



Middlesex
RUGBY

MIDDLESEX U12 FESTIVAL RULES

SEPTEMBER 2016

TEAMWORK RESPECT ENJOYMENT DISCIPLINE SPORTSMANSHIP

Introduction

The Middlesex U12 Festival format was created three years ago to help young players develop their Rugby and help bridge the divide between Mini and Youth Rugby. The intention is to provide a format that meets the RFU Age Grade Rugby requirements and enables a better Rugby experience for teams and players as well as helping facilitate a better alignment of teams when they transition to the new Youth structure at U13.

From the initial experiment the U12 Festival has gone from strength to strength helping our Middlesex mini teams move through their last year of mini rugby.

The format for the Festival is unique with a 3 weekend qualifying rounds played through the season ahead of a Finals Festival Day in March at Wasps FC. Each round comprises 2 games of 30 minutes played as a triangular fixture. The results of these games are compiled and points awarded for the results.

This enables us to create a 'Festival table' which, when the rounds are completed, forms the finals play. Prior to Age Grade Rugby, the top performing clubs played in the Cup competition which decides who will be the Middlesex Champions. There were also Plate, Bowl and Shield competitions to ensure appropriate competition for teams of all abilities. From September 2016, the clubs will play in pools rather than in a formal Cup, Plate, Bowl, Shield competition, as per Age Grade Rugby regulations. This will continue to allow all teams to participate in the Finals Festival Day in order to fit them into the appropriate pools as they enter U13s.

The format is closely modelled on the system used by the World Rugby for International Sevens and means that the teams are more closely matched and the rugby even more thrilling for all involved.

The final positions of clubs also helps establish the group entries for clubs choosing to enter the Herts/Middlesex format at U13.

There is administration provided by a Festival Organiser who is appointed jointly by the previous years winning club and the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby. The Festival Organiser, Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby and his/her deputy form the Festival Committee.

The process starts in August with Clubs formally entering their teams followed by a draw held in September. The three weekend rounds then follow starting in October.

Dates

The round dates are:

Round 1 – 13th November (20th November)

Round 2 – 4th December (11th December)

Round 3 – 15th January (22nd January)

(The second date is a fall back to allow for bad weather)

This year the finals date is Sunday 19th March 2017 at Wasps FC, Twyford Avenue, W3.

Overview

The regulations will be as previous years with only minor modifications to make certain matters clearer. The format remains the same with the three triangular fixtures followed by the Finals Festival Day. The only exception is that there will be **NO** streaming (e.g. A or B squads). Clubs/Teams **MUST** submit mixed-ability, balanced teams into the triangular and festival fixtures. Teams will still be able to enter more than one team into the festival.

It is important to point out though that the structure used for the Festival delivers very effective matching of teams on Finals day ensuring a thrilling and exciting day with everything to play for.

The U12s Festival is played using a series of Pool groupings with teams earning points during their games with the final tally of points deciding which Final Festival pool group the team enters.

As of September 2016, all teams entering the U12 Tournament will be expected to enter mixed-ability, balanced teams. There will no longer be A and B teams. The results over the three triangular weekends will ensure that teams are placed in the appropriate pools on the Finals Day.

Please note: it is the responsibility of coaches to ensure they are entering and playing mixed-ability, balanced teams.

The Organisers have some flexibility in assigning teams to the relevant grouping.

The Organisers reserve the right to manage the Triangulars and Festivals and may alter the format, rules or individual team entries as necessary. The organisers have the authority to deduct points or even remove a team from the Festival for breaches of the Festival Rules or the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Players and Spectators.

Festival Rules

All games are played under the RFU Age Grade Rugby Regulations (please see Regulation 15).

Entry Conditions

Entry is open to all Middlesex Clubs, but numbers may have to be limited.

To enter you need to do the following:

- Agree to participate on ALL dates
- Agree to host if drawn to do so
- Provide one qualified referee per team entry for both the rounds and the finals day.

DATES

We ask clubs drawn to play the round games to work together to agree the date option best for the clubs. By introducing this bit of flexibility it'll help get the fixtures played with minimal disruption. Please ensure that every effort is made to complete games on the agreed date as variation causes considerable disruption and added workload for the organisers.

The Festival Organiser is highly likely to eject any team who fails to turn up for a round. If a team fails to turn up for a fixture, their opponents will be awarded a 21-0 bonus point victory.

COMMUNICATIONS

All clubs **MUST** register a Primary Contact for your club by sending an e-mail with Contact name, Phone, E-mail and full postal address to the Festival Manager.

Copies should be sent to the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby, Waheed Aslam - waheed.aslam@waspsfc.co.uk.

All Club Coaches and Managers should be familiar with the Festival rules and ensure that all follow the respective Codes of Conduct.

HOST CLUBS

A condition of entry is that a club accepts the responsibility of hosting a round, if drawn to do so.

The host has to do the following:

- Supply the visiting teams with directions.

- Provide a suitable pitch including posts.

- Co-ordinate the schedule of matches, referees and arrange linesmen.

Host Clubs also **MUST** report the results of the Round Fixtures to the Festival Organiser within 24 hours. Late reporting may result in a penalty Points Deduction. Reporting will include:

- Score of each game listing Tries and Conversions

- Name of referee

- Discipline report

It would also be helpful if the host club can provide changing facilities and offer food to players, but these requirements are **NOT** obligatory.

Match Day Rules

Matches will be played in the following order established by the draw where A is the host and team C is listed last in the draw.

1. A v B

2. A v C

3. B v C

Kick off for the first game should be at 10:00 and **NO LATER** than 10:15 unless agreed otherwise by all teams. This means that with the 30 minute 'Rest Break' all play should be concluded by 12:30.

Teams can elect for an earlier kick off if they wish and all parties agree.

Each team will provide a qualified referee who will officiate over the game between the other two teams.

The **FAILURE** of a club to provide a **REFEREE**, for any reason, will possibly result in the deduction of points.

The coaches will ensure that the players get sufficient recovery time between games. Normally a rest break of 30 minutes will apply for the team playing consecutive matches unless otherwise agreed by both teams. Coaches are also responsible for ensuring that all their players get equal game time throughout the triangular fixtures.

Please note: it is the responsibility of coaches to ensure they are entering and playing mixed-ability, balanced teams.

Matches will be 15 minutes each way. Half time is 2 minutes only. Injury time will not usually be played, however time maybe stopped by the referee for serious incidents.

Conversions will be taken. A kicking Tee or Cone should be available from the Host Club at all times.

Coaches will remain OFF the pitch during the game, except to attend to an injury and at half time. This includes breaks in play, for example when conversions are taken. Self-motivation and organisation are considered part of the game for U12 players.

If one team gets six clear tries ahead, the game will end and the score will be recorded. So, at 6-0, 7-1, 8-2, 9-3 etc. Points for conversions are added to the score as normal and do not influence the "six-try rule". The final conversion should be taken.

This 'final' score will be used as the result for the Festival purposes. The match *may* continue to full time, if both coaches and the referee agree but the score at the end of this extension to the game will not be put forward. If this is the case, then coaches are encouraged to switch their team around to ensure a more balanced game.

Substitutions will only be made during a break in play with knowledge of the referee. Substitutions are otherwise unrestricted.

Points system

Points will be awarded as follows:

Match winner – four.

Drawn match – two each.

Losing Bonus Point - for loser within seven match points or less.

Try Bonus Point – for scoring THREE or more tries.

Complete match scores, tries scored and calculated league points will be reported, by the host, to the Festival Organiser within 24 hours.

The final position of teams from the triangulars will determine which pool they will participate in on the finals day. The order for determining the pools for the finals day will be based on the following in order:

1. Points.
2. Total match points difference.
3. Tries scored.
4. Match result between relevant teams.
5. Toss of a coin.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR FINALS DAY RESULTS ONLY

On the Finals day and for each aspect of the Festival in the event of tie then the process to differentiate teams shown above will be used with points 2 - 4 being applied initially.

However, ahead of the 'Coin Toss' the team with the overall higher Pool position will benefit from their consistency over the season and be awarded higher placement.

The 'Coin Toss' should only be used if no other method separates teams.

Disputes and Discipline

Any disputes should be resolved locally by relevant clubs, whenever possible. If a dispute cannot be resolved then notice within 24 hours should be given to the Festival Organisers.

The Organisers will inform the other clubs involved of the dispute notification and within a FURTHER 24 hours a written report of the dispute and such further information as needed should be provided to the Organisers by all parties.

Further communication and investigation of the circumstances will be undertaken as necessary.

Any Discipline complaints regarding coaches, players, spectators or referees received by the Festival Organiser, will be dealt with in the same manner and treated with the utmost seriousness.

Incidents may be escalated to the Middlesex Rugby Disciplinary Panel should it be deemed necessary by the Chair of Middlesex Mini Rugby.

The Organisers reserves the right to discipline any participating club as considered appropriate for the circumstances.

Coaches, Players and Spectators are reminded of the Codes of Conduct and their requirements. Any Abuse of Officials, Players or other Spectators will be subject to disciplinary action either through the deduction of league points or through formal proceedings through Club or County Disciplinary Panels.

OTHER NOTES

Please ensure Parents are aware of the Festival Structure and the expectations of Behaviour.

Please ensure that ALL people attending the Triangulars and Finals day are familiar with the Codes of Conduct. Abuse and foul language will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

DOGS are NOT permitted at many Rugby Grounds including Wasps FC. Those Clubs with a NO DOGS policy will be fully supported by the Organisers. To avoid problems please do not allow any parent, player or supporter to bring Dogs to the Triangulars or Finals Day.

Middlesex operate a STUDS ONLY preference. All footwear must be safe and comply with IRB - NO BLADES Policy for Boots at all Festivals and this includes all fixtures. Please ensure the players and their parents are aware of this Policy.

Mouthguards are a requirement for all players.

Clubs are expected to work in support of the organisers and communicate promptly on all matters.

All clubs will need to ensure they are entering mixed-ability, balanced squads, especially if they are entering more than one team into the U12 Tournament. Players may be exchanged between squads between rounds, but not between games either during the rounds if at the same host or on finals day. Should a team be potentially compromised through the lack of players it is recommended that in the first instance a player is loaned by the opposition teams and thereafter



that player numbers are reduced to matching levels to enable the match to be completed. Matched numbers should be achieved first through the removal of the No8 (1), then a Back (2) then second Row and No8 with the option of scrums going uncontested (3). No further concession on numbers will be allowable with 10 players being the minimum number required to complete the match.

Managers and coaches must provide though a list of players for each squad on the day including birthdates and RFU number. Barbarian teams will be considered for entry in the Development Cup on finals day, but the organisers will need reassurance on the commitment and participation to the competition before an entry will be accepted.

Entry fees have been set at £95 for all teams this season (2016/17). These fees should be paid at least four weeks before the finals day.

For further information contact:

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