



CODE OF CONDUCT

**Best Practice for Players, Spectators, Parents & Coaches
before, during and after Rugby Matches**



Code for Players

- Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
- Respect the “Game of Rugby” and play within the laws of the Game.
- Accept the referee’s decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
- Be a “good sport”. Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not “bully” or take advantage of any player.
- Rugby is a team sport and make sure you co-operate with your coach; team mates and members of your club.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
- As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- As a team sport it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.

Code for Spectators

- Remember that although young people play organised rugby they are not "miniature internationals".
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
- Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
- Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
- Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

Code for Parents

- Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
- Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
- As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- Do not publicly question the referees' judgement and never their honesty.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- Understand the value of team sport and the importance there of.

Code for Coaches

- Remember that as a coach of an “age grade team” you are to act in “loco parentis” and to that extent your duty of care is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.
- Lead by example – young people need a coach whom they respect.
- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
- Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
- Prepare young players for inter-class and inter-school activities.
- Be reasonable in your demands on the players’ time, energy and enthusiasm.
- Ensure that all players participate in matches. The “average” players require and deserve equal time.
- Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill learning and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition. Winning is not the only objective.
- Develop player and team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.
- Insist on fair play and disciplined play. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player.
- Encourage young players to develop basic skills and sportsmanship. Avoid over specialisation in positional play during their formative years.
- Set realistic goals for the team and individual players and do not push young players into adult-like competitions.
- Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
- Do not over burden younger players with too much information.
- Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed on sound coaching principles and methods, and on the principles of growth and development of young people.
- Be aware of the effect you have on growing children.
- Never criticise the referee and touch judges during or after a match in front of players or spectators.
- Always thank the match officials and if they have made decisions which require clarification, discuss the problems after everyone has changed.
- Seek and follow the advice of a doctor in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
- Ensure that proper equipment and facilities are available at all times.
- Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the IRFU.
- Attend coaching courses.
- Support the Code of Ethics and all policies regarding Children in Sport.
- Ensure you and your players are proud of your team, club and efforts during the season.