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**17 year olds playing adult rugby (Regulation 15.7)**

Dear all,

This season (2019/20) there has been a process amendment in regard to authorising a 17 year old to train and play matches with adults.

We need to align to the new DBS requirements for children playing adult rugby to ensure our clubs, members and match officials are not putting themselves or their members at risk.

It is very important that each club is aware and knows this process and adheres to it, failure to do so could lead to sanctions detailed below.

Hopefully the below points will clarify the process but should you have any questions on the matter you are encouraged to contact your RDO or myself and we will be happy to answer your questions or if we don’t have the answers seek further clarity.

**Can a 17 year old male/female player play and train with adults this season?**

***Yes they can***, so long as they have the 2 step approval process in place, approved and have been assessed by the appointed neutral qualified assessor. However they must not train or play in the front row. If the approval is in place the opposition and match official must also be made aware.

Also all age grade rugby players must be registered on the Game Management System GMS annually every season.

**The reason for playing / training a 17 year old in adult rugby can be for the following reasons**:

For the development needs of the player

 Not for the needs of the team if they are short of players

 Not for the reason the 17 year old may have more talent than an adult player

 Novice 17 year old players new to the game would not be approved

**The assessment:**

As in previous season we have decided to utilise the skills, experience, qualifications and the professional nature of our RDO team to carry out the assessment as they are neutral and not affiliated to a club.

**What the assessor will consider:**

* Number of years the player has played the game
* Has the player played in DPP (Now Cornwall Rugby Skills Programme) Academy level, Representative level – Note this does not guarantee approval, nor should approval not be granted if the player has not played at that level
* How many teams the club has and at what level
* Will the player continue to play age grade rugby and how will the playing time be managed
* The reason for the player to play adult rugby how does it benefit them and keep them playing rugby
* Physical nature of the player, height, weight and in comparison to others in a similar position in the team
* Social and emotional development of the player for their age

**Assessors:**

Jonny Stephenson: jonnystephenson@rfu.com

Phil Morris: philmorris@rfu.com

Neil Smith: neilsmith@rfu.com

**There are 2 forms to complete:**

1. Playing adult rugby – Club approval form.

This is to ensure the club is prepared for the possibility of the 17 year olds playing adult rugby and reviews mainly safeguarding issues

1. Playing adult rugby – Player approval form

This looks at the player in question which requires an endorsement by a coach of at least UKCC level 2 and CB signed approval. This also needs to be signed by the parent or guardian.

**Constituent Body CRFU Approver**

James Mills: Millsjames1404@gmail.com (U18 Cornwall Team Manager)

**Sanction Regulation 19 Appendix 2**

Clubs will need to prove that they are player-centered and that decisions on playing adult rugby are made in the player's, not the club's, best interest.

Clubs failing to adhere to the 2-step approval process will be subject to sanctions

**LOW LEVEL BREACH**

A player under the age of 18 trains with adults without required permission. No injury occurs.

• Suspension of coach/person responsible for training for 4 weeks; and Club reprimanded.

**MID LEVEL BREACH**

A player under the age of 18 plays with adults without required permission. No injury occurs

A player under the age of 18 trains with adults without required permission. Injury occurs.

• Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection for 3 months; and Team suspended from playing for 4 weeks; and Points deducted from club 1st XV equating to 2 wins (possibly suspended); and Club reprimanded.

**HIGH LEVEL BREACH**

A player under the age of 18 plays with adults without required permission. Injury occurs, or no injury occurs but player plays in the front row.

• Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection for 6 months; and Team suspended from playing for 3 months; and Points deducted from club 1st XV equating to 4 wins; and Club reprimanded.

These are entry level sanctions and may be subject to change due to aggravating circumstances (i.e. intentional breach of the Regulations) or mitigating factors (i.e. unintentional breach - club did not realise player was Under 18).

**Other Considerations:**

* If travelling away with the team, the player would need the parent or guardian consent to travel. No child should be left alone in a car with an adult.
* Behaviour of other members of the team and staff around the 17 year old need to reflect that legally they are viewed as a child. CRFU would also highlight that the consumption of alcohol is not acceptable for a 17 year old and it is the responsibility of the responsible adult that any 17 year old is not subject to this.
* There needs to be an appointed responsible adult who will need to have a valid DBS check. Responsible adults may include: Club coach, first aider, manager, captain, mentor

**Next Steps:**

* Consider if you have a 17 year old player that could play adult rugby and discuss with them and their parent / guardian if they would like to play.
* Is the decision based upon the players development and retention?
* Review the club approval form and ensure the club is prepared and can adhere to the expectations
* Contact the relevant assessor to arrange the assessment
* Gain the relevant CB sign off

Kind Regards

David Saunter Chairman of Cornwall RFU

Tony Knightsbridge Chairman of Youth and Development Cornwall RFU

James Mills U17/U18 Male Cornwall RFU Team Manager

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