



# Eastern Counties Rugby Union

## SCHOOL OF RUGBY PROTOCOL

### 2011/12 SEASON



#### Introduction

**The School of Rugby (SoR) programme aims to identify and develop young players and athletes who have the potential to play at the elite levels of the game in England.**

It provides a route for players into the England Rugby Academy system through the Elite Player Development Group (EPDG). The SoR provides an opportunity to identify emerging talent at ages 13-16, from Eastern Counties age group squads and an exit route for those players who do not continue to meet the SoR criteria.

The focus of the SoR is to develop core technical skills together with tactical appreciation of the game. Players will also be educated on the key lifestyle, fitness and mental components which will help them reach the highest levels of performance.

The Eastern Counties SoR also provides suitable players with one possible entry routes to the Elite Player Development Groups of Leicester Tigers and Northampton Saints, as well as the opportunity to be selected for Eastern Counties representative teams at U14, U15 and U16 level.

The Implementation and Operation of the School of Rugby is in accordance with the instructions and guidance provided by the RFU.

The dates for all ECRU SoR programme are integrated into the Eastern Counties Youth Structured Season and the London Division CB programme.

#### Under 13

Selection at U13 takes place in January of the U13 season. All ECRU member clubs and affiliated schools are invited to nominate players using a standard form; it is expected to be unlikely that a school or club would have more than two players of the standard necessary for assessment. Assessment is 'game based' and looks for athletic ability and potential in addition to rugby skills and uses specific criteria as set out by the RFU .

Players unable to participate in the assessment ( for example through injury ) may be invited to attend one session for assessment at a later date although this should be avoided wherever possible.

A squad of between 40 and 50 will be selected with a coach to player ratio of one to between eight and ten. It would be unusual for a player to be released from the SoR during the season.

The nine core sessions of the SoR curriculum are delivered over three Sundays ( three sessions per Sunday ) at three venues, one in each of the sub-counties.

EPDG coaches are invited to participate in the selection process and players may be invited from SoR to attend EPDG's. Players who are invited to attend SoR will continue to participate in the SoR programme.

At the end of the final session all players are then released from SoR in order to be eligible for selection for their sub-county squads in the following season.

The ECRU SoR website has more details on the specific U13 programme at;  
<http://www.ecrfu.com/playing/school-of-rugby/u13s>

### **Under 14**

The core of the squad is based on the players from Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk that will be selected during the U14 season sub-county programme; ECRU SoR coaches will watch the sub-county games for selection and a squad of between 30 and 40 players will be invited. If there is a genuinely exceptional reason why a player cannot participate in the sub-county programme ( e.g. serious injury or a recent arrival in the area ) then a specific nomination can be made to the SoR Manager for consideration.

The nine core sessions of the SoR curriculum are delivered between February and April over four Wednesday evenings held at one central club location, and one residential weekend.

A CB squad will be selected from this SoR squad and ECRU CB U14 teams will play competitive fixtures against other London & SE Division sides in line with the agreed programme.

At the end of the final session players are either retained for the U15 season, or released with a player development plan in order to be able to participate in the sub-county programme (see note 1 below).

The ECRU SoR website has more details on the specific U14 programme at;  
<http://www.ecrfu.com/playing/youth/u14s>

### **Under 15**

The core of the squad will be based on the previous season's U14 squad. Outstanding players from the sub-county U15 programme will also be considered in the late Autumn in consultation with their coaches from Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The Northampton Saints and Leicester Tigers Elite Player Development Groups are also important gateways. The squad will be between 30 and 35 players.

The nine core sessions of the SoR curriculum are delivered between February and April over four Wednesday evenings held at one central club location, and one residential weekend.

A CB squad will be selected from this SoR squad and ECRU CB U15 teams will play competitive fixtures against other London & S E Division sides in line with the agreed programme.

At the end of the final session players are either retained for the U16 season, or released with a player development plan in order to be able to participate in the sub-county programme (see note 1 below).

The ECRU SoR website has more details on the specific U15 programme at;  
<http://www.ecrfu.com/playing/youth/u15s>

### **Under 16**

The core of the squad will be based on the previous season's U15 squad. The most promising players from the sub-county U16 programme will be given the opportunity to play as part of Barbarians side in two matches against the SoR squads from which exceptional players may be invited to join the SoR. The Northampton Saints and Leicester Tigers Elite Player Development Groups are also important gateways. The squad will be between 30 and 35 players.

The nine core sessions of the SoR curriculum are delivered between September and November over five Sundays and two Wednesday evenings held at central club and school locations.

A CB squad will be selected from this SoR squad and ECRU CB U16 teams will play competitive 'graded' fixtures against other London & S E Division sides in line with the agreed programme.

At the end of the final session all players are released from SoR. Those who are selected for London Division trials may go on to represent London Division U16 and even England U16.

All players are encouraged to remain within the Eastern Counties playing programme and a formal 'handover' is facilitated to the U17 squad ( see below ) .

The ECRU SoR website has more details on the specific U16 programme at;  
<http://www.ecrfu.com/playing/youth/u16s>

### **Sub-County U15 and U16 Programme**

The sub-county programme is a key foundation of the Eastern Counties SoR programme; at U14 it is the key entry point to SoR, at U15 it offers both a release pathway and an entry pathway. At U16 the 'Barbarians' squad is a key entry route.

*Note 1 U15 and U16 players named in the ECRU SoR or EPDG squads MAY NOT ordinarily take part in the sub-county programme. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. a player recovering from a long injury or attending a 'non-rugby playing' school, permission to play for a sub-county may be requested from the SoR Manager AND the relevant EPDG coach if appropriate.*

### **Under 17**

The U17 ECRU CB squad does not form part of the School of Rugby Programme but SoR U16 players are strongly encouraged to aim for a place in the squad which forms the next stage on the player performance pathway.

Details of the U17 handover are shown on the U16 website page.

## **Girls Rugby**

A protocol covering the inclusion of girls rugby at U15 level into School of Rugby is currently being developed.

## **Coaching at School of Rugby**

The programme also provides opportunities to identify and develop talented coaches within Eastern Counties. The SoR Manager liaises closely with the RFU London North Coach and Player Development Manager and the Eastern Counties Coaching Committee to appoint coaches who fulfil the required criteria. A formal selection process takes place each season and interested coaches should contact the SoR Manager.

Members of the Eastern Counties Coaching Association are very welcome to attend and observe any SoR training session. For details of how to join the Coaching Association please go to : <http://www.ecrfu-coaching.com/>



**Have you joined our Coach Association?  
It's free, why not join now at**

**<http://www.ecrfu-coaching.com/>**

