

TOP TIPS FOR.....GROWING YOUR CLUB

HOW TO RECRUIT NEW PLAYERS AND KEEP THEM COMING BACK

To fit in line with the launch of our new Rugby League 9s – Development Festivals which are designed to help you set up a new Development team to keep hold of those players you recruit at the beginning of the year but then magically disappear! If you are interested in setting up a development team contact your regional education officer whose details can be found at the bottom of this document.

1. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF YOUR CURRENT PLAYERS ARE RETURNING NEXT YEAR?

Complete a player audit on your current membership to understand how many players are returning next year. Don't leave it until the last minute and have a nasty surprise to find out you only have five players left. By finding out early you can then start to be pro-active and plan for September or raise a concern with your AU or RFL Education Officer early enough for them to help.

Once you know who your returning players are make sure you keep them engaged during the off-season. Organise some touch sessions, socials or weekend tours over the summer. Keep in touch with them and provide regular updates. Don't just assume they will decide to play Rugby League again next year.



2. BE A WELCOMING CLUB:

University Rugby League clubs are notorious for being the friendliest and most welcoming clubs. We surveyed all players this year to understand why people who are new to the sport chose the Rugby League club and the standout reason was that they were much more friendly and welcoming than other sports. Don't lose that reputation, don't hold trials, make sure your club is the one that attracts players and keeps hold of them and doesn't turn anyone away!

3. DON'T LEAVE IT TO FRESHER'S FAYRE: Fresher fayres are a great way to recruit players but they are only one way to promote your club. Making sure your clubs social media pages are active over the summer months and regular messages on fresher forums about your club will help the club become recognised to these new recruits before they even get to the fayre. Be a presence around campus and halls during fresher's week, volunteer with the SU, get a large group of players to help new students move in or put on a BBQ for fresher's and their families when they arrive, first impressions count!

4. THINK DIFFERENT: During fresher's fayres, a thousand messages are being sold to every new student, they're a very crowded place. What will you do differently to everyone else that makes students not only remember Rugby League but want to turn up to the first session? #whatsyourpickle

5. MAKE IT EASY TO CHOOSE RUGBY

LEAGUE: Once you have got a potential players initial interest make sure it's as easy as possible for them to become a regular member of your club. Put a training session on immediately after fresher's fayre in an easily accessible location, this reduces the chances of players forgetting times and if you give them a great experience they will go out of their way to make the next session. If your first session is in a weeks' time on a pitch which is 3 miles from campus and involves a bus journey to get there then you have no chance! MAKE IT EASY!



6. DELIVER A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR EVERY NEW PLAYER: New players will come in all shapes and sizes, different levels of ability and a range of wants and needs it's the clubs job to give them all a GREAT experience. Recognise that players may be new and may have not experienced league before so adapt your sessions to suit different people's needs or even better run a couple of 'fresher's only/taster' sessions for students new to the game to learn the basics in a relaxed environment. Every player has different motivations or needs, so make sure your club have an offer for a range of different levels or experience or a more social offer such as a pitch up and play touch session once a week which is more about fun than preparing for games.

7. BE GREAT AT COMMUNICATING: How do you follow up initial interest, email isn't effective, use text messages or phone calls to communicate. People can't ignore a text or a call and it's more personal. Make sure your communication is regular, regular reminders in the lead up to the first training sessions to ensure they do not forget to attend and make sure they have all the details, venue, times, transport details etc. The small details count!



8. BUILD YOUR REPUTATION: The impact of your club having a good reputation with university staff and students is massive in terms of helping you recruit. Make sure you work hard at creating an excellent reputation for your club, don't be the club always in trouble with your AU. Be welcoming so students are talking about their positive experiences, engage with other clubs and societies, and ensure the tasks your AU asks you

9. ENGAGE WITH YOUR AU AND SU: Developing and maintaining a great relationship with your AU/SU has to be the most powerful tool you have as a club. Work hard to build a great relationship, make sure if they ask you to complete something that you do it on time. Go above and beyond to help them and they will go above and beyond to help your club. Stop making excuses, and start making an effort!

RFL EDUCATION OFFICER CONTACTS

North West and North East - Peter Brooke, peter.brooke@rfl.uk.com
South East and South West - Stephen Guan, Stephen.guan@rfl.uk.com
Yorkshire and the Midlands - Adam Hughes, adam.hughes@rfl.co.uk