



SALISBURY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Youth Section 2020/21 season and outlook for 2021/22

The 20/21 season, and the latter part of 19/20 have been impacted by the COVID Pandemic. This has resulted in a stop/start season for all the Age Grades. To ensure some form of rugby was possible for as much of the season as possible the RFU, working with the Digital Media Communication and Sport (DCMS), produced a return to rugby roadmap that set out the conditions and changes to Laws to ensure the safety and health of all involved in rugby was protected. When we have played, we have continued with the good foundation laid in recent seasons and all areas of the section have enjoyed their rugby, with our coaches fully embracing the 'Age Grades Codes Of Practice', which provides practical support and details of best practices and standards required of those delivering the Age Grade game. Full details can be viewed at the England RFU website [<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/codes-of-practice/>]. The RFU 'half game rule', is now fully embedded into all Age Grades at SRFC. This is irrespective of the score or perceived seriousness of the match and has helped more children develop the rugby skills, and individual confidence by playing more match time.

With the stop/start nature of this year we have had periods of time where there has been no rugby at all. However, with the RFU extending the season for a further month, allowing rugby focused activities to take place over the summer months and the club supporting this initiative by opening the club as required to support all age group training, the rugby time lost has been mitigated as much as possible.

Walking around the training field it is apparent to see that the numbers in all groups; Minis, Midis, Girls, Juniors and Colts had not been impacted by the pandemic. With lots of smiling and happy children (and Coaches) clearly visible.

It also seemed that the new enforced 'conditions' have created a lot of opportunity for running and evasive rugby with some great support lines and quick hands, on display across all age grades.

SRFC ethos is to create an enjoyable, safe and less formal structured rugby and it is testament to the coaches, players and parents that is clearly evident on Sunday mornings between 1000-1200 no matter what the weather.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the Coaches, Admins and various other volunteers for all their hard work, adaptability and tenacious attitude to make this season work and still allow SRFC to be in a strong position for the 2021/22 season.

Due to the pandemic, there have been very little opportunity for the Minis and Midis to take part in fixtures, although most age groups (that wanted to) managed to get a few home and away fixtures in towards the end of the season. It has also not been possible for any D&W competitions to take place for the Junior and Colt age groups this year either.

It is at this point that I would like to mention the Colts group. After a difficult season or two we now have a strong and developing Colts section, with this seasons U16s transitioning into the Colts (Players and Coaches) over the later few months of the season. The 'senior' Colts have also transitioned into the SRFC Seniors squad. These transitions have been a mixture of joint training and inter-club touch competitions. This has allowed some of the potential nervousness and worry of mixing with older players to be reduced and friendships and team camaraderie to be developed. I would like to thank Ben Brown for all his hard work over many years at the club and wish him well in his

TEAMWORK

RESPECT

ENJOYMENT

DISCIPLINE

SPORTSMANSHIP

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youth rugby coaching retirement. I would also like to thank those that now take on the mantle of Colts management for their hard work this season and wish them continued success in the coming season.

Our Girls Squad has continued with its strong position under the guidance of Lead Coach Manny Khan and the team of coaches. Numbers have remained good at training. Over the season we have been working hard to find a sponsor for our Girls Squad and this has culminated in Chemring agreeing to be their Sponsor.

This last season, the opportunity to attend coaching courses has been reduced due to social distancing and lockdowns but SRFC have continued to support our coaches to develop their skill set by not only funding any training they need (reimbursement process) but also actively encouraging the RFU to use the SRFC facilities to host training nights.

So, for the coming season, it will hopefully be different. All at SRFC are hoping for a return to 'regular' rugby with full laws being played at all age groups, and a return to full fixtures and D&W competitions. The 2021/22 season will start on the Sunday 5th September.

For the Juniors and Colts, we are hoping to implement a 'Bursary' fund to offer rugby focused support to players that are nominated by their coaches. This is possible due to the kind generosity of Lyn and Simon Walworth who sadly lost their Son a number of years ago and since then have organised a number of charity games and various other events and donating the money raised to SRFC Junior section. Their stipulation is that the money must be used to develop the Junior/Colts section of the club. (The section Rory was in when he sadly passed). We are still arranging the details of what sort of activity/situation this bursary will fund but we hope to communicate this near the start of next season.

For the Girls squad we have entered them into the D&W Competition for the first time, so, we are looking forward to supporting them in the fixtures they have. A good opportunity to wear the new squad game kit.

Previously there have been a few members in our sections that have welcomed the club's continued support through our 'Hardship Policy' and we will continue to provide the appropriate support where applicable to ensure children can continue to play rugby with their friends.

Although the club has lost many people this year the Mins, Midis, Juniors and Colts will particularly feel the loss of former Director of Youth Rugby Steve Allen. His family remains in our thoughts.

Jason Yarwood,

Director of Youth Rugby - SRFC

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