



7 July 2010

Mr Gary Townsend
Player Development Manager
Rugby Football Union
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Twickenham Stadium
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Middlesex
TW2 7BA

Dear Gary

Further to your letter and attachments of 23 June, I have now had the opportunity to undertake a pre-liminary analysis of the critical review of the structure of the game for children and the associated recommendations.

The work carried out by Dr Eston and his colleagues represents an important appraisal of the way the game is played in the 6-18 year age range, taking into account the findings of recent research. This review has led to the development of a set of recommendations that propose to enhance the quality of player experience, with an emphasis on enjoyment; involvement; skill development and decision-making; values of the game; promotion of the game among young players and the creation of a child centred approach (including taking account of the significance of the relative age effect).

The overall approach is consistent with emerging best practice in the development of coaching and coaching systems, where the stages and capabilities associated with participant development form the basis for identifying the role and capabilities required by coaches to guide the improvement of players.

The suggested modifications to game formats in the 6-18 year age ranges have been well thought through, with the suggestion that pilot work be undertaken to trial the proposals. This approach is particularly appropriate given the important observations in the documentation relating to the role of competition formats in influencing the behaviour of coaches, parents and administrators.

The proposed pilot work would appear to be both prudent and ground-breaking and will provide the Rugby Football Union with the opportunity to test the recommendations in practical situations. I have no hesitation in lending my



support to the direction that is proposed and will look forward to the outcomes from pilot work with interest.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Duffy', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Duffy
Professor
Sport Coaching