Age Grade and U13-U16 Boys Report

Date – 30/10/2025

Report compiled by Andrew Neal

Key events, issues, and achievements since the last report.

All age grade key people have been added into WhatsApp groups for age groups with county personnel added and admins which has massively improved comms.

County Cup organisation has been slick and well received by age groups.

A small workgroup has been setup to manage day to day age grade issues and cup draws etc this has proven very efficient.

I spoke to DOR about issues translating players from junior rugby to Colts and the drop off that sides are experiencing. We need to further look at this. Suggested a competition for U16 and U17s run in March and April.

Silent Sundays have been introduced and added to the calendar. 1st one seemed well received.

County Festivals through the year have been organised and the 1st round was well attended and well run.

Forms are now on the county website and being used for hosting events and competitions and applying to competitions. This has hugely improved the processes and allowed the sub group to easily sort the calendar and budgets for events.

Current and impending issues, events, and work streams

Discipline across age grade rugby is seriously slipping. Coaching standards and parent standards need to improve. Education around acceptable levels of sideline chat, Silent Sundays, technical areas and respect barriers need looking at in more detail. We need to also make sure that reporting is easier and more common and improve enforcement and also create an open "watchlist" so that clubs are aware that certain teams are repeatedly causing problems.

Registrations are down in most clubs around the county for age grade. We need to look more at the "Northumberland Way" and implement this.

Players attending redbulls at U15 level and county squads at U17 and U18 level are being nominated but not at the required GASP levels. We need to look at getting better information out about what is required and also help coaches to prepare players.

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination

Discipline matters are not coming down to age grade committee. Could I/we please get reports of any discipline matters reported into county and outcomes of hearings please?

Plans for next season. Can we really push on the U16/U17 ideas and see what can be done with the RFU? Or can we find a way of getting temp playing up forms done in block for a few matches?

County age grade rules for next season We would like to look at the following:

1. No Junior (U13 up) matches involving a Northumberland side to be played without a referee who is registered with the ref society and has at least done the entry level course.
2. Every Junior rugby match must have technical areas and coaches and subs should not leave the area.
3. Physios or 1st aiders should be identified by a bib. They are only adults allowed to enter the pitch at anytime at any level other than referee.
4. County supplied respect barriers to be made available to clubs who will use them. All parents to be behind the barriers or behind cones or behind a fence a set distance from the pitch.

Add a team report form or discipline report form or link to the website to make reporting easier.

NB – This report must not include personal or identifiable data as it may be appended to the Board Minutes. If there is a need to report on a Confidential matter, please forward that communication separately, marked 'Confidential'.