

Linlithgow Rugby Football Club

“WEE REDS” MICRO & MINI RUGBY



founded 1922 reformed 1970

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS SEASON 2015/16

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This information is revised at the beginning of each season to take account of changes and suggestions made to us. So, even if you have received this previously seasons, we suggest you read this to catch up on any new information.

Introduction to Rugby at Linlithgow Rugby Club

Welcome to the Mini Rugby Handbook which has been produced to let you know as much as possible about Youth Rugby at Linlithgow Rugby Club.

Year on year we strive to improve our delivery of rugby, ensuring it is safe, fun and competitive to create enjoyable and successful rugby to boys and girls from 5 years to 18 years, with a defined path thereafter in to Senior Rugby.

Rugby coaching is delivered by our dedicated coaches, who follow Scottish Rugby guidelines. These outline in detail how Rugby is to be coached and played in the Micro, Mini and Youth age groups. As a minimum all of our Coaches have undertaken the Scottish Rugby **RugbyRight** Course, and many have various further coaching qualifications.

We attend numerous mini tournaments with other clubs every year and host our own during October each year. These tournaments have proved to be very successful festivals for all our teams over the years

These events show Linlithgow Rugby Club at its best and it is something we work tirelessly towards throughout the season and our hard work is often rewarded with success on the pitch. We are always grateful to our sponsors who help us to fund and manage a youth membership in excess of 200 players. We are proud to promote Linlithgow Rugby Club's Youth Section as a development pathway for all levels of player. The Director of Youth Rugby, Paul Fensom, represents the Youth Section on the Club's Executive Committee.

We hope you find this guide useful, and encourage any feedback you have (good or bad). We look forward to seeing you at the club soon and enjoy your season!

Stuart Thompson
Director of Mini Rugby

Gordon Muir
Director of Micro Rugby

Linlithgow RFC Codes of Conduct

The Good Players Code of Behaviour:

- Play to Win but **NOT** at all costs. Winning is the object of playing any game but playing safely and for fun is more important.
- Recognise and appreciate the work of Coaches, Match Officials, Managers and Parents in giving the opportunity for you to play and enjoy safe and fun rugby.
- Understand the values of loyalty, respect and commitment to team mates and adults.
- Understand that as a young player (s) you should be treated in a manner that is acceptable and you have the right to tell an adult either at the Rugby Club or elsewhere if this is not happening.
- Observe the Laws of the Game. All games need rules to guide them. Without laws, there would be chaos. Make an effort to learn the laws, so you understand the game better. This makes you a better player. The laws are designed to make the game safe and fun to play and fun to watch. By sticking to the laws, you will enjoy the game more.
- Respect Opponents, Team mates, Referees, Officials and Spectators. Fair Play means respect. Without opponents there can be no game. They have the same rights as you have, including the right to be respected. Your team mates are your colleagues. You form a team in which all members are equal. Referees are there to maintain discipline and Safe and Fair Play. Always accept their decisions without arguing, and help them to help you enjoy the game more. Officials are also part of the game and must be respected accordingly. Spectators give the game atmosphere. They want to see the game played fairly, but must also behave fairly themselves.
- Accept Defeat with Dignity. Nobody wins all the time. You win some, you lose some. Learn to lose graciously. Don't seek excuses for defeat. Genuine reasons will always be self-evident. Congratulate the winners with good grace. Don't blame the referee or anyone else. Determine to do better next time. Good losers earn more respect than bad winners.
- Promote the Interests of Rugby. Think how your actions may affect the image of your club, your friends, coaches and parents. Encourage other people to watch it or play it fairly. Help others to have as much fun from Rugby as you do. Be an ambassador for the club and the game.
- **Most importantly be safe, have fun and play rugby to the level you feel you can.**

Parents and Carers Code

We would like all players and spectators to abide by the following rules and most of all have fun.

Parents and Carers are ENCOURAGED to:

- Respond promptly to e-mails sent out by coaches concerning the availability of players. Be familiar with the teaching and coaching methods used by observing the sessions in which your child participates.
- Be involved with club activities and share your expertise.
- Share concerns, if you have them, with club officials.
- Encourage your child to learn the rules and play within them.
- Discourage unfair play and arguing with officials.
- Help your child to recognise good performance, not just results.
- Never force your child to take part in sport.
- Set a good example by recognising fair play and applauding the good performances of both teams..
- Never punish or belittle a child for losing or making mistakes.
- Publicly accept officials' judgements.
- Support your child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport.
- Use correct and proper language at all times.
- Stay off the pitch

Parents and Carers SHOULD:

- Remember that young people play rugby for their own enjoyment not that of their parents
- Encourage young people to play - do not force them.
- Focus on the young players' efforts, rather than winning or losing.
- Be realistic about the young players' abilities; do not push them towards a level that they are not capable of achieving.
- Provide positive verbal feedback both in training and during the game. Remember that persistent, negative messages will adversely affect the players' and referee's performance and attitude.
- Always support the rugby club in their efforts to eradicate loud, coarse and abusive behaviour from the game. Remember young people learn much by example.

Coaching Policy of LRFC Youth Section

Our Objectives:

- Introduce the game in a safe and friendly environment
- Develop the skills of the children progressively - according to their ability, using appropriate coaching methods and in accordance with SRU, IRB & Sport Scotland Guidelines.
- Introduce the Laws of the Game
- Encourage a good standard of behaviour on and off the field
- Encourage fair play and good sportsmanship.
- Encourage respect across age groups whatever a players' ability.

The Basics - Do's and Don'ts:

- Don't forget that safety is the club's first consideration
- Do remember that children play rugby for fun
- Do remember they are here for their enjoyment - not yours
- Do give everyone a fair crack of the whip
- Do train all players according to their abilities and in accordance with SRU Coaching Guidelines.
- Don't force players to do things they do not want to do

Coaching and Playing: Coaches will ensure they take due care in:

- The avoidance of overplaying of players
- Using a squad system
- Ensuring development comes first, winning second
- When coaching contact skills ensure safety first
- Ensure players overall welfare is considered and if a coaching team feel a player is not fit to partake in an activity reserve the right to withdraw the player for their own safety and that of others.
- Never allowing injured players to train or play
- Ensure all equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate
- Never coach law violations
- Never overtly criticising players - their confidence is paramount.

Useful Information for Players and Parents / Carers

Coaches

If you have any questions relating to any aspect of the Mini Section, it might be sensible to speak in the first instance to the relevant coach for your child's year but feel free to ask any of the coaches.

All Coaches have current SRU Coaching certification.

Several of the years have several coaches so we are not listing all of them. The key contact at each age group is as follows but please get to know all your coaches.

Team	Lead Coach
P1	Gordon Muir
P2	Mark Ferguson
P3	Chris Kelly
P4	Stewart MacLeod
P5	Mark Osborne
P6	Sammy McKee
P7	Gordon Cairns

We are always glad to welcome new coaches and helpers. Most of the coaches are enthusiastic (!) parents who have volunteered to help. Sometimes we had to be asked twice before we realised that we had volunteered!

Seriously though, no one should be deterred. Some of us have played rugby seriously before but others have not. Enthusiasm and patience are the keys. We share ideas and methods. We will organise training for new coaches (resulting in SRU qualification) to teach us drills to help the youngsters. The more adults we have helping the easier it is for everyone. Speak to any of the coaches if you are tempted to help.

At matches, too, any spare hands to help with kit bags, water bottles are appreciated.

Training

There are a few **Training Sessions** on Sundays. Training session will begin at 11:00 am so we ask you to have the players down at about 10:45 so that we can begin promptly. The main **Training Sessions** will take place on Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:00. The players generally train in their age groups. After the warm up they will take part in practice drills to learn the skills of passing, tackling etc. Training generally concludes with a game between the players. Finally, for this season we are introducing the Youth Development Scheme (YDS) whereby we'll offer additional training on Mondays and Fridays run by some of our senior Youth Players who will be developed as coaches and managed by our Club Development Officer, Dougie Thompson. More details will be released at the start of the season.

Since the development of our Indoor Training Centre, we never have to cancel training due to bad weather. However we do have to get 7 age groups through one

building, which means some degree of re-organisation of times. For example two groups at 10:00am on a Sunday morning, 2 more at 11:00am and so on. Therefore there will potentially be some change to normal times in these circumstances and we'll endeavour to give you as much notice as possible.

Home Games will kick off at 11:00am on a Sunday. We shall notify the players and try to keep you posted as well. These involve a visit from one or more Clubs to play competitively against Linlithgow and each other. Home Games are likely to end later than Training Sessions as we try to accommodate as many games as possible. We provide hospitality to our visitors and our own players at the end of the session. Parents will be expected to help out with the catering side of hosting visiting clubs on a rota basis between age groups.

Away Games are the reverse of the above. Linlithgow becomes one of the visiting Clubs. Players will leave from the Rugby Club and we shall notify you and the players of the times. Most away games have no squad size limitations, but on the rare occasion, depending upon the arrangements being made by the host Club, we might be able to take only some of the players in any year

Tournaments are similar to Away Games except that generally six or eight Clubs are involved in a structured competition. Games will be organised to produce a winner with a trophy and medals awarded. Clubs are almost always restricted to one representative team and the number in the squad will also be restricted. Linlithgow hosts its Tournament in October. We shall tell you more about it nearer the time.

Whether we are home or away, parents are always welcome to come and watch the players in action.

Micros (P1 to P3)

Our Micros section enables younger players (P1, P2 and P3) to be introduced to the game gently. There is no tackling at this age level. The players learn to run and pass and play touch rugby. We think this helps prepare them for the transition to tackling and proper contact at P4. The youngsters appear to have good fun. The Micros will usually (but not always) be at the Club even if the rest of the Section is away. It is also the aim to arrange some games through the season against other clubs with Micros sections.

Minis (P4 to P7)

Our Mini section is to continue each player's development, first by introducing the concept of contact & tackling progressing this up to a form of scrummaging. The emphasis is on learning through having fun at all times.

Rugby Kit

Training Kit:

The old adage 'there's no such thing as inappropriate weather, just inappropriate clothing' applies to kit for training.

Players should wear a sports top, shorts or tracksuit bottoms and thick socks together with rugby/football boots. Trainers might be suitable for hard grounds. In colder weather

some form of tracksuit and a woolly hat is advisable. For home and away games and tournaments, the wearing of Club badged black shorts and socks is preferred.

The Club can supply training tops/shorts socks and various styles of tracksuit and training clothing. An order form is included in the booklet.

During the muddier winter games, it would be helpful if you could ensure players have dry clothes into which they can change especially for travelling the car.

Shoulder pads and protective headgear can be worn at the player's discretion. This should be IBR approved equipment. Gum shields on the other hand are mandatory for all players.

We prefer players not to play in hooded tops; the hooded top is too inviting a target for other players to resist grabbing and jerk the person back at the neck! Equally please avoid zips as much as possible.

We can often help with re-cycled kit or merchandising through the Club. Speak to the parent helpers.

Protective Equipment:

Protective Wear.

Many parents (and grandparents) worry about their child being hurt playing rugby. There is no getting away from the fact that rugby is a physical contact game and bumps and bashes are to be expected. Over recent years there has been an increase in the popularity of different kinds of protective wear for rugby. These fall into two categories; protection for the head and protection for the body.

Head Protection.

Many players now wear padded head guards. Given scrums are not part of the game at this level until P6 & 7, and ruck and mauls are limited, there's little danger of your child getting 'cauliflower ears' at this stage. Some kids wear head guards because they help keep the head warmer on a cold day, others because it helps their confidence going into contact.

Body Protection.

There are a number of junior body protection vests on the market offering various levels of padding, support and protection. Our view as coaches is that these are not necessary at this level of rugby. We are also concerned that the wearing of such protection could give some kids a feeling of invincibility and thus could actually lead to them getting hurt.

Gum Shields.

These are **essential** for all ages and for all training and games. Junior guards are available from most sports shops, on-line rugby stores and even some supermarkets.

The "Best" Protection

In our opinion the best "protection" against getting hurt in this age group is good training, good technique and good skill levels. The children are instructed in a safe environment where they can learn how to play so as to stay safe, and how to tackle so they don't get

hurt etc. Nevertheless, as stated above it is a physical game and bumps and bruises are to be expected.

Boot studs

There has been confusion in recent years about which studs or blades are acceptable on boots. This decision is now left to the referees who should always check studs before a game. They will decide if any studs are unsafe.

Weather Permitting

Previously we used to say that the most common question we are asked and the most difficult to answer was “when will the rugby be cancelled?” It depends upon the severity of the weather, the state of the ground and the judgment of the coaches. All three components are variable!

The good news now is that we’ll never have to cancel training due to our Indoor Training Centre. Even on weekends when we won’t be able to play matches against other clubs (either home or away) we’ll still be able to train indoors. This is significant for a club of our size and has already shown to have benefits to our players.

Transport

For Away Games and Tournaments we ask parents to transport their own children or make arrangements with friends if they have room.

Parking

Our neighbours at Lower Mains Park have raised with us a legitimate source of annoyance for them when access to their driveways is blocked or parked cars make it difficult, even dangerous, for them to exit on to Mains Road. The problem occurs primarily on training evenings and Sunday home games.

We are asking parents of our youth players to drop off and pick up players at the Club House. During the season, there will be coffee and other refreshments available in the Club House on Wednesdays and Sundays so feel free to pop in. **Please do not use the square at Lower Mains Park as a car park and do not use it as a drop off point.**

Linlithgow Academy is available on Sundays for parking. So you could drop your youngster off and take the car round there. It is not far. But if you are parking in the vicinity of the Club, please think of our neighbours and others in the local community. We want to continue ourselves to be good neighbours.

Food & Hospitality

As described above we provide food to all players at the end of a Home Game. This is cooked and served by volunteer parents. The pattern has been for the parents of a year to be “selected” to handle each Home Game. This spreads the load throughout the whole Section. We know that you will want to see the games so we hope that, by sharing the load in this way – and by having lots of helpers – we can arrange things to make this easy.

For our own Home Tournament parents from the whole Section are asked. It is all hands on deck.

It is not only pride in Linlithgow that leads us to tell you that our hospitality ranks with the best we come across. Nevertheless players will receive a snack at Away Games and Tournaments. You might also want to give players travelling to Away Games a snack and, especially, a drink. It can be a long day. Most Clubs also sell sweets and drinks after the game.

A cup of juice will be available to each player at the end of Sunday Home Practices. Sweets will also be on sale after Sunday Practice.

Administration

All players should be registered with the Mini Section and should be members of the Rugby Club either as junior members or through family membership. Even if you join the Club through the Membership Secretary, **please** ensure that we have a completed registration form for each player. It gives us details we need e.g. date of birth and telephone number and, importantly, gives you a chance to tell us about any medical conditions. **Membership fees should be paid as soon as possible.**

Medical Conditions

Please ensure that the coaches know of any medical conditions, which could affect the child during a mini rugby session. If the child has taken a knock during the week, which might affect him or her, please tell the coach. If there is any doubt about a player's fitness to play we would prefer not to take a chance and would let the player rest.

Lost Property

You would be surprised how much clothing and other items are left behind each week. We try to have a last-minute "sweep" of the changing rooms home or away. We have a "lost property" box, which we lock away during the week. If your child has lost something, speak to the relevant coach.

It would reduce the problem of lost property if you could label all boots and clothing. It will also reduce worry if players could leave their watch at home during mini rugby sessions.

Your Involvement

You will by now have seen that Mini and Micro Rugby relies a great deal upon the parents of the players for its success. We are grateful to all of you for the efforts we ask of you.

Even if you do not feel able to help with the coaching, transport, catering etc but can think of some way you might feel able to contribute to the success of Mini & Micro Rugby at Linlithgow, please let us know. Any ideas or suggestions that will improve the organisation and make it more fun for the youngsters - or even the coaches and parents - will be gratefully received.

And if you want more information about Linlithgow Rugby Club, the playing side or the social side, let us know. If we cannot help we shall try to put you in touch with someone who can. Any Club is only as effective as its members and the Micro and Mini members have a part to play as well.

Here's to an enjoyable and successful season!

Micro Rugby - Primary 1 to Primary 3

WHO IS TOUCH / TAG RUGBY SUITABLE FOR?

It is the policy of Scottish Rugby that children can begin their introduction to training and playing contact rugby from the age that they enter their fourth year of primary school. Children between Primary 1 and Primary 3 should participate in non-contact versions of the game such as TOUCH or TAG rugby, focussing on the development of basic movement and co-ordination skills.

Further information on what to prioritise at each age and stage of a child and young person's development in rugby is available in Scottish Rugby's Long Term Player Development strategy, which is available from the Are You Ready to Play Rugby? pages of www.scottishrugby.org

There are no formalised set of Laws for Rugby at the P1 to P3 stage but all clubs will play games based on the rules below, although there may be some minor local interpretations. At this stage, in an effort to let the game flow and give the players confidence, the referee may overlook minor knock-ons and forward passes.

PLAYING NUMBERS

Games may only proceed with even numbers, up to a maximum of 15 players per team. Balance players and ability where possible. All squad players should play equal game time. There will be one **Game Coach** on the pitch who will apply the laws of the game.

PITCH SIZE This should be appropriate for the playing numbers, age and ability.

BALL SIZE This should be appropriate for the players' ages.

KICK OFF AND RESTARTS

- (1) Tap and pass at the start, at half time and after scores and infringements.
- (2) The opposition team must always be 5m from the mark.

SCORING: Try = 1 point

KICKING: No kicking is allowed.

TOUCH: Restart with a tap and pass to non-offending team. The opposition must be 5 metres back.

OPEN PLAY

1. Touch rugby is non-contact;
2. Only the ball carrier can be touched;
3. If a player is touched below the shoulders with two hands by an opponent, he/she must pass within 3 seconds;
4. A team will have a maximum of six touches to score before losing possession to the opposition team (referees will call the number of each touch 'Touch One,' 'Touch Two' and so on);
5. A team will lose possession of the ball if a player or the ball goes over the touchline, if they have used up their six touches or if the ball is passed forward or knocked forward.

Mini Rugby - Primary 4 to Primary 5

The game at P4 and P5 is played according to the IRB under-19 law variations, with the exception of the following:

PLAYING NUMBERS

6 maximum. Games must proceed with even numbers. Balance players and ability where possible. All squad players must play a minimum of 10 minutes.

PITCH SIZE: 35m x 35m

BALL SIZE: Size 3

KICK OFF AND RESTARTS

1. Tap and pass at the start, at half time and after scores and infringements.
2. The opposition team must always be 5m from the mark.
3. Neither team may move before the ball leaves the first player's hand - the first receiver must pass the ball immediately.
4. There must be no cavalry charge - a forward charge by a single player or line of attacking players, all a metre or two apart. Sanction: tap and pass to the non-offending team.

SCORING Try = 1 point

SCRUMS: Scrums are not permitted. Tap and pass should be used for all infringements.

TOUCH: No line-outs. Tap and pass from where the ball crossed the touchline.

KICKING: No kicking is allowed.

OPEN PLAY

1. The ball must emerge from rucks within 5 seconds. Sanction: tap and pass to the team that did not take the ball into the ruck.
2. As per the full laws, tackled players must pass, play or release the ball and move away immediately.
3. All tackles must be below the waist and defending players are not allowed to target the ball or prevent it from being played. Sanction: tap and pass.
4. Defending players can contest the ball once the tackle is complete.

BALL CONTROL: The ball must be held in two hands at all times.

HAND OFF: No hand off is permitted. Sanction: tap and pass.

GAME COACH

There will be one game coach on the pitch who will apply the laws of the game (no other adults should be on the pitch).

TIME: The maximum game time is 2 x 10 minutes.

During festivals shorter games may be played but no player should play a total of more than 50 minutes.

Mini Rugby - Primary 6 Rugby

The game at P6 is played according to the IRB under-19 law variations, with the exception of the following:

PLAYING NUMBERS: Games must proceed with even numbers. 8 players per team. Exception: schools and clubs with large numbers may play either 10 or 13-a-side as long as both teams agree and P6 law variations still apply. All squad players must play a minimum of 15 minutes.

PITCH SIZE: 70m x 35m

BALL SIZE: Size 3 or size 4

KICK OFF AND RESTARTS

1. Tap and pass at the start, at half time and after scores and infringements.
2. The opposition team must always be 5m from the mark.
3. Neither team may move before the ball leaves the first player's hands the first receiver must pass the ball immediately.
4. There must be no cavalry charge - a forward charge by a single player or line of attacking players, all a metre or two apart. Sanction: tap and pass to the non-offending team.

SCORING: Try = 1 point

SCRUMS

- Scrums should be formed from the nearest available players:
8 players per team. Scrum size: 3 players (formation 3)
10 players per team. Scrum size: 5 players (formation 3: 2)
13 players per team. Scrum size: 6 players (formation 3: 2: 1)
- No pushing or wheeling.
- Both hookers should strike.
- Scrum half must pass, then at least one further pass must be made before a try can be scored.
- The opposition scrum half must remain at the midline and allow an immediate pass.

TOUCH: No line-outs. Restart the game with a tap and pass from where the ball crossed the touchline.

KICKING: Kicking is only allowed within 5m of kicker's goal line.

OPEN PLAY

1. The ball must emerge from rucks within 5 seconds. Penalty: tap and pass to the team that did not take the ball into the ruck.
2. A pile-up must be stopped immediately and a scrum awarded to the side going forward.
3. As per the full laws, tackled players must pass, play or release the ball and move away immediately.
4. All tackles must be below the waist and defending players are not allowed to target the ball or prevent it from being played. Sanction: tap and pass.
5. Defending players can contest the ball once the tackle is complete.

BALL CONTROL: The ball must be held in two hands at all times.

HAND OFF: No hand off is permitted. Sanction: tap and pass.

GAME COACH: There will be one game coach on the pitch who will apply the laws of the game (no other adults should be on the pitch).

TIME: The maximum game time is 2 x 15 minutes. During festivals shorter games may be played but no player should play a total of more than 60 minutes.

Mini Rugby - Primary 7 Rugby

The game at P7 is played according to the IRB under-19 law variations, with the exception of the following:

PLAYING NUMBERS: Games must proceed with even numbers. 10 players per team - 5 forwards and 5 backs. Exception: schools and clubs with large numbers may play up to 13-a-side (6 forwards, 7 backs) as long as both teams agree and P7 law variations still apply. All squad players must play a minimum of 20 minutes.

PITCH SIZE: 70m x 45m

BALL SIZE: Size 3 or size 4

SCORING: Try - 1 point

KICK OFF AND RESTARTS

1. Tap and pass at the start, at half time and after scores and infringements.
2. The opposition team must always be 5m from the mark.
3. Neither team may move before the ball leaves the first player's hands the first receiver must pass the ball immediately.
4. There must be no cavalry charge _ a forward charge by a single player or line of attacking players, all a metre or two apart. Sanction: tap and pass to the non offending team.

SCRUMS

1. Scrum formation to be 3:2. (exception: 3: 2: 1).
2. No pushing or wheeling.
3. Both hookers should strike.
4. Scrum half must pass, then at least one further pass must be made before a try can be scored.
5. The opposition scrum half must remain at the midline and allow an immediate pass.

TOUCH

1. The line-out should start 3m from touchline.
2. After the line-out, two passes must be made before a try can be scored.
3. Line-outs are not to be contested. There is to be no line-out supporting or lifting at this level.
4. The line-out ends when the ball or the player carrying it leaves the lineout.

KICKING: Kicking is only allowed within 5m of the kicker's goal line.

OPEN PLAY

1. The ball must emerge from rucks within 5 seconds.
Sanction: tap and pass to the team who did not take it into the ruck.
2. A pile-up must be stopped immediately and a scrum awarded to the side going forward.
3. As per the full laws, tackled players must pass, play or release the ball and move away immediately.
4. All tackles must be below the waist and defending players cannot prevent the ball from being played. Sanction: tap and pass.
5. Defending players can contest the ball once the tackle is complete.

BALL CONTROL

The ball must be held in two hands at all times.

HAND OFF

No hand off is permitted. Sanction: tap and pass.

GAME COACH

There will be one game coach on the pitch who will apply the laws of the game (no other adults should be on the pitch).

TIME

The maximum game time is 2 x 20 minutes. During festivals shorter games may be played but no player should play a total of more than 60 minutes.