**Colt’s Committee Ring-Fencing Policy Working Group Proposals**

The WG met on 6 May 2015 and decided to propose the below adaptations of the current ring-fencing requirements to the Colt’s Committee. Following the Colt’s Committee AGM on 5 June 2015 the paper has been updated. Below are the recommendations of the Work Group.

It should be noted that the purpose of these recommendations and the ring-fencing policy in general is to ensure that players play at the highest level of which they are capable in a safe environment that will enable them to enjoy the game of rugby and develop to their full potential as rugby players.

1. The current eight players who are ring fenced will be replaced by a percentage of players. It is suggested that the percentage be 20% of total squad numbers.
   1. Players will be ring-fenced until 31 December. If a player is chosen for representative rugby he/she will continue to be ring-fenced; however if not chosen they may be removed from being ring-fenced
   2. All representative players will be automatically ring-fenced and the percentage should be considered a minimum not a maximum
   3. A guideline will be issued stating (or perhaps re-stating) that players should always be played at the highest grade appropriate vis-à-vis the player’s skill even if not ring-fenced.
   4. Regular D1 and D2 players should be identified as well as ring-fenced players if playing in a lower division than they would normally
2. The Union/Colt’s Committee will agree on a standard team sheet that lists a player’s name, date of birth and (ideally) shirt number. This should be used by all clubs and be exchanged prior to the kick-off of the match ideally in time for any discussions on ring-fenced / players playing in a lower grade to be discussed
   1. The team sheet should also identify:
      1. Ring fenced players
      2. D1 players playing in a D2 match / D2 players playing in a D3 match
   2. The guideline relating to playing of players at their appropriate grade should be clearly stated on the team sheet including the statement that “Player safety is paramount and non-negotiable”
3. Any player playing down a division should be identified to the opposing coach prior to kick off. The opposing coach will need to agree to the higher grade player (or players) playing at a lower grade. Such agreement should not be unreasonably withheld and such an arrangement should be the exception not the rule.

If, in the opinion of the coaches of either team the player becomes a threat to the safety of the opposing team the player should be withdrawn, ideally at the behest of his/her coach; if not at the request of the opposition coach or as a last resort, by order of the referee

1. No player should play more than one division below their normal grade. If a player generally plays in D1 then they may (if not ring-fenced) play in D2 if required (see guideline above); likewise a D2 player may play in D3 but a D1 player may not play in D3.
2. The match day squad should be limited to 25 players. Currently such a rule is only enforced for grand finals. By applying the rule throughout the season it means that teams get used to this system

**Additional Guidelines**

1. If a player ring-fenced player plays in a lower division than normal the opposing team may request that they field a like-for-like replacement of NAG/ring-fenced and/or higher grade players playing in a lower division. For example, if a ring-fenced prop was requested to play by team A in a D2 match, then team B can request that their D1 prop be fielded as his/her direct opposite number. Such a request should be the exception and not the rule, but should not be unreasonable withheld. However, player safety must be the primary consideration in such circumstances.

In addition if a NAG, any NAG is playing in a Division 2 (or Division 3 – if this is the top team of the Club) game then the opposing team can request that they match the player or players one-for-one with a NAG of their own so as to balance up the teams. Although that matching up would ideally be position-for -position it is enough if it is number-for-number. Again, such requests should be the exception not the rule and the safety of players is the paramount consideration.

When considering such requests for higher grade players to be fielded in lower grade leagues coaches / managers should bear in mind that it may mean that a regular player from the lower grade team could miss out on playing that game; hence the above is a guideline and not enforceable unless agreed by both coaches (such agreement should not be unreasonably withheld) and should be the exception rather than the rule.

Clubs are also reminded that they main purpose of youth rugby is the development of players not winning at all costs.

1. Player Management

The World Rugby Medical Guidelines with regards to maximum daily playing time for age grade players state that a player should play a maximum of 90 minutes and players should not play two matches in any one day. This should be adhered to by the clubs.

**To: Secretaries / Chief Executive Officers of Unions and Regional Associations in Membership of World Rugby**

**AGE GRADE RUGBY PLAYERS**

The Council, at its recent Annual Meeting agreed that 90 minutes be adopted as the maximum playing time permitted in one day for Age Grade Rugby Players.

In association with the above decision the Council also agreed that Unions be requested to ensure that Unions engaging in Age Grade Rugby consider their duty of care and that all necessary safety requirements are adhered to.  
  
Yours sincerely,



**Hugh H. Penman  
Head of Council and Member Services**

http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/?subsection=22