



SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE Newsletter 10 – March 2008

“The Child’s Welfare is Paramount”

YOUTH FORUMS

The RFL is holding its first Youth Forum this month in Bradford. Clubs in the area have been invited to send junior players in the U12 age group to Odsal for a day. The RFL wants to hear what children have to say on matters that affect them and is also asking the children to help the RFL draw up a Code of Conduct for Children. More information about the Youth Forum in the April newsletter.

CLUB WELFARE OFFICER (CWO)

Although there are record numbers of new CWOs registering with the RFL and a lot of clubs have asked for information on CWOs there are still a very substantial number of clubs who have not yet appointed a Welfare Officer.

Currently statistics show that less than 60% of clubs or other organisations that should have a Welfare Officer in place have made an appointment. It is essential that every Club running a junior section has at least one CWO who has responsibility for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children at the club. The RFL has a full job description for CWOs but in essence the role is described below.

If your club is having difficulty in appointing a CWO or would like to talk to somebody about how to go about it please get in touch with the Safeguarding team.

What does a Club Welfare Officer do?

Task	RFL Support
Ensure all coaches & others on the RFL list are CRB checked.	RFL to support CWOs by advising who should be CRB checked, explaining the process and providing resources to support all applicants through the process.
Encourage Coaches to attend SPC course.	RFL will provide dates of Safeguarding & Protecting Children courses via the CWO newsletter, RFL website and email bulletins.
Act as first point of contact for coaches, parents or children who may have concerns.	RFL will supply guidance on what to do if a concern is reported to you.
Report any concerns to the RFL.	Any concerns you may have or that are reported to you should be reported to the RFL who will decide an appropriate course of action.
Ensure the relevant club personnel are informed of any necessary info the RFL send out.	The RFL will send out regular information which can be passed on to coaching staff, parents etc and will provide resources so that you can inform others of the key messages.

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The RFL commit to: -

- Be available as a first point of contact for any issues.
- Provide guidance on all aspects of the role, e.g. CRB checking, reporting concerns.
- Train the CWO to an appropriate level.
- Ensure correct policies etc are in place to support the role.
- Communicate relevant issues regularly.

CWO SURVEY

Thank you to all who have completed and returned the CWO Survey from last month's newsletter. If you haven't sent your response in yet it's not too late. The RFL will compile the results over the next few weeks and publish them in the April newsletter.

ANTI DOPING & 100%ME CAMPAIGN

The RFL condemns the abuse of illegal and performance enhancing substances at all levels throughout the game. The use of these substances can have very severe consequences on health.

The RFL work closely with UK Sport on the 100% ME campaign and encourage all Rugby League players to be able to say with pride "that performance was 100% ME". Doping is cheating and should not be tolerated in Rugby League.

The RFL is working on an Anti Doping Leaflet for use in the Community Game which will be available later in the year – until then you may find the following information useful.

The most frequently used substances within Rugby League appear to be stimulants and anabolic steroids.

Stimulants are substances which act on the central nervous system by speeding up parts of the brain and body's reactions. Stimulants can also suppress hunger and give the impression of increased concentration.

However, stimulants can cause overheating of the body, which can cause the internal organs to stop working, difficulty sleeping, sweating, shaking, anxiety, depression and mood swings. Stimulants can also place undue pressure on the heart which can cause severe problems and cause the heart to be more susceptible to cardiac arrhythmias, which can be fatal..

Common stimulants are cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines and ephedrine – these and all other stimulants are banned in Rugby League.

Steroids stimulate the development of male sexual characteristics and the build up of muscle tissue. Perceived benefits of steroid use are increased muscle tissue leading to increased strength and power.

However, steroids affect the body's natural balance and can have very serious effects including:

- Increased violence, mood swings, depression and personality changes (known as "Roid-Rage")

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- Serious liver damage
- Increased risk of heart disease and kidney damage
- Increased risk of muscle injury – the muscles mass gets bigger but the supporting tendons and ligaments may not be able to cope.
- Adolescents may stop growing altogether
- Development of breasts in male users
- Shrinking of the testicles in male users
- Impotence in male users
- Infertility in male and female users
- Development of male features in female users

Common steroids include nandrolone, stanozolol, Methandienone, DHEA – these and all other steroids are banned in Rugby League.

Steroids can be injected and this poses many risks associated with syringes, including infections, HIV and Hepatitis. Syringes, and other injecting equipment, should never be left where it could be accidentally found by a young person. Young people should be educated of the risk of syringes.

RESPECT & TOUCH LINE BEHAVIOUR

Clubs are working really hard to improve touch line behaviour and there are some excellent examples of good practice in the game but there are still some examples of appalling behaviour and comments from both coaches and parents.

In general abuse from the touch lines is classed as **Poor Practice** and as such is in contravention to the RFL Safeguarding Policy. Extreme behaviour can cross the line into Abuse – either **Emotional Abuse** when children are subjected to constant criticism, name calling and sarcasm or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations or **Bullying** when a parent pushes their child too hard or a coach shouts at or humiliates children.

It is understandable that people may often have concerns about reporting the behaviour of adults who are aggressive and vociferous. Where possible the RFL will protect the identity of the person who has reported an incident when they feel threatened by the individual concerned. It should be remembered that if these individuals are intimidating to other adults they are likely to be even more intimidating to any children within their care. Please remember the reporting procedures and inform the RFL if you are concerned about behaviour you see at matches.

REPORTING SERIOUS INJURIES

Just a reminder that if a player suffers a serious injury at a game or training session that this should be reported to the RFL - the following are viewed as “serious injuries”:

- Broken neck or spine
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Incident in which a player stops breathing
- Incident in which a player loses consciousness for a period of more than 5 minutes
- Head injuries leading to surgery or a stay of more than 48 hours in hospital
- Any other injury which is life threatening

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The injury should be reported by contacting the RFL as soon as possible after the match. In the most severe of cases contact should be made immediately on the emergency number below.

The RFL will:

- Inform the Benevolent Fund Serious Injuries Officer, Dave Phillips, who will make contact with the Player's family to see if there is any immediate support or practical assistance that the RFL or the RFL Benevolent Fund can offer
- Inform the RFL insurance brokers of the incident
- Deal with any requests for information from the media

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

The RFL has just started an Equality & Diversity Newsletter and the first edition is enclosed for you. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Sarah Williams if you want to discuss any related issues or would like any further information.

RFL CARNEGIE SIDE BY SIDE CHALLENGES 2008

Enclosed is an information brochure for the 2008 RFL Carnegie Challenges which raise money for the RFL Benevolent Fund. The RFL is aiming to get representatives from right across the game to support the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge (Hadrian's Wall Path is fully subscribed already) so please circulate the information within your club.

COURSES

Education courses are still available - Positive Coaching - Safeguarding & Protecting Children - Equity in Your Coaching and the new Time to Listen package – use the Training Request form circulated last month or contact Stacey to book courses.

SAFEGUARDING TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Emma Rosewarne emma.rosewarne@rfl.uk.com	Acting Lead Safeguarding Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5013	Mobile 07850 483736
Dean Hardman dean.hardman@rfl.uk.com	Deputy Safeguarding Officer & Lead Safeguarding Education Strategy Direct Line 0113-237-5041	
Stacey Thompson stacey.thompson@rfl.uk.com	CRB Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5036	

Emma Rosewarne's mobile number can be used as an emergency number to ask for support or to make an initial report of an incident at any time. Anybody who has an issue or a question can email the Safeguarding team on the dedicated email address: safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is 0808 800 5000 - your Local Safeguarding Children Board will also be able to give advice in cases which you think needs statutory agency input.

The RFL would like to thank the CPSU and other sports, particularly the ECB & FA, for sharing their policies and templates and allowing the RFL to adapt materials for its own use.

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