RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION WOMEN

RFUW U13s AGE BAND REVIEW and FAQ's

Background

The current age bands were introduced in 2007-8 to cater for the increase in players at youth levels and provide sufficient competitive outlets at Under 15 and Under 18.

As women's and girls' rugby has continued to grow and develop, the framework at youth level has remained largely unchanged with minor amendments made to take into account changes within the schools environment and the need to develop competitions to cater for girls within education.

Many clubs presented the RFUW with proof of the fact that their U15s age-bands were struggling for numbers, reflected by more clustering of clubs and lack of players in many CB squads.

Finally, we provide and encourage 'girls only' rugby for the U12 age-band at schools and yet in the club environment, the only provision is mixed contact with boys.

The above demonstrated there was a desperate need to address this.

The Way Forward

As per the December 2010 RFUW Newsletter, we are now in a position to update you on the findings of our Review Group around a potential new age-band at U13s. All clubs were invited to take part in an on-line survey in April / May of 2010, around this subject. The findings were collated, and pilots of a newer, simpler form of the game were conducted.

The results of these pilots were delivered to the RFUW Competitions Review Group and recommendations were then sent to the RFUW Board on 9th April. We are now in a position to outline the way forward for Girls Age-Band rugby from 2011/12 season.

U13s Age-Band – this age-band will be brought in from ***1st September 2011***

- Girls players must be Aged 11 and 12 on the 1st September 2011
- The format will be Tag to Tackle (please see rules and regulations attached)

U15s Age-Band

- Girls players must be aged 13 and 14 on 1st September 2011
- The format will be full contact 13-aside rugby as per the current rules and regulations

U18s Age-Band

- Girls players must be 15, 16 or 17 on 1st September
- The format will be full contact 15-aside rugby as per the current rules and regulations
- Once a player has their 18th birthday, they are permitted to play senior rugby as well as continuing to play U18s rugby. Please ensure the welfare of the player in considered

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FAQs

1. I am an U12s female player, can I still play in the RFU continuum?
    a. U12 girls may continue to play U12's mixed rugby in the RFU continuum.
    b. U12 girls may apply for a dispensation to play down in the U11 age group of the RFU continuum.
    c. Any player aged 10 or below on 1st September 2011 will continue to play their rugby through the RFU continuum which starts at U7s
2. I'm currently the youngest player in my U15s side (i.e. in the U13s age-bracket for season 10/11), how will this affect me going forward into season 2011/12
    a. Introducing the U13 age band for the 2011/12 season will have no effect on current players within the RFUW system. Those players that were 12 on September 1st 2010, will be 13 on 1st September 2011 and eligible for the U15s age-group
3. I have been playing Mini Rugby through the RFU continuum. I am now 12 on September 1st 2011, but there is no U13s girl's team for me to play in. What happens now?
    a. The RFUW has carried out a full investigation of the current active female players at this age-group on RugbyFirst. This mapping exercise has highlighted geographic areas that the RFUW will target through their Development Department to assist it setting up U13s activity.
    b. The RFUW has also mapped where the current active U11s female activity is on RugbyFirst and the figures are a third more than the current U12s. This demonstrates that there are players out there to start these 7-aside teams up immediately
4. If there is no U13s provision for me as a player, can I train with the local U15s section?
    a. Players from the U13s age-band is allowed to do non-contact training alongside an U15s squad
5. Will there be a structured competition for U13s in this first season?
    a. No. The first season will be focused on setting up new U13s around the country and playing friendly local cluster fixtures
    b. We suggest in this first season that clubs join together for local pitch up and play type events
6. Will this be part of the RFUW Player Pathway?
    a. No. This will not lead to CB or Divisional Rugby, but is an integral part of the development of the player to help them progress into the U15s age-group where the Pathway beings
    b. This age-band is a link between Mini & Youth rugby and Girls only rugby that has not previously existed
7. What are the RFUW plans for School Rugby at U13s?
    a. The National Competition structure for schools at this Age-band will be as per season 2010/11
    b. Schools will be encouraged to start the introduction of Tag to Tackle when and if the girls are ready
    c. The above activity will mean that School / Club links through RFU and RFUW are more straightforward and seamless
8. Will there be any coaching resources to support this new Age-band?
    a. The current rules & regulations are attached
    b. Coaches & Teachers training resources and materials will be distributed to clubs, schools and coaches in preparation for the start of the new season
9. What qualification do I need as a coach to coach Tag to Tackle?
    a. We advise that you have taken a Tag Rugby Course or are working towards a Rugby Course ideally that eventually leads to a Level 1 qualification