

## Letchworth RFC - Playing Under Age Players

### PLAYING UNDER AGE PLAYERS IN ADULT RUGBY

A player may play adult rugby once he reaches the age of 17, but, this is not an automatic right under the RFU's Regulations. Such a player may only play or train with adults provided he has been assessed as capable of playing with adults and, unless the player is an England Academy Player, he may not play in the front row of the scrum until he reaches the age of 18.

Permission must be gained from the player's parent, guardian, head teacher or club before any player under the age of 18 plays adult rugby. It is mandatory to record this permission on the RFU's Playing Adult Rugby Form. A copy of this is attached. The Regulations are set out in RFU Regulation 15.1.4.4 – 15.1.4.5.

*15.1.4.4 Players may not play adult rugby, or train with other adults, until they have reached their eighteenth birthday unless they comply with one of the following exceptions:*

- (a) players who are aged 17 may play adult (including Under 20) rugby and train with adults provided they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults and the RFU's playing adult rugby form has been duly completed and signed. This exception does not apply to playing in the front row of the scrum during contested or uncontested scrummages either during training or in a match, where (subject to (b) below) there is an absolute prohibition on players under the age of 18 playing in adult rugby; or*
- (b) players who have not reached their 18th Birthday who are England Academy Players and who may play adult rugby and train (including in the front row of the scrum during contested or uncontested scrummages) if the RFU Head of Elite Player Development has given his specific written consent. Such consent must be given for playing or training.*
- (c) Players of all sexes and of any age may train or play together in non-contact variations of rugby, providing the organizer has assessed the session as safe for all players.*

*15.1.4.5 Permission to play must be obtained, and recorded in the RFU's playing adult rugby form (a copy of which must be kept), from either the player's parent, guardian or head teacher, before any person under the age of 18 plays adult rugby or plays with players who are not in the same annual age banding. When assessing whether a player under 18 is capable of playing adult rugby, those responsible for making the decision must take account of the guidelines at paragraphs 1.1 – 1.5 below. Breach of RFU Regulation 15.1.4.4 and/or 15.1.4.5 will be regarded very seriously by the RFU, the sanctions for which are set out in Appendix 2 of RFU Regulation 19.*

*15.1.4.6 The RFU playing adult rugby form must be retained by the Club, County or other rugby body for whom the player plays and sent to the RFU, or as it directs, immediately upon request by the RFU.*

The RFU has also issued guidelines to help those who make the assessment as to whether the 17 year old can play adult rugby. These follow the applicable Regulations in RFU Regulation 15.

## **1. Playing out of Age Grade:**

- 1.1 *The decision to allow a young person to play out of age grade lies with the person in the best position to assess all the relevant circumstances and they must obtain permission from the player's parent, guardian or head teacher.*
- 1.2 *When making a decision the following aspects should be considered:*
  - (a) *The physical development, **skill level and experience** of the individual and his playing colleagues*
  - (b) *The individual's playing position in the team*
  - (c) *The competitive standard of a particular match or training session(s) or series of matches and playing conditions (if approval is not being given for the season)*
- 1.3 *The ultimate consideration must be for the welfare and safety of the player and those with whom he will be playing.*
- 1.4 *There must be clear communication with all those involved in and affected by the decision.*
- 1.5 *Clear and complete records must be kept of decisions taken and the bases for them.*

Whoever is making the assessment must determine whether the player should be playing with adults on a match by match basis or for training only or for training and playing a series of matches or for playing and training for a whole season.

Please note that it will not be possible to register a 17 year old to play adult rugby unless the form has been duly completed and signed.

The decision making process should be documented and enclosed is a suggested form to be used.

Please note that the RFU takes any breach of its Age Grade Regulations very seriously. Sanctions for breaches are set out below.

Classification of Breach	Description of Classification	Entry point for sanction
Low level breach	U18 player trains with adults without permission. No injury	Suspension of coach/person responsible for training and 4 weeks; and Club reprimanded
Mid level breach	U18 player plays with adults without permission. No injury U18 trains with adults without permission. Injury occurs	Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection 3 months; and Team suspended from playing for 4 weeks; and points deducted from club 1 <sup>st</sup> XV equating to 2 wins (possible suspended and Club reprimanded)
High level breach	U18 player plays with adults without permission. Injury occurs	Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection for 6 months; and Team suspended from playing for 3 months; and points deducted from Club 1 <sup>st</sup> XV equating to 4 wins; and Club reprimanded.

Aggravating Features:

Intentional breach of regulation  
Club failure to warn teams of relegation and consequences of breach  
Very young player  
Very serious injury

Mitigating Factors:

Unintentional breach – team did not know player was under 18 and it was reasonable to assume he was  
Player nearly 18 years old  
Player capable of playing adult rugby and permission would have been granted had it been requested  
Injury not serious