England Rugby

NORTH EAST UPDATE CALL

Laura Lines

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AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. RFU Impact 25- what's been happening
3. U18 & U16 League round up
4. Inner Warrior Series
5. PDG update
6. Courses coming up
7. Bishop Auckland follow up
8. 6-12 girls
9. Open discussion

WHERE ARE WE?

Number of players registered on GMS at the end of January

County	Girls numbers	Women’s numbers
Cumbria	339	288
Northumberland	480	285
Durham	635	614
Yorkshire	1387	1324

IMPACT 25- FACILITIES

A main focus of the funding due to player and coach feedback on the state of facilities across the country;

Large scale projects;
Hartlepool- changing rooms
Consett- social space
Houghton- Changing room and social space
Jarrovians- social space
Novo's- Changing room and social space
North Shields- Social space
Keswick- changing rooms
Egremont – social space
Upper Eden- Changing rooms
Guisborough- social space
Acklam- social space

Toilet upgrades; (this was open for any club to apply)
Durham City
Gateshead
Hartlepool
Hartlepool Rovers
Peterlee and Horden
Ryton
Stockton
Ashington
North Shields
Novo's
Guisborough
Middlesbrough
Redcar

Small grants; (this was offered to clubs that had talked to us via the facility audit, meetings or counties flagging)
Bishop Auckland
Durham City
Gateshead
Hartlepool Rovers
Peterlee and Horden
Ryton
Sunderland
Carlisle
Ashington
North Shields
Northern
Middlesborough

Total RFU Grants = £635,739.03
Total Project Costs = £3,357,650.23

We also have pitch maintenance support, this is not funded by Impact 25 but is aiming to improve grass pitches to enable clubs to facilitate growth. To engage with this clubs first need to have a Pitch advisor visit which is free and can be booked via here

IMPACT 25- GIRLS RECRUITMENT

School Rugby Managers;

This role is aimed at getting new state schools playing rugby (primary and secondary). We do not have the resources to have national coverage so have to focus on small areas.

Sunderland area- Bryony- bryony.blanchard@biddickacademy.co.uk
Clubs- Houghton, Washington and Sunderland

Teesvalley- Andy andy.tennyson@clevelandssp.co.uk
Clubs- Hartlepool, Hartlepool Rovers, West Hartlepool, Billingham, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Guisborough, Acklam and Redcar.

North of Tyne Rugby Partnership
Jack Smith - northoftynesrm@gmail.com
Clubs- Wallsend, North Shields and Northern

Royal Grammar School Newcastle - Charlie- c.maddison@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk
Clubs - Novo's - Northern & Wider NRU Partnership

Cumbria – Carlisle Area – Thomas Maughan cumbriasrm@rrca.org.uk

1 New Proposed – Workington/Whitehaven Area

6-12 delivery;

This project aims to increase the number of girls in clubs mini sections by paying a private provider to delivery in local schools. This projects success is judged on the number of girls ultimately registered at the club.

Durham area- Vigor rugby to work around Consett, Bishop Auckland, Houghton and Peterlee & Houghton

Cumbria Area

Garry Holmes – Home Grown Sports Development

Chris Wright – Wright Sports Services

Newcastle Falcons;

The RFU have funded Falcons community section to deliver in local schools around; Gateshead, Blaydon, Ryton and Westoe.

Northumberland CB funds Falcons to do work on behalf of clubs across the CB. The Falcons also host the coordination meeting for the wider NRU Delivery Partnership with Chair – Keith Atkinson.

Also have Berwick with an RDO & Ashington, Percy Park and Whitley Bay Rockliff with the Coastal CRC.

Gavin Beasley gavin.beasley@newcastle-falcons.co.uk

Love Rugby
Contents Include: - Running a festival, Social Media Frames, Posters, Logos, Videos

IMPACT 25- COACHING AND VOLUNTEERING

Vouchers for coaching and match official courses;

Vouchers have been available for volunteers for free coaching and match official courses in May/June time in time for booking going live in July.

Mentoring;
A small number of clubs have been offered mentoring opportunities for a group of their coaches. This is a very small focused project and clubs in the North East are;
Darlington
Rockcliff

Impact Champions;

Clubs where offered the opportunity to identify an impact champion at the start of the season which started with an evening workshop and is followed up with online coaching CPD opportunities.

Womens Leadership;
A program designed to support females currently in leadership roles within their club. Applications where open to all before Christmas.

Inspire;
A program designed to support females looking to get involved in club leadership but currently under the age of 24. This was open to all applications before Christmas.

Volunteer recruitment grant;

This was open to all clubs to apply for in November. The clubs that have been successful in receiving the grant and training are;
Egremont
Cockermouth
Hartlepool Rovers
West Hartlepool
Durham City
Darlington
Ashington
Wallsend
Blyth
Berwick
Alnwick
Northern
Morpeth

IMPACT 25- WOMEN'S RECRUITMENT

Inner Warrior resources are still available to help you run a recruitment event.
Activation Guide

We do not have a huge number of resources in this area and would be keen to hear ideas from the game as to what would be helpful to you.

T1 RUGBY

Quick Start Guide
Introductory Video
Club Guide
https://www.englandrugby.com/run/coaching/delivering-t1-rugby

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2025

172 days to go/24 Mondays

Ticketing
- General ticketing window currently open, Group ticket window open for some games (20+ tickets)
- 53% or all tickets sold as of mid- February

Volunteering
- Volunteer role offers started to be sent out last week.
- Sunderland = 234, York = 158, Salford = 159
- Document listing local clubs, volunteering opportunities to be circulated with all volunteers who applied. If you are looking for volunteers, please email me with details (Event, Role at Club, Date & Times, Point of Contact etc)

Key Dates
- 100 days to go is the next big comms moment (14th May)
- 8th March at the Beacon of Light (pre Sunderland AFC v Cardiff) fan zone with rugby activity. Current Women's Rugby World Cup trophy will be on display.
- 23rd March York 6N community activation – 3G pitches outside the stadium

U18 AND U16 LEAGUES

U18s

- Expanded this season. 12 clubs currently involved.
- Ongoing, mostly positive feedback, some issues rearranging games.
- End of Season 10s Festival.
- Organisers scheduling a review and planning meeting.

Proposed U16s League

- Expressions of Interest from 10 clubs.
- Aim to provide a more structured and competitive offer, whilst maintaining a focus on development and enjoyment.
- Extra tool to retain players and engage new people.
- Upcoming Planning Meeting – Details TBC - March

U16s Girls League Expression of Interest 25/26

IWS NORTH

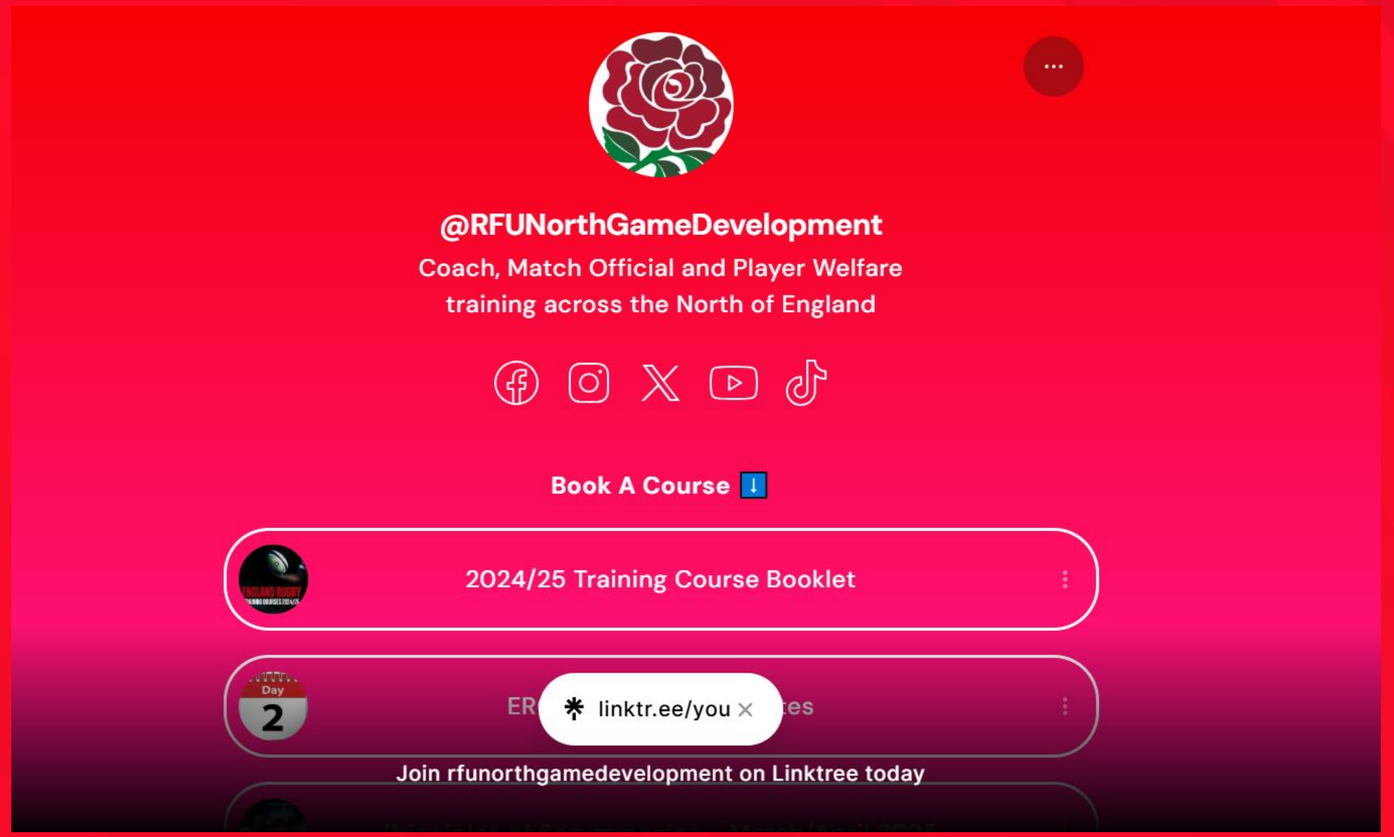
- Very positive season and engagement.
- Number of matches played is well up on 23/24.
- 20 Matches with Results Reported.
- 7 of 9 entrants have played matches so far.
- Further fixtures scheduled for most teams.
- Celebration/Social Event on Good Friday at Blaydon.
- Intro to Leagues Webinar – Monday 24th March @ 19:30 – Register here.

PDG;

UP COMING COURSES;

Please check out-
https://linktr.ee/rfunorthgamedevelopment?fbclid=IwY2xjawIivQdleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHR3WrMEQ-gCketodxS5ydIcGHdI9nZoZRyvnlvfJJiJnzc7vXkgu0J8piA_aem_-TXQAQ25MZUNrgdjx9XxHA

All courses and the leaflet on what courses are right for you can be found via that link.



FOLLOW UP FROM BISHOP AUCKLAND EVENT;

The RFU board visited Bishop Auckland in April and we had a number of clubs attend from across the area to have an open discussion about the game in the North East. The following day there was also a symposium hosted to discuss the elite game in the North East.

How do we compare to the rest of the country, on general numbers;

County	Girls numbers	Women's numbers
Cumbria	339	288
Northumberland	480	285
Durham	635	614
Yorkshire	1387	1324
Cornwall	637	342
Devon	1320	803

The issue seems to be; how do we keep talent and also recruit talent to the area.

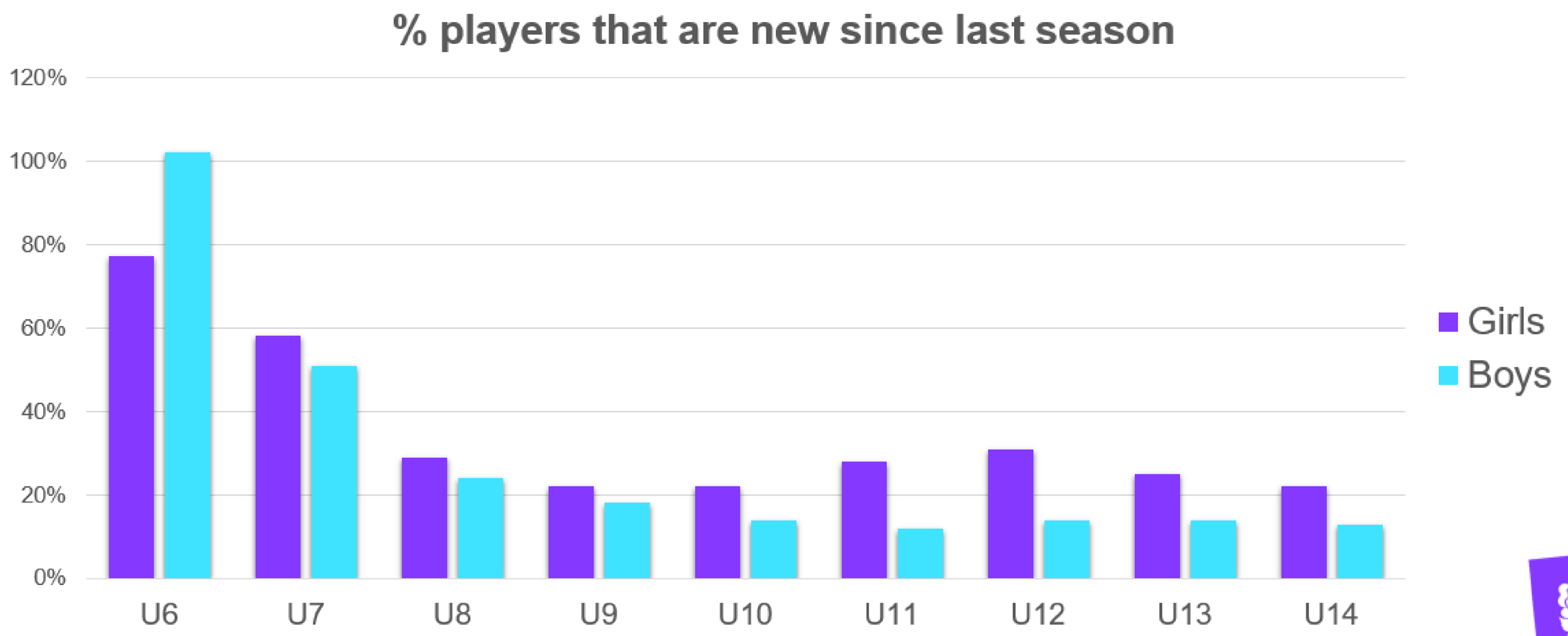
U6-U12 INTRO

Slides to come from Yvette

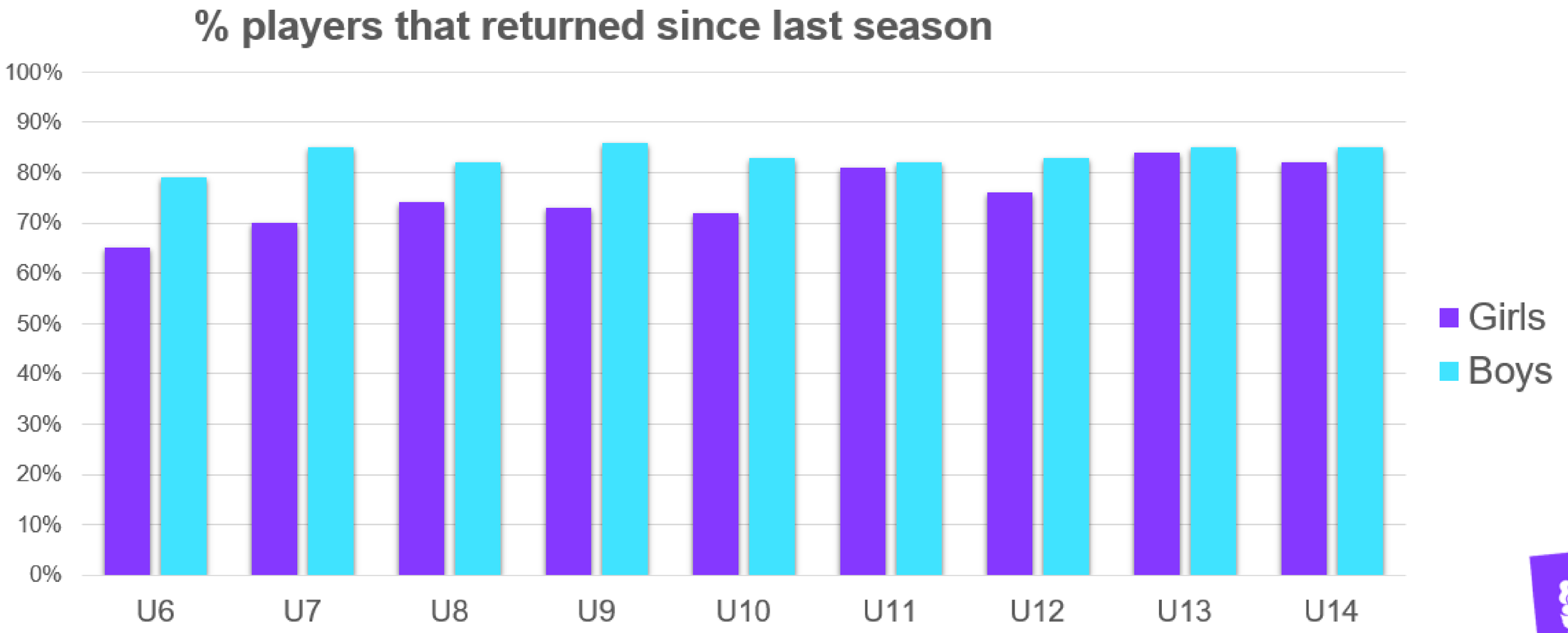
Trends in girls' growth at 6-12 years

Tag rugby U6-U8	• High recruitment • Lower retention than boys
Mixed contact rugby U9/U10/U11	• Low recruitment • Lower retention than boys
Girls only U11/U12	• Recruitment increases • Retention increases

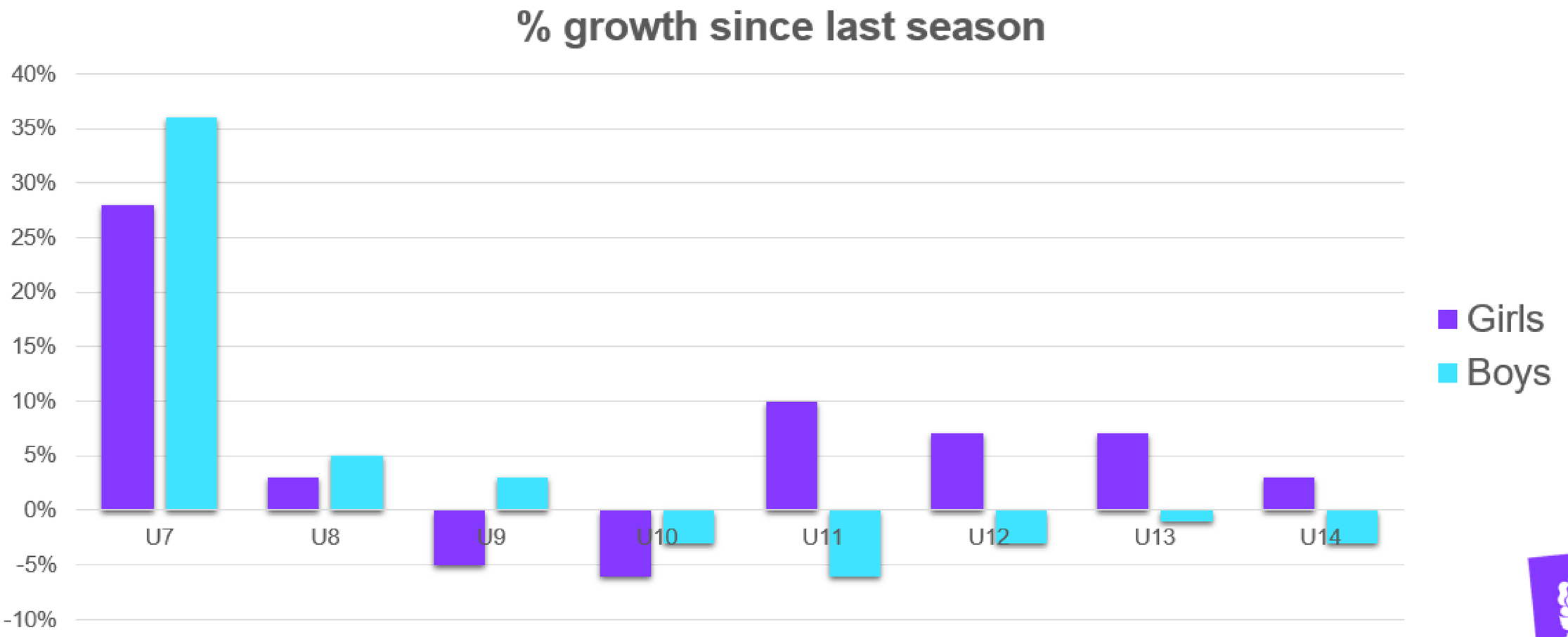
Recruitment



Retention


% players that returned since last season
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
U6
U7
U8
U9
U10
U11
U12
U13
U14
Girls
Boys

Growth


% growth since last season
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
-5%
-10%
U7
U8
U9
U10
U11
U12
U13
U14
Girls
Boys

Key findings from club research

Club Culture

Clubs that **listened** to girls and **advocated** their needs created consistent **growth**

Team Environment

Teams that gave girls a **sense of belonging** were much more effective at **recruiting** and **retaining** girls

Girls Only

Offering **girls only** rugby at U9/U10/U11 is an effective way of **growing** girls rugby at this age.

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GIRLS ONLY

What girls and parents say are the benefits

- **Greater confidence** and belief in themselves
- More willing to be **involved and more vocal**
- Given **more opportunities** to be involved in the game
- A greater sense of being **part of the team**

When we started our girls' section in September 2023. We quickly observed that girls preferred playing in a dedicated girls' team. Last season our u9s continued to play with the boys. We saw that any girls who we managed to recruit rarely stuck around, so having learnt from that accidental experiment at the start of the 2024 season we have created a dedicated u9s girls' team . This has not only ensured a 100% retention rate but also has naturally recruited more girls to the team through word of mouth.

(Bromley RFC
14 registered girls at U9)

- **Clubs aren't always aware they can have girls only teams**
- **Club led – monthly or weekly? Matches? Weekday?**
- **Opportunity to involve coaches leading into U12 girls' team**

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Question for clubs to consider...

Point of clarification. In regulation 15, mixed rugby can include teams that are mixed gender, all boys or all girls. It is encouraged for clubs to have girls only teams at any age of mixed rugby if that is what meets the needs of the girls in their club.

1. Preparing for RWC and the opportunity to inspire and welcome new girls to rugby…. What environment do your teams offer for a new girl joining your club?
2. Do you know what girls in your mixed teams want and need to keep them playing rugby? Every girl and every team is different so try speaking to them and their parents to understand what rugby at your club feels like to them.
3. What can you offer to girls? Girls only training sessions? Pitch up and play sessions with other clubs? Girls only summer activity? Girls only sessions in schools? A girls' element to a minis festival? Female coached sessions? All girls non-contact sessions?
4. Girls only opportunities are a proven way of retaining and recruiting girls' but they are not the only way. A well coached and managed mixed team can recruit and retain girls too.

England Rugby

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OPEN DISCUSSION

England
Rugby