



Middlesex
RUGBY

FESTIVAL FRAMEWORK
& GUIDANCE

August 2017

TEAMWORK RESPECT ENJOYMENT DISCIPLINE SPORTSMANSHIP

Overview

Purpose of this Document

This document provides a framework for the Middlesex Rugby (the 'County') Mini Rugby festivals and provides guidance to organising clubs.

The framework provides the club hosting a county festival with a concrete level of expectation as agreed between the County, the host and the participating clubs.

A club hosting a County festival undertakes to fulfil these requirements to the best of their ability.

This framework covers the U7 to U11 age grades. U12s are now covered under Junior Rugby.

For Clubs wishing to run their own Mini Rugby festivals throughout the season, approval must be sought from the Chair of Community Rugby and the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby. Clubs will be expected to adhere to the guidelines below for running their own festivals and to adhere to the new Age Grade Rugby Regulations that came into force in September 2016. Please note: Non-CB approved festivals may indemnify your insurance and will be seen as playing outside of Regulations.

Principles

Middlesex Rugby has achieved great success in Mini Rugby and has thousands of mini rugby players under its purview. Our aim is for our festivals to be fully inclusive to all children and to be player-centred. Our festivals provide an opportunity for all Middlesex Clubs to contest a County festival each year. The role of a County festival is twofold:

1. To provide a county-wide highlight of the season where all Middlesex clubs gather to celebrate Mini Rugby.
2. To provide a competitive festival, appropriate for age, player and team development levels.

Unlike most rugby festivals, the County festival needs to accept as many team entries as possible across all abilities of players. This complicates matters tremendously and therefore it is incumbent on both organisers and entrants to work together to create the best experience for the players as possible.

Whilst the County Festivals are competitive, the value and importance of team spirit, sportsmanship, Rugby's core values and of course FUN should always be prominently developed, acknowledged and encouraged.

Format

The festivals are organised over three weekends in March based on the age grade of the players:

- Under 7 and Under 8
- Under 9 and Under 10
- Under 11

Each individual age grade is treated as a separate festival with its own host club. Under Age Grade Rugby there will be **NO** streaming of players (i.e. A/B competitions). Clubs will be expected to submit mixed-ability, balanced teams to the festivals. Quite obviously safety is of primary concern. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that they are playing mixed-ability balanced teams.

Festival Pre-Planning

Date of Festivals

Middlesex Rugby will set these no later than 1st January (preceding season) in order that the dates are available for fixture secretaries prior to the fixture meetings in January/February. These dates will confirm to the Middlesex Rugby Age Grade Rugby calendar.

The festivals will normally take place in March, prior to the Easter holidays. Historically, the three festivals have been held on different dates, but this need not be the case. The festival dates will be mindful of not clashing with school holidays.

Middlesex Rugby will also reserve a contingency date that will be used in the event of a festival having to be postponed due to bad weather. Clubs should endeavour to keep this date free in their fixture lists.

Organisation

Ownership

The Middlesex Rugby Community Rugby Committee wholly sub-contracts the running of the County festival to the host club. The Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby and the Festival Chair are the final authority and their decision is final.

Host Clubs Nominations

Nominations for host clubs will be requested prior to 31st August. A decision on which clubs are awarded a festival will be based upon a balance of the club's capabilities and the County's desire to allow all clubs the chance of hosting, should they so wish. Preference will be given to clubs who have signed up to the Old Mutual Wealth Kids First Rugby programme. The Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby will make the final decision on which clubs are awarded a festival to host.

Festival Chair

Each host club must nominate a Festival Chair by 1st November at the latest.

This person is responsible for coordinating their club's endeavours to host the festival and acts as the principal contact between the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby and the host club. It is essential that this person has regular email access.

The Festival Chair must be present at the festival and is ultimately responsible for all issues arising on the day. It is highly recommended that a deputy is also appointed.

Festival Committee

The Festival Chair must coordinate a team of club members/volunteers prepared to undertake responsibility of various tasks. A suggested structure is provided in this document. Clubs are strongly advised to follow this guidance as it provides a mechanism for distributing the workload so that individuals are not unduly burdened.

It is recommended that the Festival Committee comprise between 4-8 people each with specific responsibilities allocated as illustrated in this framework document.

Festival Management

It is not intended that Middlesex Rugby prescribes all aspects and detail of the pre-festival management or indeed the activities on the day.

Clubs are encouraged to adopt a flexible management approach so long as the desired outcomes are achieved in an equitable fashion.

Financing

County Involvement

Middlesex Festivals are run on a zero subsidy basis and as such host clubs are responsible for the finances of the event. Host Clubs should ensure that they have a contingency arrangement for foreseeable issues such as flooded pitches etc.

Utmost care should be taken in the selection of sponsors with particular attention paid to their suitability for an event for children.

Club Involvement

The club will be responsible for financing all aspects of the festival and costs must be met by income generated by the festival.

Entry Fees

The entry fee for the festival will be agreed between the host clubs and the County and it is expected to be in line with previous years. Entry Fees are one source of revenue and clubs should ensure they are diligent in raising other sources of income to mitigate the costs of entry.

All club entry fees should be received at least four weeks before the Festival date. Late withdrawals or no shows by clubs will result in the forfeit of the entry fees and may count against them for entry in future festivals.

Fund Raising

It is intended that the host club make a reasonable surplus from the festival, without appearing to charge overly commercial fees.

The following practices are acceptable:

- Car parking
- Programme sales
- Raffle
- Sponsorship
- Bar & food takings
- Rental of space for vendors

The County will consider that this is the responsibility of the host club, but would expect clubs to have no mandatory cost payable by players, above the entrance fee.

Clubs that are VAT registered will need to add VAT to charges as required under HM Revenue & Customs regulations.

Presentation of Final Accounts

A final income and expenditure report must be presented to the County after the festival has taken place (within 2 months). This should detail each cost and revenue stream (including any subsidy, sponsorship and entry fees). This is to allow the experience of previous festivals to be passed on to clubs hosting future festivals.

County Level Sponsorship

The Committee may obtain one or more countywide sponsors for the festivals. In this situation the county will decide on the allocation of funds based upon the amount and nature of the sponsorship proposition.

Facilities

Playing Space

The objective is to have as many mini-pitches available as possible to ensure that a maximum number of games can be played simultaneously. This increases the number of games that can be played over the festival time period. For U8 to U11, this equates to 12 mini-pitches. Playing pitch sizes should conform to Age Grade Rugby guideline dimensions. It is recognised that these may need to be reduced in order to have enough pitches to play all the required games but must be the minimum size as per the Age Grade Rugby guidelines.

A safety perimeter of at least 2 metres should be maintained around all pitches; no prams or other articles likely to cause harm should be allowed within this area.

Car Parking & Traffic Management

Parking continues to represent a major challenge. Parking should preferably be off-road, but in any case, the host club must identify the parking available and ensure that this is no further than 15 minutes by foot from the festival.

Local residents should be notified of the event in advance and volunteer marshals be used in order that traffic flows as smoothly as possible.

Information on the location of the festival, public transport and parking available must be provided to all visiting clubs. Car sharing should be encouraged to reduce the number of cars arriving at the event.

It is recommended that the Host Club advises the local police station of the event where further advice can be sought on the traffic management options available.

Toilets and Changing Facilities

Male and female toilets must be available and must be no further than 5 minutes walk from each pitch and clearly sign-posted. The provision of temporary toilet facilities must be considered if the permanent facilities are insufficient or too far from pitches.

Refreshments

The festival is likely to run into the early afternoon. The host club should make available food and drink stalls and state in advance what will be available.

First Aid

St Johns Ambulance or equivalent must be organised to provide first aid. Trained volunteers may supplement this. Access must be maintained to all the playing pitches in the event of an ambulance being required. A dedicated area may be required and is recommended as the FIRST AID CONTROL POINT.

A record of all injuries treated on at each Festival should be maintained. This information is being collated to assess the safety of Middlesex Rugby Festivals and the effectiveness of coaching and refereeing in Middlesex. No personal details are retained. Any injuries that require notification to the RFU are the responsibility of the Host Club.

Bad Weather

Bad weather is always a possibility. The main control posts and first aid must be covered. It is the responsibility of participating teams to provide tents for their players. The Host Club should identify space allocated for team tents; these should not impede access for emergency vehicles or present a hazard to either players or spectators.

Any decision to cancel/postpone the Festival must be taken in conjunction with the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby.

Balls & Flags

Unless otherwise notified by the County, it is the Host Club's responsibility to provide at least one match ball per pitch. Touch flags are recommended, but at the Host Clubs discretion.

Risk Assessment

The Host Club must carry out a risk assessment for the festival, which should be kept on file for reference. Hazards must be clearly identified as part of the communications plan for the event. More information on Risk Assessments is available from the RFU website.

People Resource

Host Club

Except for referees, the Host Club is expected to arrange all the volunteers required to run the festival, except for referees (see below). All volunteers must be briefed in advance of the event as to their duties.

It is recommended that the club considers using older youth players as marshals (e.g. U13s and above). This could be rewarded by a contribution to an age group tour.

Car Parking Marshals

Adults (not children), wearing tabards, must be made available for at least 1.5 hours before the festival start time in order to organise parking of visitors.

Control Point

Control points should be established to provide registration and overall management of the festival. This will need to be managed at all times.

Pitch Marshals

Pitch Marshals are **extremely important** to the successful running of a festival. At least one pitch marshal should be allocated to each pitch. The pitch marshal is responsible for ensuring that each game takes place on time, for organising an independent referee, a match ball and relaying results to the control point.

Referees

A pool of experienced referees is maintained for the County. Referees only qualify for the County list if they have been a) nominated and b) meet criteria (e.g. ELRA for the referees at the older age groups). The referee pool consists of “tag” and “contact” referees in order that all age ranges are covered. Referees ideally should not referee their own club; however this may be unavoidable in some situations.

A volunteer acts as the Chair of the Referees panel and manages the allocation of referees to each festival. Ideally there should be 2 referees per mini-rugby pitch in order to provide for breaks and cover in case of injury. All clubs will be required to submit the name of at least one referee per team and confirm their availability for the whole day.

Referees must be notified and confirmed at least two weeks prior to the date of the festival. The referees are required to be attired in a way that ensures that they are club-neutral, ideally Middlesex Rugby or RFU referee kit. Referees should be provided with a food and drinks voucher.

Festival Structure

Clubs allowed to participate

The festivals are restricted to Middlesex Clubs only. All clubs are encouraged to attend in some capacity.

Age Grade festival format

The U7 to U11 festivals will provide the opportunity for all players to participate in the festival. It is up to the participating club to submit mixed-ability, balanced teams to the festival.

With the Age Grade Rugby formats introduced from September 2016, there will no longer be streamed festivals e.g. A Festival, B Festival etc. All festivals will be for mixed-ability, balanced teams. The objective is to get all players equal game time and enjoyment when entering a festival. We will continue to run a ‘Development’ festival for players that are new to rugby or not confident enough in contact rugby.

Note: It is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that they are playing mixed-ability, balanced teams. Coaches must be true and fair to their own players and the opposition.

All entries will be considered for entry into the festivals. In the event of the entries received exceeding the capacity of the Festival the organisers (in consultation with the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby) may be forced to restrict entry. The criteria used will be: Date and Time of entry received and the total number of teams entered.

In some circumstances 2 or more clubs may decide to combine to create a Barbarian team. It is important that these Barbarian teams have a nominated coach and ‘manager’ to ensure continuance of welfare and safety responsibilities.

Player Registration

A player registration form stating name and date of birth must be submitted for each team on the day of the festival.

All players must be age eligible according to the RFU Rules and Regulations section of www.englandrugby.com.

Format (U7 – U11)

The format of the festivals must be player centric and encompass the following criteria:

- It must be fun for the participants – this is the number one priority and the reason why we use the word “festival” rather than “tournament”.
- 5 games max per team - this is a rule from the RFU to limit playing time from a player welfare point of view.
 - U7 and U8 players can play a maximum of 50 minutes per day
 - U9 and U10 players can play a maximum of 60 minutes per day
 - U11 players can play a maximum of 70 minutes per day
- All players should get equal game time.
- Sufficient number of pitches available - the format selected determines the number of games to play and the number of pitches (mini pitches) determines how long the festival will take and how long teams must wait between games.
- It should take no more than 5 hours to complete – the duration of the festival can be very tiring for everyone taking part.
- Open to all clubs in the County - this is hugely challenging as this is now 35 clubs. Some have huge numbers wanting to enter 3 or 4 teams – especially at the younger age groups.
- Able to have multiple teams per club – the county festival should be about getting as many players involved as possible and providing the means to allow clubs with large numbers to give this opportunity to all of their players.
- Open to all levels of ability – this is not elite rugby, but about participation.
- Games should not be mismatches – being beaten by a high score margin is demoralising for the youngsters taking part. We want games that are competitive. With the older age groups, mismatches can lead to safety issues that need careful management by the referee. The referee will be encouraged to discuss with coaches to change players if there are concerns over safety and mismatches.
- There will be no trophies at festivals as there are no overall winners. However, all players will be awarded a participation medal.
- Wait time between games should be less than 60 minutes
- Each category will then consist of 16 teams with 4 pools of 4 teams.

Pool Stage

1. Each team will play each opposition team in the Pool (3 games).
2. Each team will be awarded four points for a win, two points for a draw and one point for a defeat. (This is purely for placing teams in the appropriate pool for the second half of the festival.)
3. The teams in each Pool will be ranked by reference to the number of points awarded, with the team with the highest number of points ranked highest in the pool. (This is purely for placing teams in the appropriate pool for the second half of the festival.)
4. If at the end of the pool phase two or more teams are level on points the following process will be used to determine their final positions:
 - a. If two teams are level on points the final position will be determined by the result of the match between the two teams.
 - b. If that match is drawn the pool position will be determined by the margin between tries scored for and against them in all pool matches (the team with the highest margin will be ranked higher);
 - c. If the final position of teams level on points cannot be resolved by the above means the teams will be ranked by tries scored (the team with the highest number of tries scored will be ranked higher);
 - d. If the final position of teams remains unresolved the teams will be ranked by reference to the toss of a coin between the team coaches.
5. The ranking of teams in the pool stages is purely for placing teams in the appropriate pool for the second half of the festival.

Semi-finals and Finals

6. After the Pool phase has been completed, all teams go forward into the second phase pool system. There will be a semi-final and final. If the score is level at the end of normal time NO extra time will be played, as set down in the Age Grade Rugby regulations and guidance.
7. If the score is level at the end of a semi-final, the winner will be determined by count-back reference to the pool stage and the highest ranked team (same criteria as above) will go forward.
8. Winners of the semi-finals will play the final and the runners up will take part in a 3rd/4th playoff.
9. For the quarter-finals, this means that we refer back to the games that the teams played in the pool stages and the following process will be used to determine the winner. The winner will be determined by the total number of points earned in all pool matches.
10. There will be no overall winners and no trophies will be awarded, as per the new Age Grade Rugby regulations.

If each game were played with 20 minute slots to allow change-over, it should result in 3 games per hour which should take less than 4 hours to complete. With this format all teams get 5 games and the maximum wait-time between games should be 40 minutes.

If there are an insufficient number of teams, an alternative format may be used, but the emphasis must be to maximise the number of games played and that all players get equal game time.

Trophies & Medals

Costs

The cost of the participation medals is the responsibility of each host club. Middlesex Rugby will assist in sourcing the medals and will recharge back to the clubs prior to each festival.

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Finalists

There will be **no** trophies awarded to any team.

Medals: Will be awarded to every player in the squad. The number of medals per team should be in line with maximum squad sizes.

Communication

Invitations

Middlesex Rugby will coordinate a central register of clubs wishing to participate in festivals (age grades and number of teams). This should be completed by 1st November.

The host clubs will send formal invitations to attend the festivals in January and request payment by no later than 31st January.

Late entrants are at the sole discretion of the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby and this is unlikely to be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

Festival Details

An information pack must be produced and sent to clubs prior to the festival in a form that may be distributed electronically.

The County website will be updated to provide links to where information can be obtained (probably the Host Club's website). The pack should contain: Address (map), parking details, timetable and other information that will get the participants to the right place at the right time. It is recommended that your club includes a page on your website to provide this information and any additional data necessary to ensure smooth running of the day.

Any venue or Host Club specific details should also be included.

County Festivals operate a NO DOGS policy at ALL FESTIVALS.

The Codes of Conduct are to be communicated by ALL Clubs to Coaches, Parents, Supporters and the Players.

Festival Programme

A programme **may** be produced with the playing order and times for each age group. The county will provide logos and introductory material as required and will need to sign off all Middlesex branded collateral.

The Host Club must fund the production of the booklet and it recommended that advertising space be provided for local businesses as a means of generating revenue. Festival programmes should be reasonably priced and copies made available FOC to all age group Coaches and Club Officials.

It is accepted that programmes are expensive to produce and can often be inaccurate due to last minute changes in the festival planning. An acceptable alternative is to produce an electronic programme for email distribution (or website download). This may be a simple A4 sheet per age group to allow printed copies to be available on the day.

DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

It is stressed that the County requires all those attending the County Festivals to behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct set by the RFU. Furthermore, the County Festivals exist to promote rugby and its development; sportsmanship and fair play are vitally important and should be stressed throughout the Festivals.

ALL ADULTS – coaches and parents should be strongly reminded of the Code of Conduct and the consequences for any breach of these. Any disciplinary violation by an adult at a County Festival will be managed under the auspices of the Senior Disciplinary code, which will likely result in a ban from the game and all clubs for a period of time in line with the offence.

All coaches and spectators should be seen to respect and support the officials, organisers and volunteers at all times. No coach or parent will be permitted to harass or abuse any official, organiser or volunteer in any way. Foul and profane language is not acceptable at any time.

Any complaints should be processed through official Club Channels either through the Chair of Mini Rugby or an appropriate Age Group manager.

Any matter referring to Child Welfare **MUST** be dealt with through the County Safeguarding Officer.

The Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby and the Festival Chair reserve the right to remove any person or team from the festival that fails to follow the codes of conduct and commence disciplinary action.

The Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby's decision is final on all matters of discipline at the Festival.

Further information on the expected standard of behaviour is provided in the good festival guides available from clubs and the RFU.

For further information contact:

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