

LINLITHGOW RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

SCHOOL 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.

LINLITHGOW RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Introduction to School Rugby at Linlithgow Rugby Club

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

For many years Linlithgow has had a set-up for youth rugby, which was one of the first in Scotland and extremely productive. Linlithgow Academy and Linlithgow RFC work together in partnership to bring club and school rugby together within a single structure to ensure that children are able to play rugby throughout their secondary schooling. 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 aim to field Academy / Club teams each week teams at S1, S2, S3, U16 and First XV, as well as setting up a regular girls 7s team. Boys coached by the Club can and do play for the Academy teams on Saturdays but there are restrictions on who can play for the Academy in the national Cup Competition (Brewin Dolphin).

These teams 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!

Kenny Ewing
Director of School 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.

Organisation of the Season

Youth Rugby takes place from August to March. There is a full schedule of school games for nearly every Saturday throughout the season, including the School of Rugby Eastern League.

There is also a Cup competition (Brewin Dolphin) for the school at two age groups, the School First XV (U18s) and the U16 side. The details of this competition are not known at the time of going to print and will be communicated separately. These are however played midweek and agreement on pupil release is done in conjunction with the schools should this be required. There can be other games arranged on an ad hoc basis against visiting schools and clubs

Saturday home games are played either at the Academy (usually S1 only), Kettilstoun (usually S2) or Mains Park. Sunday home games will generally be at Mains Park but there are occasions when we might use the pitch at Kettilstoun.

Transport

For away games on Saturday or Sunday, a bus/minibus will often be organised and this will leave from and return to Linlithgow RFC. At other times we will ask parents for help with travel by car.

Please note that when we collect players' membership fees, we also collect a school bus levy as a contribution to the costs of hiring the buses on a Saturday.

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

Training

Training for the School First XV pool (and therefore also the U16 players) takes place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The other teams train on Wednesday evenings.

All training takes place at Mains Park, including our Indoor Training Centre when the pitches are unplayable due to bad weather. Since the development of our ITC, we never have to cancel training – a fantastic statement for a club of our size. However we do have to get a number of age groups through one building, which means some degree of re-organisation of times. 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.

Coaches

If you have any questions relating to any aspect of the School 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
S1	Kirk Richardson
S2	Iain McLean
S3	Neil Wilson
U16	Kenny Ewing
1st XV	Dougie Thomson

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.

Contact

If you have an email address, it is worth making sure we know as the Club circulates a weekly electronic update providing information. You will also find the Club web site an invaluable source of information. The web site is at www.rugby.linlithgow.com

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

We also operate a dress code for players and ask that they wear smart trousers (black/dark grey), smart shoes, shirt and tie (either School or Rugby Club) to all games.

Kit

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 will always check studs before a

game. He will decide if any studs are unsafe. Scrum caps and shoulder pads should also be IRB approved with the kite mark.

Washing

Players will be provided with shirts to wear and the Club will arrange for them to be washed. Players should also wear black shorts and black/red socks. Shorts and socks are available to purchase through the Club. Speak to your relevant coaches if this is required.

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. 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 or 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.

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.

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 weekend 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 training nights 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 Saturdays and 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

It is not usual to provide food following school games except in three circumstances. The first is when we feel that the length of the journey for the visiting school means that the players need some refreshment. The second is when we are reciprocating hospitality that is provided to our visiting teams by the school (for this custom and practice has built over the years). The third is midweek Cup games unless the visiting team has come only a short distance.

Parents will be asked to help with the hospitality, either by providing food or helping to serve it. Generally we shall provide flyers to the home players asking you to provide each player with some food item. These are varied from player to player. We also then need a couple of volunteers to help set the food out for the teams and serve up some juice.

The games for U15 and U16 sides on Sundays are different. We would ask that you are prepared to group together and to buy and cook some pasta and sauce for the teams. There are not many games and if there are enough volunteers then this work will be spread. The age group coaches will co-ordinate this with the parents.

It is not only pride in Linlithgow that leads us to tell you that our hospitality ranks with the best we come across and we have an excellent reputation among Schools and Clubs for it. In recent seasons the number of volunteers has declined and we ask you to step forward to take on these catering tasks.

Administration

All players should be registered with the School 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 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.

Youth Dinner

The above usually takes place in the Club House on a Wednesday evening in March. It is for players and their coaches from S1 to S6, together with guests, including a principal guest, usually a former International or current professional player. A three-course meal is served and the principal guest makes a speech.

Afterwards the principal guest presents awards to the Players’ Player and Coaches’ Player of each team. The Team of the Year also receives an award. The voting for this is organised by the coaches. Tickets for the event go on sale about a month before the Dinner.

District Game & Pathways

Edinburgh District runs teams at U16 level. These play intra-district games at the beginning of the season. Linlithgow is in a district that also includes several other Clubs who play under the banner of the Edinburgh Western Chargers.

Usually there will be a couple of sessions for the S2s halfway through the season where they will be introduced to the Edinburgh coaches and undergo skills testing. There are, however, no games at S2 level. Nominations for Pathways are skill-based with the age group coaches and Club Development Officer participating in nomination and selection.

There is a parallel process for the U16s, although there is an easier starting point, i.e. those that in a previous season were U15 who attended skills camps. It is quite possible, however, for a player who did not play in the District U15 side to be nominated for, selected for and flourish in the following season’s U16 side.

Your Involvement

You will by now have seen that School 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 School 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 School members have a part to play as well.

Here’s to an enjoyable and successful season!