



Welcome to Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club (ADHRC) Junior Section

The purpose of this document is to outline what the Junior Section are looking to achieve during the 2011 /2012 season and to give you, the parents and guardians, an idea of how we will go about this. Our philosophy is that rugby must be safe and must be enjoyable for all age groups who play at Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club. If it is not enjoyable, the children will not want to come to training and certainly will not want to learn. The support of parents is essential but we must all remember that we are here so that the children can learn the game of rugby and have a great time.

Introduction to ADHRC Junior Section

The Junior section at ADHRC welcomes boys and girls from around the age of 3 ½ up to 18 with squads in the following age groups Minis (U5, U6, U7, U8, U9, U10) Midis (U11, U12) and Youth (U14, U16 and U18 and U18 girls touch rugby). To be eligible for an age group players have to be under that age on the 1st September 2011. Beginners and experienced players are welcome across the age groups. There is no mixed gender rugby after U12s. The home of the Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club is Zayed Sports City between Old Airport Road and 30th Street.

We will be piloting a new age group this season which will be for girls aged between 8 years old and 11 years old. This will be in the form of touch and tag rugby and played at the same time on a Thursday as the other age groups.

All age groups will be training on a Thursday evening from 6.00 PM. U5s will play until 7.00 PM and U6s will play to 7.30 PM. All other age groups will train until 7.45 PM to 8.00 PM. After training there is a great opportunity for a social gathering either pitchside or in the clubhouse.

Throughout the season we have a mixture of friendly fixtures against other clubs as well as competitions that usually take the form of larger tournaments (festivals) involving several clubs, many from outside of the UAE. This season, under the sponsorship of the UAE Rugby Association (UAERA), there will be a league competition involving home and away games culminating in semi finals and finals towards the end of the season. The home of the Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club is Zayed Sports City between Old Airport Road and 30th Street.

We follow the UAE RA pathway laws and IRB variations and adhere to the laws, guidelines and philosophy that this lays down. Some key points to note are:-

U5 and U6 - These age groups are ‘reception’ groups for our very young members to be introduced to rugby in a safe environment. It gives the children some exposure to rugby related skills and is aimed at preparing them for moving up to Tag Rugby which is played at U7 and U8. Children must have reached an age of 3 ½ to be accepted into this age group. The U5 and U6 groups train on a Thursday and the U5s are not allowed to play against other clubs or external teams in competitive matches. The U6s do have games against other clubs and will compete in the Abu Dhabi Tournament and the Exiles event as a fun activity.

Core Skills:- Ball familiarization; running with the ball; basic pass; Receiving a pass; the tag, tap kick and pass.



U7 & U8 - In these age groups the young players are introduced to the basic concepts of rugby within a safe and enjoyable environment. It is NON contact and tags (attached to belts worn by all players) are used to simulate tackles. The key emphasis is the basic rugby skills of catching, passing and running. These age groups will participate in friendly matches (match days) and rugby festivals (tournaments) throughout the season. Players have to have reached their 6th birthday before they can play in match days or festivals.

(U8s can be introduced to basic tackling in training after January 31st 2012)

Core Skills:- Ball familiarization; running with the ball; basic pass; receiving a pass; the tag; swerve; tap kick and pass; support; team ethic; sportsmanship.

U9 to U12 - At Under 9 and above, the children are introduced to contact rugby (this means they can tackle their opponent). Some children take to this immediately. Many others are less certain and we completely understand this. No child is forced to do anything he or she does not want to do. The players are introduced to more complex aspects of the game including set pieces (scrummaging and line-outs) as well as building on the basic skills of rugby.

Core Skills:- Tackling; taking a tackle, run and pass; picking up the ball; side-step; pre contact; support play; basic team play; basic set piece (scrum and lineout); team ethic; sportsmanship.

U14 to U18 - In this age group the players start playing the full version of the game with just one or two variations for safety. These age groups are a key part of preparing the players for moving into adult rugby and as a result players are given more responsibility when developing individual, unit and team skills.

Girls.

The IRB regulations lay down the rules governing the participation of girls in rugby and the ADHRC Junior section follow these directives. Girls can play alongside boys in all age groups within the Mini (U5-U10) and Midi (U11 & U12) sections and we actively encourage girls to play an integral part in these age groups. Mixed teams are not allowed from U13 upwards and at present the ADHRC Junior Section runs an U18 girls touch rugby group. Children must be above the age of 12 as at 1st September 2011 in order to play in this age group. There will be competitive games and tournaments for this age group during the season.

Any girl aged 17+ is more than welcome to train / play with our women's side.

Style of Rugby

Our aim is to coach and encourage our young players across the whole section to play open, expansive rugby. This means focusing on core skills and teamwork as opposed to individual glory. Teamwork is critical to success across the section and for the development of all players, irrespective of ability. We aim to develop the skills of all players whilst allowing everyone to play to their best ability. Above all, we aim to make this great game fun and exciting for all our junior members whilst ensuring they stay safe.



Coaches

All the coaches in the junior section are volunteers and give up their valuable time to pass on their knowledge of and passion for rugby. Many have children in the section and most have played the game for many years. Many of us coach so that others may get the same enjoyment from the game that we have had, not only in their formative years, but for many years to come.

Some key points to help support the coaches throughout the season:-

Discipline The role of the coach is not to baby sit children or to act as in-loco parents. They are there to coach rugby. If children do not want to be at training or are disruptive then this can have an impact on the enjoyment of the other players and the benefit they will get from the training session. We ask all parents or guardians to actively help the coaches to ensure that all children behave in the correct manner at all club activities.

Parents Coaches are not able or allowed to take responsibility for players whose parents/guardians leave them during training sessions, matches or tournaments. If you do have to split your time between age groups, have to go to the clubhouse or leave the ground, you must appoint another parent to be responsible for your child.

Support for the Coaches We ask that you support the coaches actively during training and tournaments. Our young players will not only learn from their coaches but also from the conduct and behavior of their team mates, parents and supporters. Whether this is helping with some practical elements of training or supporting a selection decision, we ask that you support the coaches.

Support for the Players Whilst we fully understand that it is not always possible, we do hope that you will come and support your children as often as possible whether it is in training or in the final of a tournament. The more support the players have, the more they will raise their game. Please encourage and support vocally but always respect other players, teams, clubs and officials. Remember our young players will look to us all as role models.

Points of Contact If you would like to discuss any aspects of the section then we would ask that for playing matters you address the lead coach of the appropriate age group and for administration, the age group manager. If after this you require further clarification then please feel free to speak to the Head Coach or the Junior Section Manager, see below.



Selection Policy & Philosophy

Sport is, by its very nature, competitive. Whilst the ADHRC does not advocate a 'win at all costs' policy we do realize that there is a balance to be struck between allowing each member of the squad to develop and achieving team success. Selection policy takes into consideration a number of factors; safety, individual ability, ability to play in a team, team ethic, attitude to training and attendance. Our aim is to teach children to be competitive within good sporting and ethical boundaries i.e. 'to accept victory magnanimously and defeat gracefully.'

Our aim this season is to strive for success whilst ensuring we accommodate players of all abilities. To that end the selection policy for all age groups will be as follows:-

1. Players will be selected to play in teams that allow them to safely enjoy the game of rugby, played at a level appropriate to the individual.
2. Tournaments and League Games: the strongest squad/s available will be selected.
3. Match days (friendlies): selection will be at the discretion of the coaches with an emphasis on participation by as many players as possible.

This selection policy is based around the following factors:-

1. Strongest does not necessarily mean best. Coaches will select their strongest squad based on all the factors already listed; e.g. the best player who rarely attends training will probably not be selected for the 'A' team.
2. Mixing abilities can match varying talents and physical size but can lead to a loss of confidence in some players. Fielding mixed ability teams can lead to a lack of confidence amongst the less able players and conversely, a lack of interest and demoralization amongst the more capable players.
3. Selecting players by ability will allow individuals to develop at their own speed without the pressure of letting their team mates down.
4. Selection is a key element in developing our young players as they move through the age groups. Learning that selection is not automatic but based on the factors listed previously will help our players to develop into good sports people, irrespective of ability.
5. During some match days (friendlies) and all tournaments there will be restrictions on the number of teams we can enter into each age group. This is due to time and space available on a particular day. This may mean that from time to time that not all of the players who have made themselves available for selection will be able to play. We will try and limit these situations as much as possible. Parents and players can help by good communication with the coaches (see Communication below)

Some Administrative points

Clothing Please ensure that your children come to training in the correct clothing. When playing on match days, in tournaments or in league games all players must wear ADHRC socks and shorts. Match shirts must be worn by ALL players when representing ADHRC. Kit will be given out as part of membership for players. Any items that become damaged or lost must be replaced at a cost to the player and not the rugby club. Kit sales usually take place each Thursday at training.

We have an obligation to our sponsors who have provided us with the necessary funding and therefore it is very important that the correct match day kit is worn.



Studs Please ensure that your child wears approved studs or footwear. Your age group coach will be able to advise you if needed. We also encourage players to wear alternative footwear (trainers/sandals) to the pitch and change in to their boots at the pitch. This helps avoid 'sharpening' of studs on hard surfaces.

Gum Shields and safety equipment We **STRONGLY ADVISE** that all children should wear a gum shield when playing rugby. For further advice please speak to your age group coach. Many children want to wear other items of safety equipment (shoulder pads, scrum caps etc). All items of clothing must comply with strict guidelines; if in doubt please ask your age group coach for advice. Please note, protective kit should be used in training session too and not just on match days.

Punctuality Please try whenever possible to arrive at training in good time. All age groups will undergo a pre training warm up to prevent injury and late arrivals may miss this vital aspect of any training session.

Communication It will be necessary for the coaches to contact parents to enquire about player availability or to pass on administrative points. This will normally be done by email. It is vital that **all** parents/guardians reply to all of their age group coaches emails especially when relating to player availability. A great deal of planning goes into match day/tournament preparation (playing schedules, water, food etc) and the coaching staff need to establish how many teams they can enter. Any player who just 'turns up' on match days or tournaments having not declared themselves available for selection most likely will not be able to play. All official ADHRC communication to junior section members will be either through email or by posting on the club's web-site. Other platforms such as Facebook etc. whilst useful are not for official communications.

Age Group Managers As the club and especially the Junior Section grows, it is absolutely vital that communication is regular and clear in its content. All age groups, with no exception, will have an age group manager who will be responsible for the communication for that age group. Coaches should be left to coach and the administration of an age will be the responsibility of the manager.



Conclusion

The Junior section has grown from strength to strength over the past few years and has seen many young players enjoy playing rugby. We are confident that the 2011 /2012 season will be no different and that we will be able to build upon the success of last year and make this season a memorable one. To do that we need the support of all those involved; the players, coaches and above all, parents. We hope that you will get as much enjoyment from watching as your children will get from playing. We look forward to seeing you at the pitch and to you helping the club achieve its aims.

Kindly note that this document forms part of the terms and conditions of the Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club and that by becoming a member of ADHRC you agree to the terms and conditions of the club and agree to abide by the Codes of Conduct which have been issued by the UAE RA which can be accessed on the ADHRC web site or the Arabian Gulf RFU web site.

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