



Principles of Inclusion

Shrewsbury RUFC is an all-inclusive rugby club. It is our intention at a mini and junior level to engage with children of all backgrounds and sporting ability, to introduce them to the sport of Rugby and to coach and encourage their development within the sport.

It is our prime purpose to ensure that the players enjoy themselves in a safe playing environment, and that all kids get equal opportunity to develop their playing skills. It is these principles that will support a strong club in the future, with maximum numbers of players coming through the club.

SRUFC does not stream the age group squads based on ability. This is in line with best practice from the guidance documentation - This is outlined in italics below. More details on the Age Grade Rugby can be found on this link - englandrugby.com/AgeGradeGuidance

“The streaming of players within an age group into graded squads (such as A and B teams) based on perceived ability is an issue. The RFU believes that this, especially at primary school ages, is not inclusive or within the game’s ethos and values.

Every effort should be made to ensure that all children and young people are provided with equal opportunities to play, train and develop alongside their peers in an open and transparent manner.

Some coaches are too quick to substitute good coaching and teamwork development for streaming of players. This does not mean that there should be no differentiation based on merit, attendance and development, but does mean that players being given equal opportunities to play and compete should be prioritised.”

There are however circumstances at a Junior level where it is appropriate to select teams on ability where fixtures are being competed.

This policy sets out how SRUFC will make team selections at a Mini and Junior level, taking into consideration our aspiration to be an all-inclusive club.

Safety Non-Selection

The Lead Coach is responsible for ensuring the safety of players at matches. It is entirely the responsibility of the Lead Coach (or appropriate delegate), or other club official, to decide if a player hasn’t the experience to play in a match environment, or in a specific playing position on the pitch. In these circumstances the Lead Coach will explain this decision to the player and their parents/guardians, together with providing a coaching plan to get the player to a standard where it will be safe for them to compete within a reasonable time period.

MINI SECTION

Friendly Matches Selection

It is the Lead Coach’s responsibility to make team selections for friendly matches, both home and away. Working with their Team Manager, an appropriate number of players should be selected for matches, that aligns to expected numbers from the opposition. Wherever possible the Lead Coach or Manager should contact the opposition to confirm our approach to team selection.

The Lead Coach should make all reasonable endeavours to provide all the age group squad with equal levels of match play through the season, to align with the principles of inclusion as outlined above. It is expected that players will be given the *opportunity* to attend an equal number of friendly matches (it is up to players and their parents whether they wish to attend), and during the matches to have broadly equal time on the pitch, taking into consideration planned and unplanned substitution.

Festival Selection

It is the Lead Coach’s responsibility to make team selections for festivals. Working with their Team Manager, sufficient festivals should be entered to provide all players the opportunity to play at least one, and preferably two festivals.



It is expected that players will be given the *opportunity* to attend an equal number of festivals (it is up to players and their parents whether they wish to attend), and during the matches to have broadly equal time on the pitch, taking into consideration planned and unplanned substitution.

Selection of team numbers should be appropriate to the age group and festival rules – it is unlikely that a full age group squad should be selected for a festival. A team plus substitutes is preferable. Selection should be made on the principles of inclusion as outlined above.

There are no circumstances where non-competitive festivals should be fielded with an 'A' or 'B' team.

JUNIOR SECTION

The principles of inclusion are supported by the Junior Section and over the course of the season the Lead Coach shall endeavour to provide equal opportunity for player development and game play.

It is noted at a Junior level that there is greater emphasis on competitive play. It is therefore entirely the Lead Coach's responsibility to make team selections appropriate to the fixture, based on player safety, the standard of the opposition, and the competitive nature of the fixture. Wherever possible the Lead Coach or Manager should contact the opposition to confirm our approach to team selection.

Specifically, there are occasions where competitive festivals and tournaments are hosted at the Junior age group. It is the Lead Coach's responsibility to decide whether to field a competitive team in such circumstances. In the event the Lead Coach does decide to field a competitive team (rather than a mixed ability team) then this decision will be made well in advance and communicated accordingly to the age group squad and their parents/guardians.

Selection of team numbers should be appropriate to the age group and festival rules – it is unlikely that a full age group squad should be selected for a festival. A team plus substitutes is preferable. Selection shall be at the Lead Coach's discretion.

COMMITTEE DECISION IS FINAL

In the event that there is any concerns regarding the policy or its application, then the concern should be raised with the Executive Committee via the Team Manager or a member of the Mini and Junior Committee, and the committee shall consider the concern and revert accordingly.

James Russell

Chairman – SRUFC Mini and Junior