



Developing Player Programme (DPP) FAQ's

Q – Why do we engage with Under 13's as most academic evidence would suggest starting later?

A – Academics and practitioners agree that talent identification becomes more efficient with age; but talent development benefits everybody, at every age. Rugby should continue to encourage both early engagement *and* late specialisation in the sport whilst acknowledging that selection for elite training and specialisation would be more effective if delayed until after maturation, that period of maximum growth and change. It also referenced longitudinal assessment rather than one off, time restricted trials is more appropriate to identification of players for development programmes.

Building on these statements the consensus was to start the Under 13 programme later in the year and use this programme as longitudinal assessment ensuring all players were seen across a number of activities, situations and days which would enable better assessment and selection before entering the programme fully in their Under 14 year.

Q – The RFU Talent Symposium recommended “instead of talent identification, we should seek player development programmes...” however the key objectives of the programme are “To provide a first opportunity to identify those players with greatest potential” this appears to be in direct conflict of the Talent Symposium

A – The DPP is a development programme where the sole focus is on developing a player's ability to help reach their potential; it is only at the end of this development phase some players are then identified as having the most potential to move forward.

Q – Why does the programme start for under 14 – 16 in October and not September?

A – It is important to recognise the demands on players during the early months of the season when most return to rugby after a period of rest. The DPP is a complimentary programme to club and school activity not instead of and recognising this by reducing load protects the community game where the vast majority of players will remain and play. The under 16 programme also finishes in December to allow all players to access CB programmes leading into Academy activity.

Q – Why is there limited contact time in the programme of 20-30 hours?

A – The season is currently 35 weeks long, assuming that a development session is at most an hour and a half long, 30 hours equates to 20 weeks of potential engagement across the season. Once appropriate breaks have been factored in consensus is that 20 – 30 hours is appropriate on top of other rugby activity during this time.

Q – Why are summer months not factored in to develop players in better weather?

A – Children in their formative years participating in a wide number of activities is known to support late specialisation sports such as rugby. Many players involved in the DPP will access rugby throughout the 8 months of the season participating in club, school, CB and DPP activity and they should be encouraged to participate in other sports during the off season.

An Age Grade Good Practice Working Group has investigated and considered what appropriate summer activity should look like for Rugby. The Player Development Sub Committee of the RFU will review this information and the impact on DPP activity for the future and will report back in 2017.



Q – Why is it recommended that approximately 10% of players be involved in the programme?

A – In order to identify the most appropriate players to move forward in the pathway any development programme should begin with a broad base containing people of varying abilities, and who will enjoy the sport; some of whom will drop out for a mix of reasons, some of whom will go on to play professional Rugby, and a small proportion of whom eventually enter the international test Rugby arena. Based on the rough guide that in any given environment 10% of people have the potential to succeed in any given arena the DPP has used this as the basis for appropriate number involved.

Q – How do the Festivals mentioned relate to CB programmes?

A – DPP festivals are not intended to replace CB activity but to supplement the DPP programme through testing the learning in a conditioned game environment and not in a competition format. The festivals will take place towards the end of the year and include all players that have been involved in the programme and should be included into the CB playing calendar. Players not currently involved but may have been identified as potentially appropriate for the programme may also be invited to participate.

CB games are intended to support players across the CB, it is not a Regional Academy programme and players might not be engaged in DPP activity. Where appropriate, games between CB's in the Regional Academy have been structured into the National Calendar in line with the National Under 16 Strategic review.

Q – How are players nominated and how do we know what is looked for in players so we can nominate the most appropriate players?

A – Nomination for the DPP should be inclusive and all schools and clubs should be able to nominate players to be considered for the programme. Guidance will be provided by each Academy to support this process. Players can be invited into the programme or nominated at various points within the year to support late developers; further guidance for this will also be provided in the nomination form. Regulation regarding eligibility for each academy will also be in the guidance.

Assessment opportunities will be organised by the Regional Academy across the geographic patch with operational support from the CB

Stakeholder forums will also be arranged for clubs, schools and parents in each regional academy to provide further details of the player pathway and DPP programme.

Q – When and how are players released from the programme and how can the CB support them following this?

A – Most players entering the programme will remain for the whole programme, the majority of players leaving the programme are self-selecting to not be involved anymore for a variety of reasons. Where players are deemed to not be progressing or finding the environment difficult an appropriate discussion with the player, guardian or parent should take place and any appropriate information shared with school/club and where appropriate CB coaches.

All players in the DPP are still participating at their normal place of play, not just participating in the programme, and therefore initial follow up should be to find out are they still involved in club/school rugby.

Where players have left the game further follow up may be appropriate to discover why this may be and CB's may wish to take this course of action.

When the programme finishes at Under 16 a session / workshop should be delivered to highlight next steps for the player pathway activity e.g. CB programmes at Under 17/18. This will be discussed and delivered through the Regional Player Pathway Group.



Player/Parent questionnaires will also be sent out each year to support quality assurance.

Q – Who has responsibility for appointing first aid and ICIS qualified cover, who provides equipment for them to use and does payment for them come out of the overall DPP budget?

A – Ensuring that there is appropriate medical cover for all DPP sessions, including festivals, is the responsibility of the Regional Academy in liaison with the CB. The costs associated for this and any equipment is included in the overall DPP Budget. Training for coaches will be financed centrally by the RFU.

Q – Who is responsible for the Medical forms, where are they kept and who has access to them?

A – The Regional Academy (RA) will, prior to the programme starting, send out a medical screening form to ensure appropriate information about individuals is gained prior to participation in the programme. The forms will be held centrally by the RA and appropriate information passed on to medical staff on site, centre managers and lead coaches. All medical staff, coaches and managers in the programme will hold appropriate DBS checks.

Registers will be taken at each centre to monitor attendance; responsibility for this will be agreed in the Regional Player Pathway Group meeting.

Q - Is there a minimum qualification level for coaches?

A – It is recommended that coaches have a recognised rugby Level 2 or equivalent qualification, they will need to have an appropriate DBS check, completed the England Rugby Headcase coach course and attended other appropriate safety courses e.g. Rugby Ready.

DPP coaches should be committed to their personal development and are expected to demonstrate that they are engaged in annual CPD. Coaches may currently hold an RFU Coach License; coaches will be encouraged to join the England Rugby Coaching Association upon launch as a support resource.

Coaches would also be expected to uphold the Core Values of Rugby at all times.

Q - What is the selection criteria for venues for centres and who has responsibility to source them?

A – Venues need to be appropriate for the activity that is taking place, for example if there are evening sessions in the winter then suitable floodlights would obviously be appropriate. The Regional Player Pathway Group should discuss the merits of suitable venues, based on requirements etc. and the Regional Academy should take responsibility for sourcing them with support from the CB.