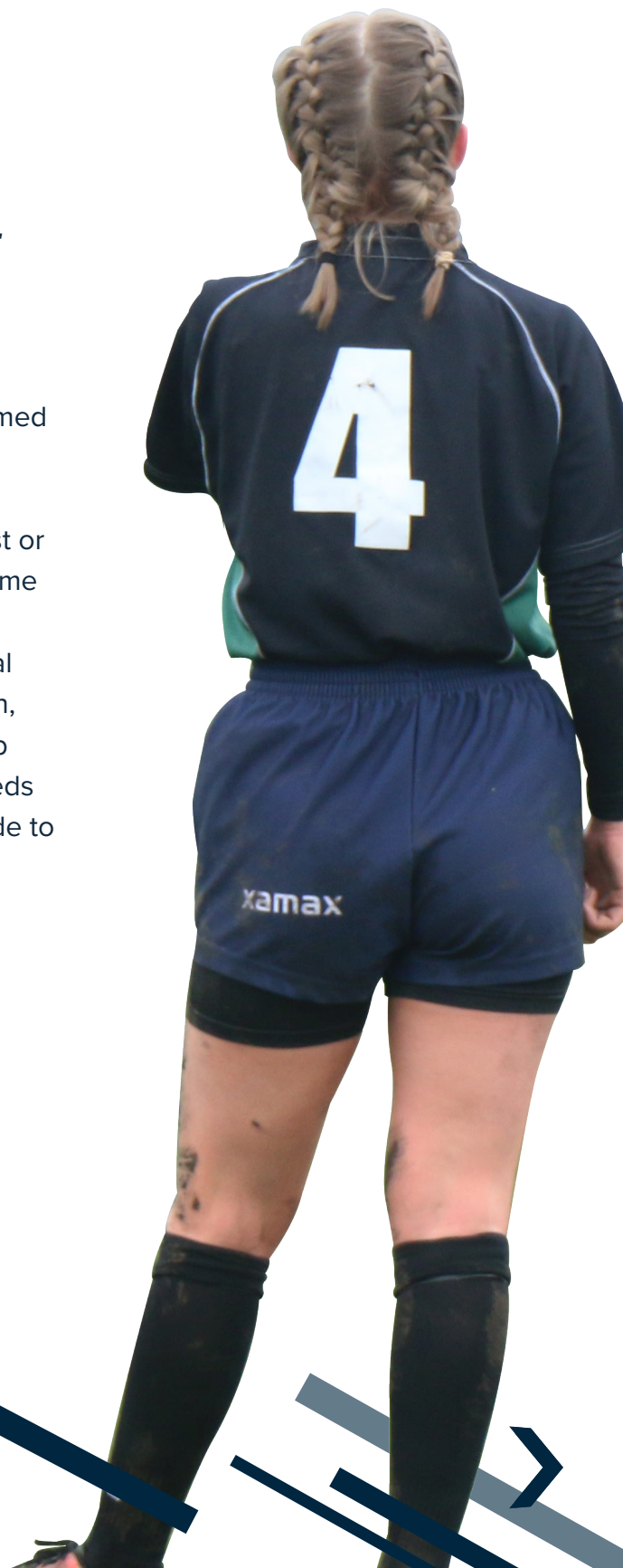
## ***WHAT IS RESPECT?***

Rugby League has a code of conduct for everybody in the game which sets out the behaviour expected of everybody.



## ***RUGBY LEAGUE IS FAIR AND INCLUSIVE – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?***

Rugby League is a fair sport where everybody is welcomed and given RESPECT whatever their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social or cultural background. Rugby League will not tolerate racist, sexist or homophobic abuse or harassment of any type in the game from players (young or old) or volunteers or spectators involved in the game. Young people who have individual needs such as a disability, or anything related to religion, diet or any other requirements should speak to the Club Welfare Officer so that the club can make sure their needs can be given proper consideration and every effort made to support their involvement.



## **WHAT IS THE YOUNG PERSON'S CODE OF CONDUCT?**

The Rugby Football League asked young people what they wanted to see from others in the game. This is what they 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 young people and young people
- Report any incidents of bad behaviour
- They also agreed that young people 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 ok 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 social 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?***

- Physical - hitting, punching etc.
- Dares - making someone do something they don't want to do
- Name-calling, sarcasm, and racist taunts
- Pressuring other to join in inappropriate behaviour
- Making threats
- Unwanted physical contact
- Graffiti
- Stealing or hiding personal items
- Making someone feel small
- Being ostracised or ignored





## ***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.

## ***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 referees or disagree with their decisions.

You must also RESPECT the other players and must not swear or abuse other players or use racist or homophobic abuse. Spitting at people and biting are banned.

Players who break the rules may be sent from the field and may be suspended for one or more matches. Players who behave very badly or act in a way that may hurt another player may be suspended 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 excluded 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 so that this can be considered as well before any decisions are made.

## **WHAT IF I'M OFFERED DRUGS IN RUGBY LEAGUE?**

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 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.

Rugby League has Zero tolerance to performance enhancing and social drugs which are banned in Rugby League and all sports. If anybody offers you drugs at the club whether it's a team mate or an adult you should tell the Club Welfare Officer. Players are not allowed to take stimulants (such as ephedrine), social drugs or steroids. If you are worried about drugs you can use one of the contact numbers below such as Ask Frank. There is also useful information on UKAD's website [ukad.org.uk](http://ukad.org.uk)

Steroids stimulate muscle tissue, however they may have severe side effects, including acne, shrinking of the testicles, infertility, liver damage, heart damage and increased mood swings including anger and depression.

Stimulants are substances which act on the central nervous system by speeding up parts of the brain and body's reaction. They can be very dangerous for a player's heart amongst many other dangers.

Common stimulants are cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines and ephedrine - these and all other stimulants are banned in Rugby League.

"Social" drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana and ecstasy, have many health risks and are also against the law. Possession can lead to a criminal record.

Many drugs are injected into the body and this is especially dangerous as needles can contain diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis. If you ever see a needle, tell someone at the club straight away.



## ***WHAT IF AN ADULT DOESN'T TREAT ME PROPERLY?***

Rugby League should be fun for young people. Most 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 young people 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 Safeguarding Team if you have any concerns on 0844 477 7113 option 6 or at [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com).

## ***WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?***

Rugby League should be fun but for a few young people the fun is spoilt by adults who do or say things which may be abuse which can be physical, sexual or emotional abuse or bullying or neglect. 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 any 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; a member of staff at the sports club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.
- We know that many young people prefer to tell a friend when they are distressed about abuse. If anyone shares information about abuse with you then it is essential that you encourage and support them to tell an adult who can help.
- Contact one of the organisations listed at the end of this leaflet.
- Your 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 at [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com).

Alternatively you can contact any of the specialist organisations listed at the end of this booklet.

**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](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

**ChildLine**  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
telephone - 08001111

**Kidscape**  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

**Kidszone**  
[www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone)  
textphone - 0800 056 0566

**NSPCC**  
[www.There4me.com](http://www.There4me.com)  
[www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk](http://www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk)  
(aimed at 12 - 16 year olds)

**Talk to Frank**  
[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)  
telephone - 0800 776600

**UKAD**  
[www.ukad.org.uk](http://www.ukad.org.uk)