



Farnham Rugby Union Football Club

Farnham RUFC Under 8s

**Mini Prospectus
for Parents/Carers
Season 2009/10**

September 2009



A Message from the Coaching Team

Welcome to Farnham RUFC's Under-8 Age Group for 2009/10.

The 2008/09 season was the first year of competitive Rugby for this group of children and, from the Club's perspective, we judged it a resounding success – not because our A squad were crowned Surrey Champions, but because we ended the season with all but one or two of the 50 or so children who had started it, and even gained some new recruits.

We have similar ambitions for this year, and this document is designed to inform you about what those ambitions are, how we aim to achieve them and how YOU, the parents/carers of our young charges, can help us.

We have a very busy schedule ahead. Not only do we have more teams entered in more festivals than last year, giving more opportunity for those who wish to participate to do so, but we must also be mindful that this is the last year of Tag Rugby for this group and that we need to prepare our children for the rapid way in which the game will develop and change for them from next year onwards.

Above all, we want to ensure that we can report similar success to you next year and that, whatever happens, everyone - parents/carers and coaches included, but above all the children - has fun in the meantime.

Mark Escolme
Under-8 Head Coach



Our Goals

We will judge our success in 2009/10 on the following criteria:-

⚠ One Squad – “All For One and One For All!”

EVERY U8 player – whatever their level of physical and skill development, whether they play in festivals, which team they may be selected to play for or which squad they train with – contributes to the success of the Club and the U8 Squad, and is as highly valued as any other. We want them ALL to understand this, to contribute throughout the season and to come back next year.

⚠ Doing Our Best

Everything we do, we try to do to the best of our abilities. We compete hard, but always uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship.

⚠ Participation

Players, coaches and parents are all fully engaged and involved.

⚠ Contact Rugby Ready

We start to lay foundations, so that our children may approach contact Rugby safely and with confidence.

...and, most importantly of all:-

WE ALL HAVE FUN!!!



Our Approach and Core Values

Farnham U8's aspire to be 'best' in Surrey at....

Competitive Spirit and Fair Play

- We play every game to win, but we play fairly
- We never complain about referees, opposition coaches or players
- Win, lose or draw, we are always first to congratulate the opposing team

Preparation & Appearance

We are proud to wear Farnham colours

- Clean strip at all festivals
- Shirts tucked in, socks pulled up (no tracksuit bottoms during matches)
- Our players are warm and appropriately dressed at all times
- Boots are clean, no studs missing
- Tag belts and 2 tags worn at all times (including training)

Our Support

We are ambassadors for our Club

- We encourage vocal touchline support (parents, coaches and subs)
- We do not tolerate abuse of any kind
- We do not respond to abuse from other quarters
- We never complain about referees, opposition coaches or players (particularly in front of our players)



The Season Ahead

The Laws

The Under-8 age group plays **Tag Rugby** (although, as mentioned already, this is their last year of doing so). The laws of the game will therefore be familiar to those who have played, coached, refereed or spectated at Under-6 and/or Under-7 level.

There is, however, one key modification to the laws to which they have previously played, which is that there will be an **automatic turnover of possession where a team is tagged seven times in succession**. Those who went on tour to Wales in the spring have already had some limited experience of playing to this new rule.

This should fundamentally alter the way most teams will approach the attacking aspect of the game, as the object of this development (as the particular amending rule itself puts it) is:-

“...to reward good defence and to promote the attacking side keeping the ball alive by passing the ball before being tagged”

Coaching Priorities/Key Skills Required

Defence (tagging) – this has always been a coaching priority for this peer group and proved to be a strength last season. We intend to continue to develop our defensive strategies to ensure that we continue to earn our due rewards in defence, in particular to play an aggressive “rush” defence which puts pressure on the attacking team. Key points to this approach include:-

- Staying onside - at the free pass, the defenders cannot advance until the ball leaves the scrum-half’s hands (not when the referee whistles or calls “play”)
- Solid line - defenders stay in/return to position covering width of field, with no gaps
- Double tagging – a defender takes both tags of the attacker, one with each hand (more chance of succeeding with at least one; discourages different defenders from trying to tag the same attacker at the same time).



Coaching Priorities/Key Skills Required (cont)

Attack - our challenge is to improve our ball handling, passing, support running and communication skills, in order to create space for better-placed support runners to receive the ball before the ball carrier can be tagged. We will also introduce some pre-planned moves at appropriate times. Key points to keeping the ball alive include:-

- Communication - players are talking to each other all the time, particularly calling for the ball
- Positioning - players stay in/return quickly to line position during passage of play; be available to receive a pass
- Awareness of space – attackers move into better positions in support of the ball carrier; avoid the channel between touch and 2 metres in from touch
- Players passing before they are tagged

Playing Schedule

We have a very full and ambitious programme planned for 2009/10, across the whole age-group:

- **31 Sundays** of Rugby (excluding Xmas and New Year)
- **Competitions:-**
 - 18 festivals
 - 8 A festivals
 - 7 B festivals
 - 8 C festivals
 - 8-12 fixtures with other clubs (training/competitive friendlies)
 - 3 internal tournaments
- Approximately **13 Club Training Sessions** for each squad/team

One of the key goals in arranging our fixture list was to ensure (continuing the approach taken last season) that all those who wish to participate in festivals are given as many opportunities to do so as possible. Thus we plan to send two teams to most C festivals - which means that there will be some days on which we will need in excess of 40 players and a dozen or more coaches/referees to enable us to fulfil our fixtures.



Organisational/Coaching Structure and Methods

Background:

- Anticipated squad of 50+ players.
- Up to 18 coaches available
- Club has funded/will fund RFU Coaching &/or Refereeing courses

Player/Coaching Structure:

- Players to be grouped by ability (*recognising that at U8 players will progress and develop at different speeds through the season*)
- 2 Squads (Bulls and Sharks) with 2 teams within each Squad:-
 - ▲ Bulls – Bisons and Buffaloes
 - ▲ Sharks – Tiger Sharks and Hammerheads
- Head Coach has overall responsibility for Under-8 squad
- 2 Squad Lead Coaches will design weekly training plans for Bulls and Sharks
- Players and coaches to be assigned to Bisons, Buffaloes, Tiger Sharks and Hammerheads during early-season assessment. Coaches are likely, wherever practical, to be assigned to their children's team in order to be able to accompany them to festivals, fixtures and training. However, there will be fluidity of movement between teams at all times.
- Coaches to switch occasionally between squads/teams to share know-how and to get to know more players within the age group

Festival Entries & Selection:

- U8s to send 1 team to each A festival (Bisons) and each B festival (Buffaloes)
- U8s to send 2 teams of equal strength to each C festival (Tiger Sharks & Hammerheads)
- **Please note:** Players will be considered for selection on the following criteria:-
 - Performance
 - Attendance
 - Parent/carer responsiveness to e-mails
 - Whether the player has been offered fair opportunity to participate
- Although teams will generally be selected from within their allocated pool of players, teams may occasionally be strengthened (or used to give players an opportunity to test their levels of development) by selections from the player pools of the other teams.



- Every effort will be made to ensure that all players attending each festival will be offered a fair share of the game-time on offer. However, there may be some key matches where the coaches need to exercise their judgement on which of the available players or combinations would best serve the interests of the team as a whole and we ask that you recognise that such difficult decisions will be made in good faith. This will happen only when it is absolutely necessary and the coaches recognise their responsibility to manage the expectations of the children in these circumstances.

Sunday training:

- Squad Lead Coaches, with assistance of Team Coaches, to design plans for each training session, to be arranged broadly as follows:-
 1. Warm up (all together)
 2. General skill development (all together/mixed groups)
 3. Specific skill development/match-based activities (within Squads/Teams)
 4. Matches (within Squads/Teams)
- We will continue with our weekly Player of the Week awards, one for the Bulls and one for the Sharks, which are intended to reward good learning and attitude and to provide encouragement, rather than simply to identify the most able players.

Internal Tournaments:

- 3 tournaments – Wilks, Mitchell & Egan Cups
- Round-robin format
- Mixed-ability teams – everyone takes part (coaches separated from own children)

Coach Development:

- Coaches are encouraged to take RFU Coaching and/or Refereeing courses, at Club's expense.
- 5 coaches in the Under-8 age group took the RFU Level 1 Coaching course in the summer; 4 more are scheduled to take the course during the season.
- All coaches will plan at least one training session during season, under Squad Lead Coach supervision.
- Coaches will attend regular internal coaching development sessions.

Problems:

We encourage you to discuss with us any problems or concerns you have with either your child's Team Coach, Squad Lead Coach or the Under-8 Head Coach.



Perfect Player Preparation and Pitchside Parenting

The Ten Commandments

1. Check your e-mails regularly and respond promptly.
2. Notify availability/non-availability promptly*.
3. Arrive on time, whether for festivals or training. Training usually starts at 10:00 sharp, so allow 10 minutes beforehand to get your child prepared pitchside.
4. Bring plenty of fluids and snacks for your child.
5. Bring the correct clean playing kit and appropriate additional clothing for the conditions**.
6. Ensure your child has been given a tag belt and 2 tags.
7. Ensure your child takes fluids regularly, esp. during festivals.
8. Ensure your child has been to the loo before training/matches.
9. Occasionally, a child may need to take a “time out” to avoid disruption to others – please support the coaches and take responsibility for your child...
10. ...but otherwise always offer positive encouragement.

* Players may be omitted from festivals if availability is not confirmed promptly

** **COLD IS OUR WORST ENEMY.** While the coaches will do their best to keep your child(ren) active, on cold and/or wet days you must provide them with:-

- **Woolly hat**
- **Layers** - including underneath playing kit
- **Additional tops** – e.g. training top/sweatshirt(s) – **NO HOODS**
- **Tracksuit bottoms** to wear between matches/after training

Little hands also get cold quickly, so you should also consider **Rugby mitts**. Thick gloves are not suitable, as they inhibit catching and tagging.

What Else Can You Offer?

We are all giving up our time for the Club, whether as players, administrators, coaches, referees, touchline supporters, tea-makers, kit-washers or taxi service. All of these roles contribute to the success of the Club. Parent/carer support is particularly important – please don't just stand on the touchline, but ask yourselves, what other support or assistance can you offer?



Coach and Admin Contact Details

U8 Head Coach

Mark Escolme markescolme@yahoo.co.uk 07969 013857

Bulls Lead Coach

Paul Thompson pthompson@capelthompson.co.uk 07961 127061

Sharks Lead Coach

Nigel Hughes nigel.hughes@compassmc.com 07920 862136

Coaches

Paul Adlam paul.adlam@phoenixventilation.co.uk 07775 514781

Laurence Bedford laurenceandsarah@sky.com 07747 174628

James Eaton jamesandclareplus4@btinternet.com 07505 450546

Julian Edwards julian.edwards@acegroup.com 07766 994333

Rick Egan eganar@btinternet.com 07765 106171

Sean Jones Sean.Jones@rbs.com 07837 567247

Brendan Massam brendan@massam.com 07718 967735

Gary Male Gary.Male@sonardyne.com 07817 286570

Mitch Mitchell trudieandmitch@gmail.com 07974 145897

Nick Purnell nick.purnell@clydeco.com 07802 355914

Luke Stone luke.stone@kpmg.co.uk 07769 972124

David Taylor les_taylors@yahoo.co.uk 07957 364235

James Thorne thorne.family1967@btinternet.com 07549 185922

Eamon Van Der Flier eamonvanderflier@aol.com 07901 516379

Toby Wilks toby@simpsonwilks.co.uk 07976 277869

Admin

Cath Adlam catherine.garland@gfk.com 07810 633101

Contact details are also available on the Club's website at www.farnhamrugby.org