



Eastern Counties Rugby Union Player Movement Protocol

Introduction

The Eastern Counties Rugby Union exists primarily to promote the effective management, development and enjoyment of the game of Rugby Football for all existing and potential participants at all age levels within the area for which it has governance.

This involves supporting and promoting the game at all age levels ensuring that those players who wish to develop their skills are provided with the opportunities to do so. Such an approach will, out of necessity, require the development of training schemes for all coaches at various levels as well as the provision of opportunities for players and coaches alike to progress to higher skill levels – Player Performance Development Squads (Elite), County Rugby Matches at the various age levels, and Coaching Development at different levels are among some of the provisions we currently make.

It is generally recognized that the development of better skills, both playing and coaching are fundamentally inter-related and it is, therefore, important that both coaches and players who wish to develop their skills be exposed to each other as well as progressively higher levels of competition.

It is equally recognized that for some players and coaches there may be no wish to develop their skills to a higher level than that at which they currently operate – this is perfectly acceptable as an approach as long as enjoyment of the game is not being compromised or the potential of players is not being developmentally damaged where there is a wish on their part to improve.

As far as players who qualify to play adult rugby are concerned (i.e., 17 years of age for all those except Front Row Forwards, when it is 18 years of age), it is perfectly acceptable, should they wish, to transfer to a team of higher ability in order to improve their skills – such transfers should be conducted responsibly and considerately between the management of the receiving and sending clubs.

It is also recognized that players may wish to move between clubs either to progress their rugby or play with friends. This is a fact of life and cannot be legislated for; we do, however, request that clubs follow the same protocols.

For players who do not qualify to play adult rugby we needed to agree a Protocol to which we can all subscribe since this has been the source of some conflict over the years. It is, for this reason, that the Eastern Counties Rugby Football Union agreed the following Protocol in the real hope it can be used as the template that will allow the more effective management, development, and enjoyment of rugby football within the area over which it has governance. **This Protocol is designed to apply to all players from mini up to the age at which they qualify for adult rugby – observations are, however, made in the introduction as to how adult player movements should be appropriately and courteously managed between clubs.**

Protocol

1. All players must, should they so wish, be allowed to develop their skills by being exposed to better coaches, and better competition.
2. Where players, should they so wish, decide to receive additional and / or better coaching then this should be allowed and encouraged without criticism, even if this coaching is not being provided from the parent club. Equally, the player(s) are to be encouraged to return to their parent club to play club rugby.
3. Where players wish to transfer clubs and are under the age of 18 this must always be with the consent of both the player and his / her parents. This must always involve responsible communication between the receiving and sending clubs.
4. Notification of transfer to the Eastern Counties registrar MUST be made via the relevant Norfolk/Suffolk/Cambridgeshire RDP Chairman.

5. Wherever possible, players in the EPDG squads are to be encouraged and allowed to play for their Eastern Counties side at their appropriate age level.
6. The EPDG should always notify the Clubs of those players who have been both selected for as well as de-selected from the squads.
7. If any club or parent considers that inappropriate approaches have been made to players to transfer clubs, or for any other reason, these matters should always be brought to the attention of the relevant Norfolk/Suffolk/ Cambridgeshire RDP Chairman for appropriate advice / action.
8. The Eastern Counties CBRDP Committee will keep this Protocol under review, and report to the ECRU General Management Committee on any developments.

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