

# Off Island Development Programmes Information – 2023/24 Season



## Introduction

This document provides information to parents and players to assist in understanding our off island development programmes, the selection process and associated travel / commitment requirements.

The information is provided with what is believed to be current information and has been compiled from experiences gained over the past few seasons. It will change and we encourage anyone with an interest in selection to contact the relevant team coach, the Rugby Development Officer (“RDO”) Steve Melbourne, or any member of the Academy’s Committee for more guidance.

This policy does not apply to U18 Girls who are able to freely access the County programmes, due to lack of competitive fixtures and this being the only avenue for competitive game time. That said, during their assessment, if they are identified for a further higher development programme then the same level of support is offered as detailed in this document.

These programmes are in addition to Guernsey’s Sussex league commitments which take priority. The Academy is committed to support and grow talent, but due to the high cost and commitment involved a total of 5 players from U15, U16 and Colts will be selected at any one time. It is envisaged that our local Player Development Programme will continue to provide the development framework for the majority of players.

**Parents and selected players need to be very aware of their commitments, both financial and time, when considering off island rugby – it can materially impact educational needs, so schools support is also required.**

## Selected Players

Players wishing to be selected to represent Guernsey at this higher level are expected to uphold the Core Values of Rugby within the County, PDP, Club and School environment. Players who do not uphold these Core Values will be removed from the programme.

The Academy supports (Financially, Coaching and Conditioning) those players selected for the programme and therefore players are expected to support the Academy in return for the investment, whether it be coaching younger age groups as a role model, supporting the Academy’s fund raising and other rugby related events (School Rugby Festival, Easter 7s and Summer Rugby Camp etc.).

The Academy will contribute for up to 5 players with a financial contribution of £60 per player per trip, subject to a cap of £600 per season.

## Selection for Trials

During the season the RDO will work with the relevant coaching team to observe players development. This will identify players for consideration for both the local PDP and any higher level development programmes. These assessments commence from emerging players within the U14s for the following season.

# Off Island Development Programmes Information – 2023/24 Season



The Lead Coach of each age group will also have a profile for each player and will use this alongside a more detailed understanding of individuals' skills to recommend players for consideration.

During this initial pre-selection stage parents will have been given background information on this process by the lead coach and RDO thereby ensuring they are familiar with the commitments.

**The final decision to send players for trials will rest with the Academy Committee, after careful advice from the RDO. There is a cap on the number of players the Academy can realistically send and support.**

Once the squad of trialists have been confirmed the selection normally works as follows:

- For new players wishing to be considered
  - They will need to attend open trials in UK; and
  - If selected they are likely to be considered part of the programme for the following two years.
- For players that represented the County last season (U16s upwards):
  - They will be exempt from 1<sup>st</sup> Open trial session in UK; and
  - They will need to attend 2<sup>nd</sup> county trial session in UK.

*The dates for trials, training and matches vary considerably between the age groups. At U16 level the county season is usually condensed during the first half of the season due to it being GCSE year.*

## **Open Trial Information**

The day normally consist of some exercises and game related practises with appropriate exercises for particular positions. In the afternoon the players are put into match situations and conditioned games. The process whittles down the players which can be over 150, to a squad size of circa 40 players.

The results of the trials are normally e-mailed to the parents and team manager within two to three days following the trials. It should be noted that unsuccessful participants are not provided individual feedback on their assessment due to the large number of nominations that are considered. Players should not be disheartened, as to even get to a trial is a significant achievement and they will get further opportunities if they continue to progress at club level; this is the start of the players' journey and not the end of the road for them.

During this trial, scouts from some of the Premiership Rugby Academies will also be reviewing players, and selection for an academy (normally Harlequins) is also undertaken from this selection process.

## **Successful County or Academy Players**

As already mentioned, the number of fixtures and training sessions for each age group can vary enormously. However, if selected, players can expect to commit to as many as 20 off island trips throughout the rugby season (this excludes Guernsey's age group Sussex league fixtures which take priority).

The commitments to both Harlequins Academy (HA) & Sussex County (SC) may include:

- HA - mid-week training and matches, commitment of over 20 trips

# Off Island Development Programmes Information – 2023/24 Season



- SC – 3 training sessions plus 3 or 4 matches, commitment of over 6 trips

The Sussex RFU is very aware of the significant commitment both parents and players provide, so if there are issues with the frequency or dates then these need to be raised early so this can be factored into the planning process. This would be typically done through the RDO, who will act as a conduit with development personnel at county or at other development programmes.

## Travel

Typical trips will involve flights between Guernsey and Gatwick.

All transport bookings are the responsibility of the parent/carer who should identify the cheapest option.

When booking flights the cheapest option is normally to book through our Travel Coordinator. If there is more than one player travelling, parents can liaise together to arrange one booking.

## Chaperone

Parent/s or carers will normally accompany their son/daughter and therefore will be responsible for their welfare and conduct. If a parent chooses to agree private arrangements for a chaperone in their place, the non-travelling parents will charge the chaperone with responsibility for their children by providing medical and contact details and the chaperone will accept responsibility for the duration of the trip.

In such private arrangements as a parent of one child responsible for others alongside their own, chaperones will not necessarily have a current DBS Certificate and therefore non-travelling parents should ensure that they are happy with arrangements and understandings they have put in place.

This is not usually a problem as players will have known each other for a period of time and will have played for Guernsey on a number of occasions, thus developing an understanding of what is expected and acceptable. Parents will also be known to each other and will have developed a relationship over the years. Any parent who is not happy with arrangements will have to make their own travel arrangements as necessary. The Academy does not provide a chaperone. Players cannot travel without one.

The chaperone may be male or female. They will:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare and safety of players under their charge.
- Deal with any medical situations under the advice of attending medical professionals.
- Liaise with players' parents for the above scenarios.
- Shall not share accommodation with players unless they share a room solely with their children **unless non-travelling parents consent to their child sharing with the chaperone.**
- Enforce behaviour and codes of conduct of the Guernsey Rugby Academy.
- Ensure they have consent and medical forms to hand!

## County Kit

Selected county players will normally be given socks and be awarded with a tie. For matches, players are expected to obtain other relevant kit directly from the County liaison (normally a web shop with code)

# Off Island Development Programmes Information – 2023/24 Season



## **Insurance**

Players are covered under the same conditions as when playing and travelling for the Academy. This **only** covers the reciprocal health arrangements and does not cover flight cancellations, personal insurance etc. Neither does it cover follow-up treatment in Guernsey.

## **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT**

### **Costs**

Being selected for county or other off island development programmes can cost thousands of pounds for a family. The players will need to be accompanied by a chaperone when they travel and overnight stays are sometimes required.

The Academy will contribute £60 per player per trip, subject to a cap of £600 per season.

This contribution is inclusive of any costs of the chaperone.

### **Hardship / Financial Support**

The Guernsey Rugby Academy LBG may agree to assist with some of these costs. This is to support parents who find the financial commitments demanding. Funds are allocated at the sole discretion of the inclusion committee on a case-by-case basis. The Team Manager should contact the Academy Chair on behalf of the player in the first instance.

### **Sponsorship**

Past successful players have secured sponsorship privately (i.e. Elizabeth Colleges' OEA Funding Scheme) to support their season. This of course is actively encouraged by the Academy.

If you have any further questions about selection criteria then please contact:

Steve Melbourne  
Rugby Development Officer  
Mob: 07781137988  
E-mail: [stevemelbourne@rfu.com](mailto:stevemelbourne@rfu.com)