

Colts' Association Handbook



Mission Statement:

- To maximize participation in Youth Rugby in Hong Kong
- To maximize the opportunities for participants to play the sport and enhance/expand their knowledge of the game
- To increase representative opportunities for Youth players
- To provide as safe an environment as is possible for players in a contact sport

September 2010

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➤ **Overview of Youth Rugby in Hong Kong**

The Hong Kong Rugby Football Union's vision is to be recognized by the local and international communities as a leader and innovator in the development of the sport of rugby. Development and support of youth rugby is a key component of this, through the infrastructure of Clubs, Schools and Tertiary institutions.

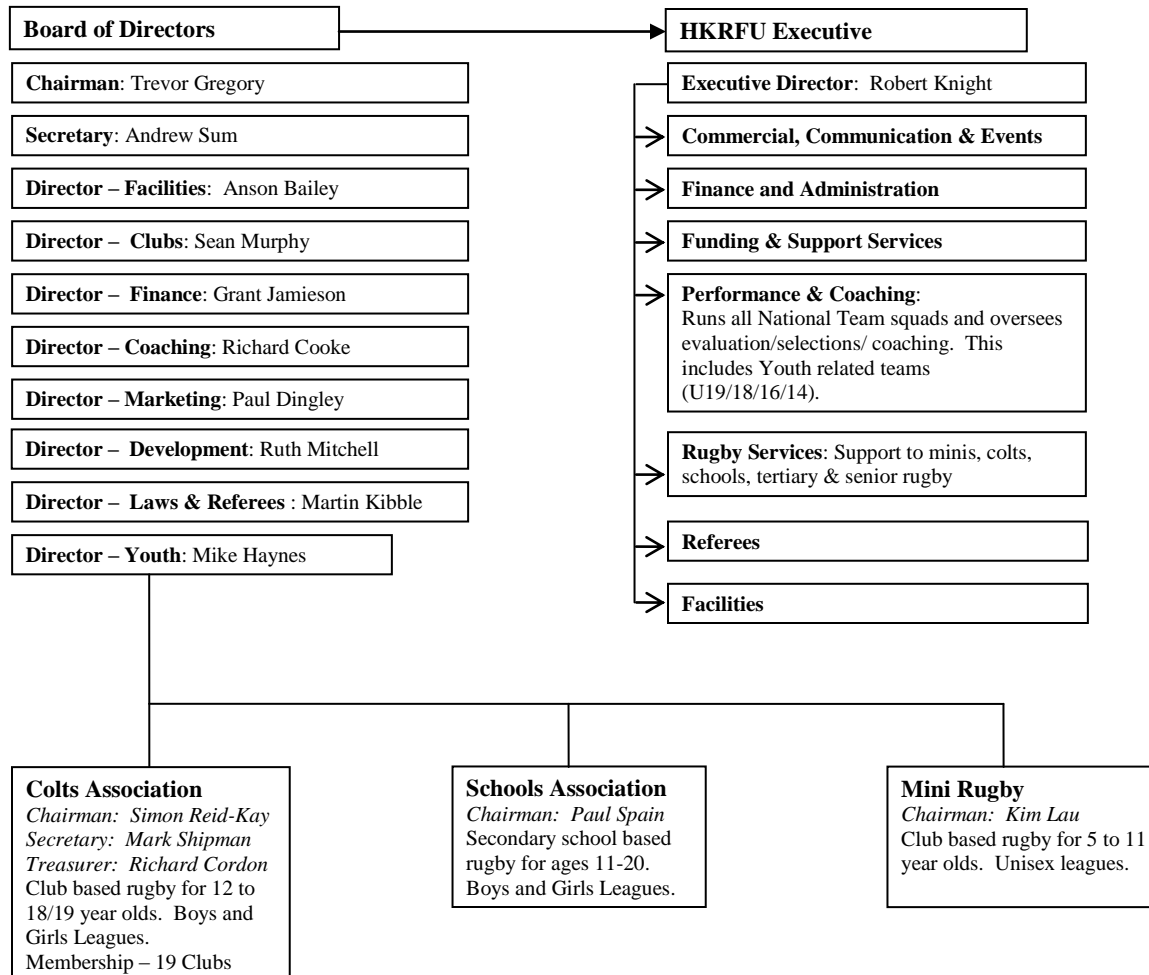
The HKRFU employs a permanent Executive Director who has a number of key personnel reporting to him who are each responsible for the remaining staff employed by the Union to work solely for the betterment of Hong Kong rugby.

The Board of the HKRFU comprises 10 Directors. The Board oversees the professional staff. Each Director is elected for a two-year term with eight of the directors (excluding the Chairman and Secretary) overseeing a specific facet of HK rugby (e.g. Facilities, Clubs, etc.). The Union also has a Director of Youth who oversees all rugby related to children up to young adults, i.e. five year olds through to school leavers.

Youth rugby is organized around the three main centers of rugby activity for schoolchildren and young adults in Hong Kong: Schools, Clubs and University. In addition the Club section which promotes rugby from the ages of 5-18 is further split into two groups:

- Mini – Ages U6 – U12 (split into individual year age groups)
- Colts – Ages U14 – U18 (U19 in lower divisions) (currently split into three 2-year age groups)

The HKRFU is organized as follows (note all Directors are volunteers)



The Colts Association is a constituent Member of the HKRFU and the holder of one of the 17 votes in the HKRFU. It represents any club that enters boys or girls teams in the established U14, U16 and U18/19 Colts leagues. Each of these clubs is entitled to have a representative sit on the Colts Association Committee. In addition the Colts Association Committee has a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer who are elected at its Annual General Meeting. A representative of the HKRFU Community Rugby Department also sits on the Colts Association Committee.

Under the Union's *2006 Rugby Road Map*, the stated target for Colts is for all member clubs to participate in each existing age group, creating a minimum of 12 teams in each of boys U14, U16 and U18/U19 leagues, and nine teams in the girls U14, U16 and U19 leagues.

In addition, it is hoped to increase player numbers to allow competitive divisions in a one year age band structure of each of U13, U14, U15, U16, U17 and U18/U19.

➤ **Colts Association Organization/Officers/Teams/Meetings**

Clubs and Teams: The current Clubs comprising the members of the Colts Association are listed at [<http://www.hkrugby.com/en/node/549>]. The Association has been expanding every year and currently operates a number of Leagues and Tournaments (including a 15 a-side league and 7 a-side and 10 a-side tournaments).

Officers: The Colts Association is staffed by volunteers from each Club. Its function is purely advisory. It makes recommendations to the Youth Committee that in turn forwards these for acceptance by the Union. The constituent Clubs in turn elect : a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer from amongst the members. Their responsibilities are:

Chairman – To chair meetings and act as the Colts representative on the Youth Committee which is chaired by the HKRFU Director of Youth;

Secretary – To keep the minutes of the Committee's meetings and ensure the Association acts according to its by-laws and constitution; and

Treasurer – To manage the Association's finances and ticket allocation for the 7s.

So far as is practicable, and to ensure continuity, the Chairman and Treasurer are elected for two year terms on even years; and the Secretary on odd years.

Committee Meetings:

- Regular – The Colts Association meets one time per month between August and April/May
- AGM – Association elections are held at the end of the rugby Season, typically May-June at the Colts Association Annual General Meeting (AGM). Each Club has a single vote. Any nominee for the position of Chairman, Secretary or Treasury with over 50% of the eligible vote is elected for a two year period.

The Colts Association may from time to time establish sub-committees to address particular issues or concerns, or to develop a particular new initiative to benefit Colts rugby. For example, the Small Clubs sub-committee addresses initiatives to assist the development and growth of smaller clubs.

➤ **League Structure for Boys and Girls Youth Rugby**

Eligibility: Any age eligible player (See Appendix 1) registered with a Club can play Colts rugby in Hong Kong. This includes: current residents, students who are at boarding school outside Hong Kong and visiting friends.

Age Groups: Colts competitions are organised on an age (not weight) basis. They play in two or three year bands – U14, U16 and U18/U19 for Boys and U14, U16 and U19 for Girls. The age cut off is based on a calendar year (i.e. Jan 1 to 31 December). See Appendix 1

Season: The HK rugby season typically starts in early September and goes through to the HK Sevens in late March/early April. Club rugby is, with limited exceptions, played on weekends. Seniors play on Saturdays and Mini and Colts on Sundays. Most Colts clubs train on Sundays as well.

Integrated Calendar:

The Colts Association has, in conjunction with the HKRFU Performance Department, the Schools Association and the HK Mini RFU developed an Integrated Calendar [[web link](#)] indicating key events and fixtures in the rugby calendar for Youth Rugby in Hong Kong. The purpose of the calendar is to promote coordination of the development of youth rugby in Hong Kong; identify and minimize calendar congestion where possible; and assist players, coaches and parents in managing their rugby commitments.

Leagues:

Boys

The rugby year opens with training commencing generally towards the end of August/beginning of September building up to an age group 10's tournaments in middle/late September. This allows Clubs to assess squad members and strengths of players before the 15's season starts in early October.

The Boys then play a 15-a-side league. Teams are divided into divisions in each age group based on team members and relative strengths so as to promote competitive matches. The lowest division of each age group may decide to play matches other than 15-a-side depending on their player numbers; otherwise all Clubs/teams are expected to field 15-a-side teams throughout the 15's season.

The Colts Association has adopted a set of Principles to be adhered to by any club which has the strength and depth of talent in a particular age group sufficient to enter two teams of equal strength into the same league division or two teams in the same league division but where one team is stronger than the other. Those

Principles are set out below. The 15's season ends on a Grand Finals day where traditionally the top teams play to decide the Championship for each age group division. The Colts Committee may decide from time to time to adjust the teams playing on Grand Finals day for the benefit of the development of HK Colts rugby players as a whole.

There is also a "International Youth 10's Tournament" (IYT) played in the week of the Hong Kong Sevens to which overseas clubs are invited to play Hong Kong based teams at all Colts levels.

The rugby year culminates with a short 7's season in March.

Key fixtures:

Team Size	Competitions	Timing
10s	U14, U16 and U18/U19 – Tournament	September
15s	U14, U16 and U18/U19 – 2-3 Divisions/age group & Grand Finals	October – February
	U14 – U19 NYD Tournament *	New Years Day
7s	U14 and U16 – Tournament	March
	U 18 – Tournament	December
	Showcase 7s **	HK 7s Weekend
10s	HK International Youth Tournament (IYT)	Thursday prior to the Hong Kong Sevens

* Some of the fixtures on NYD involve two HK teams playing. The selection for this is decided by the organizers of NYD prior to the event to ensure the most competitive level of games possible.

** Showcase 7s teams are played between HK Island and Peninsula teams. In recent years, eligibility is decided by where the player lives not on Club (i.e. players ordinarily residing on HK Island vs. all others)

Girls

HK Girls rugby is still in the early stage of development and while seeing huge growth is still built around a series of 7s and 10-a-side tournaments. The Girls have traditionally played 10s in the first half of the season, and 7s in the second half. There will be a total of six tournament days, with matches at all age groups. The season culminates in the "All Girls Rugby Day" at King's Park in April.

Key fixtures

Team Size	Competitions	Timing
10s	U14, U6 and U19 – Tournaments	October - December
7s	U14, U16 and U19 - Tournaments	January - March
7s	U14, U16 and U19 – NYD Tournament	January 1 st
7s	Sevens Showcase	March
	All Girls Rugby Day	April

Fixtures calendar is "locked":

Given the growth of Youth rugby two of the increasing constraints on Colts matches availability pitches and referees. Therefore the Colts Association has moved to a more rigid schedule. The schedule for each coming year will be approved at the start of the year (September) and teams will be expected to adhere to it. If games need to be cancelled the cancelling team will have to reschedule within two weeks or forfeit to the other team.

The decision to award points for the forfeit will be made by the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of the Colts Association acting jointly through a simple majority vote. As in Senior rugby the game will be:

- Registered as a victory for the non-cancelling team who will be awarded a score of 20-0 but no bonus points.
- The team that cannot play the forfeited game will also have one point deducted from their League standing.

Note the following additional options are also available:

- Senior Rugby also fines the cancelling team out of the subvention,
- The Colts Committee may vote to disallow some, or all, of allocation of HK Sevens tickets to Clubs repeatedly forfeiting games.

Match results

Both team results should return a match report (see Appendix 4) by the Wednesday after the match to Brandon either by e-mail or fax.

Principles to apply where a club enters two teams into the same League Division**Two Equal Ability Teams**

These Principles apply to a Club wishing to enter two **equal ability** teams in any one division: -

1. Promote and encourage increased competition for the benefit of players & Colts Rugby in Hong Kong

The purpose of entering equal-ability teams in the same division is solely to promote increased competition within a division by increasing both the number of competitive games and the quality of individual games within that division for the ultimate benefit of players and Colts Rugby in Hong Kong.

2. Produce teams of equal-ability to achieve the desired increase in competition

Each team should be constructed so that they are of equal-ability so far as it is possible.

3. Maintain the “equal-ability” balance

A club playing two equal-ability teams in a division should seek to maintain this equal team balance throughout the season and any new players joining part way through as permanent replacements for players who leave part way through the season should be allocated to a team squad with this Principle in mind. “New” players include existing club players who form part of the available pool of players (See Principle 4 below).

Mid-way through a season, if it transpires that one team is dominating the division to such an extent that the objective in Principle 1 is not being achieved then subject to the prior agreement of the Colts Committee, a once-only rebalancing of intra-club teams will be permitted.

The mid-season rebalancing opportunity should not be used to tactically switch players for the purposes of manipulating league positions but only to ensure Principle 1 is upheld.

4. Ensure intra-club competition - Independence of teams from the same club

A named team of 15 first choice players should be selected for each team at the beginning of the season and this list circulated to all other teams in that division. All other remaining players registered for a Club will be deemed “pool players” and may play for either or both teams in order to afford flexibility to coaches especially where the number of available players is low. This flexibility also allows coaches to maximise competitive pitch time for all available players. Each team should be considered independent of each other although teams may train and be coached together without breaching this requirement of “independence”.

Coaches and managers should always field their strongest team for all games (including intra-club games) from the pool of players available. Full use of all pool players should be made before considering drafting players in from the club’s other team playing in the same division.

5. Promote player safety above all else - unavoidable switching of players between the two equal teams

Player safety is paramount and non-negotiable! Generally once a player is allocated to a team he cannot then play for the club's other team playing in the same division unless exceptional circumstances dictate.

Other than "rebalancing" (please see Principle 3), the only exceptional circumstance is where there is not a "suitable replacement" for an injured player or a player who has left the club, from within the remaining pool of players. The lack of a "suitable replacement" in this instance relates to a scenario where the safety of an available pool player would be jeopardised by playing him in a position for which he is not trained or physically suited. The existence of a common pool of players which both equal-ability teams may call upon should greatly reduce the need to switch players between the two teams.

To reflect the fact that the switching of a player between the two equal teams is a "last resort" solution; once a player has "switched" squads under this exceptional circumstance then he will not be permitted to switch back to his original squad. If the switch was prompted by injury then the returning player must join the team from which his replacement came.

6. Act with integrity, sportsmanship and in the spirit of fair play

Coaches, managers and players of all clubs will at all times act in accordance with the spirit of these Principles. Suspected breaches of these Principles should in the first instance be raised with the Coach of the opposing team; if a resolution cannot be reached then the matter should be escalated to the Colts Association whose decision on the matter will be final. Deliberately fielding a "weakened" team to influence final league positions, tactical switching by exaggerating injury positions or frivolous claims of suspected breaches are non-exhaustive examples of conduct which are contrary to this Principle.

Two Teams of Unequal Strength

These Principles apply to a Club wishing to enter two teams in any one division but where one team is of stronger ability than the other.

1. Promote and encourage increased competition for the benefit of players & Colts Rugby in Hong Kong

The purpose of entering two teams of unequal strength in the same division is solely to promote increased competition among a greater number of players within a division by increasing the number of competitive games within that division for the ultimate benefit of players and Colts Rugby in Hong Kong.

2. Team Construction

Each team should be constructed so that they are split into a first team and second team so far as is possible; with the 15 strongest players in the squad constituting the first team.

3. Maintain the balance

A club playing two teams of unequal strength in a division should seek to field its strongest players in the first team throughout the season. Any new players joining part way through the season should be allocated to a team with this Principle in mind.

There should be no tactical switching of players for the purposes of manipulating results or league positions.

4. Ensure intra-club competition - Independence of teams from the same club

A named team of 15 first choice players should be selected for the first team at the beginning of the season and this list circulated to all other teams in that division. Any changes to the 15 first choice players during the season, for example because new players join or because of injury, should be circulated to all other teams in that division. All other remaining players registered for a Club will be eligible to play for the second team; they may also play for the first team in order to afford flexibility to coaches especially where the number of available players to the first team is low. This flexibility also allows coaches to maximise competitive pitch time for all available players. Each team should be considered independent of each other although teams may train and be coached together without breaching this requirement of “independence”.

Coaches and managers should always field their strongest first team for all games (including intra-club games) from the pool of players available. No player should play for both the first and second team over the same playing weekend.

Players from the second team squad, subject to the foregoing Principles, are permitted to play for the first team. The maximum squad size for the first team shall be 23.

5. Promote player safety above all else - unavoidable switching of players from the first team

Player safety is paramount and non-negotiable! Generally once a player is allocated to the first team he cannot then play for the club's second team playing in the same division unless exceptional circumstances dictate.

The only exceptional circumstance is where there is not a “suitable replacement” for an injured player in the second team squad within the

remaining pool of players. The lack of a “suitable replacement” in this instance relates to a scenario where the safety of an available second team player would be jeopardised by playing him in a position for which he is not trained or physically suited.

6. Act with integrity, sportsmanship and in the spirit of fair play

Coaches, managers and players of all clubs will at all times act in accordance with the spirit of these Principles. Suspected breaches of these Principles should in the first instance be raised with the Coach of the opposing team; if a resolution cannot be reached then the matter should be escalated to the Colts Association whose decision on the matter will be final. Deliberately fielding a “weakened” first team to strengthen the second team and accordingly influence final league positions, tactical switching by exaggerating injury positions or frivolous claims of suspected breaches are non-exhaustive examples of conduct which are contrary to this Principle.

➤ **Registration**

The Union continues to consider the revamp of its registration policy. For the time being each team will register their players as they see fit and then provide the Union with their members lists in an Excel spreadsheet format covering the following cells:

First Name
Last Name
Date of Birth
Phone #
Club
E-Mail Address

All clubs are required to provide official player and team numbers to the Committee at the beginning of each season, as and when known.

➤ **Finances**

Accounts are handled by the Treasurer who is responsible for maintaining and presenting updates during the year, as well as an end of year report.

The Colts banker is HSBC. Payments in HKD to:
Beneficiary Name: Hong Kong Colts Rugby Association
Banks: HSBC
Account number: 110-476488-001

The Colts Association looks after the following funds:

1. Union Subvention for Boys and Girls teams from U14 to U19
2. IYT
3. Sevens Tickets
4. Easter rep tours

Union Subvention: Once the Union subvention is agreed in the annual budget, the Treasurer is responsible for collecting the total subvention and then distributing the agreed amounts to each Club. This is worked out by the agreed number of teams submitted by each club per age group. A small amount is deducted from each boy's team subvention to cater for any extra development needs during the season.

IYT: Each overseas club entering the IYT is required to pay an entry fee. All of these funds are then collected by the tournament manager and deposited into the Colts account.

Sevens Tickets: Each local Club may request sevens tickets. These are then totalled up and forwarded to the Union for approval. Once agreed, the treasurer will then collect monies for the tickets on a two tiered process; 50% in October and then the balance of 50% in January. The monies received are passed over to the Union in full and tickets are then duly dispersed to each Club.

Easter Rep Tours: Each age group tour manager will collect HK\$1,000 from each player to cover leisure time activities, not covered by the Union. The monies are deposited into the Colts account and then given back to the respective managers to take on tour. Any monies not spent on tour are then put back into the Colts account once the tour is over.

In general the Colts account runs at a small profit each year. This surplus will be used to fund extra development needs for each season.

➤ **Overseas Barbarians**

[D. Peters to provide]

Just because you're studying overseas doesn't mean you can't be part of the Hong Kong rugby community – the Union and Colts Association organize a number of matches and programmes every year specifically for our “Overseas Barbarians”, and we run a database and Facebook site [search Facebook for HK Overseas Barbarians] to help you keep in touch. The highlight of the Overseas season is traditionally the Standard Chartered New Year's Day Tournament, where overseas students face their Hong Kong-based peers at Under 16 and Under 18 age groups, but in recent seasons there have also been Overseas Barbarians teams in the Standard Chartered International Youth Tournament which takes place in the week of the Hong Kong 7s, and also a summer programme with matches against visiting school teams.

No matter what standard of rugby you are playing, we want you to feel part of the Hong Kong rugby family, and don't forget many of the Overseas boys have gone on to great achievements...Mark Wright, Hong Kong 7s captain and currently playing in Japan is one famous old boy, as is Scottish international centre Graeme Morrison who played in the New Year's Day Tournament at U15 level. To find out more, and get yourself on our mailing list, contact Robbie McRobbie [robbie@hkrugby.com].

➤ **Play Up/Down Process & Evaluation**

The Colts Association has two very distinct policies for playing up and down. Playing down is permitted for all age groups. Playing up is limited only to U16 players playing up to U18.

The Colts Association has set these guidelines as a means to provide parents some assurance that a process is in place. However, the Colts Association and HKRFU also note that this process relies on a large degree of trust from the Clubs and participants and it is simply impossible to police to ensure it is carried out to the letter. Nonetheless, breaches of these guidelines will be taken very seriously by the Colts Association.

Introduction – Why permit it at all?

1. The Colts competitions are organised on an age (not weight) basis, in two year age bands – under 14s, 16s and 18s (U19s for the lower divisions) for Boys and U14,U16 and U19s for Girls. The age cut off is based on a calendar year (i.e. 1 January to 31 December). Play Downs with Girls is not permitted.

2. Hong Kong Colts Rugby is growing but it still has a relatively limited pool of players at the Colts level (hence why the two-year bandings are required). At the same time the Association recognizes that the differences in size and maturity of players in these age bands can vary significantly. To address this players may be permitted to play out of their age bands – either in a lower age band (a Play Down) or in a higher age band (a Play Up).
3. The objective of the Colts Association is to encourage maximum participation in the sport while at the same time to promote safe, competitive and enjoyable rugby at all times. The purpose of the Play Up/Play Down process is to facilitate these objectives for exceptional circumstances.
4. At the same time the Colts Association is keen to provide for an appropriate transition step for boys/girls to move to Senior Rugby, should they desire to. To manage this transition the Colts Association and HKRFU have created a detailed process based on those used elsewhere in the world.
5. A list of all players approved to play up or down will be kept by the Colts Association and will be made available to Clubs on request to the Secretary.
6. This section sets out guidelines and procedures for approval for Play Ups and Play Downs. Players who have not been approved by the Colts Association for a Play Up / Play Down should play in their correct age band.

Guidelines – Play Down

7. Generally, players should play in their correct age band. But in the context of the two year bands, it is recognised that different levels of experience in rugby, maturity and physical development, size and other factors may mean that it is appropriate for players to play in a different age band.
8. A number of factors may be relevant to the decision as to whether it is appropriate for a player to Play Up or Down. The factors will vary with each individual, but they will include:
 - **Age** – only players in the adjoining year are allowed to play down
 - **Safety** – of the player and of other players on the pitch. This is a paramount consideration.
 - **Size** – height, weight. The Association has no set criteria on this but in general the approval is for undersized players only.
 - **Experience** – an inexperienced or novice player may be a suitable play down candidate.
 - **The player's circumstances** – mainly skills.
9. A player's circumstances may change in the course of the season, and it may be appropriate for the Colts Association to reconsider an approval during the course of the season.

10. U19 age boys who are still in secondary school and not playing senior rugby are eligible to play down and can request permission to do so.
11. A player who plays down may only play for the most senior team for their club in the age group they are approved to play in
12. No player playing down is permitted to play any form of representative rugby, including NYD or the Showcase 7s.

Procedure – Play Down

13. All applications for Play Downs are to be made on the prescribed form provided in Appendix 2 [*web link*].
14. The form should be completed in full with all required documents (e.g. photograph) provided, and be approved (through a signature only) by: the parents of the player, the coach or the respective Club's Colts Chair or other responsible person on behalf of the chair.
15. The player should not Play Down until his or her application has been approved.
16. The application will be considered by the Colts Committee as soon as possible after the application is submitted. Usually, this will be at the next scheduled Committee meeting.
17. If approved by the Association the Chair of the Colts Committee will countersign the form and return it to the Club.
18. For approved Play Downs, **prior to each game** the coach or manager of the team fielding the Play Down player must inform the opposing team's coach prior to the commencement of play, and must visually identify each Play Down who will be playing in the game. Coaches/managers are encouraged (but are under no obligation) to enquire of each other prior to each game whether the other team intends to play any Play Down player.
19. If the opposing team's coach considers that the Play Down poses a safety risk to his players he can object to the Play Down player either before the match kicks off or can ask for his/her removal from the pitch at half time (or at an interim water break, if any).
20. The only basis for an objection to an approved Play Down playing is player safety.

21. In the event of such an objection being lodged, or if, having regard to the factors referred to in paragraph 8, a Club considers the approval of any particular Play Down of another Club ought to be reconsidered by the Colts Committee, it may request that the Committee reconsider the application.
22. The Colts Committee may reconsider the approval of a Play Down in response to such a request, or at any time, again having regard to the factors referred to in paragraph 8 and any change in circumstances since its initial approval of the Play Up or Down.

Guidelines – Play Up

23. The Play Up procedure is intended only for boys or girls looking for more playing time and/or a greater challenge from their rugby than that which is achievable in their current age grouping alone.
24. This is only applicable to U16 players who have achieved a level of physical maturity and have the requisite skill levels to be successful playing at a physically more challenging level of rugby (i.e. the U18s). This option will only be open to 15 year old players in the U16 age group (i.e. the upper year of the age group).
25. If an U16 player plays up he is not allowed to play in the U16 section during that season
26. An U16 rugby player can play representative rugby in his proper age band (i.e. U16) but not U18.

Procedures – Play up

27. Play Up procedures within Colts are exactly the same as with Play Down procedures noted above with two additional requirements:
 - The process of approval will require that after approval by the Committee the players in question also must be evaluated; and
 - Colts approved by the HKRFU Department of Higher Performance; and

U18s Playing in Senior Rugby – Many rugby unions provide their better Youth players the opportunity to enter Senior Rugby before they turn 18. HK is no exception:

28. Youth rugby is a transition stage for players to go from Mini to playing Senior rugby. To promote the highest level of rugby for participants (that want to continue at the senior level) some Colts players are permitted to play on senior teams if the parents request this. While the Union recognizes that playing senior rugby is a choice for the child and parents to make the Union does, in order to promote safety, offer parents and clubs a means to evaluate

what level of senior rugby they should play. Play Up procedures for playing in the Senior Divisions are as follows:

- It is limited to only players who are 17 on the day they start to play Senior rugby;
- Nominations are made as described above and then submitted to the Colts Association;
- The Colts Association approves them as they would any other Play Up request.
- [If parents are uncertain about the abilities of their child and want a third party opinion the Union can undertake a variety of tests to ascertain suitability and gives their recommendation based on two key factors:
 1. Position played; and
 2. The Division in which the HKRFU considers the player should be playing. (Note that the Senior League has five divisions)]
- At any point in the season the player can request for a re-look [or the Union can recommend a player] be allowed to play at a higher division.

Please note:

1. That the Union and the Colts Association are only acting in an advisory capacity. As with any play up request it is solely the choice of the parent to allow this.
2. That there are differences between the Insurance policies provided by the HKRFU for Youth and Senior rugby that all parties need to make themselves aware of.

29. All applications for Play Ups are to be made on the prescribed form provided in Appendix 2 [*web link*].

Other points

30. The procedure for approving Play Ups or Downs does not provide for “blanket” objections by any coach or Club to approved Play Ups or Downs being fielded by a team. As safety and the individual player’s circumstances are the criteria for approving a Play Up or Down application, each individual approval is to be treated separately and on its merits having regard to the criteria identified in this section. Again, safety of the player or other players is the relevant basis for any objection to the Play Up or Down participating in a game.

31. If other reasons indicate that the approval of the Play Down should be reconsidered on a wider basis, then this procedure permits that reconsideration by the Colts Committee.

➤ **7s Tickets –**

The Colts Association is given the right to source tickets to the Hong Kong 7s directly from the HKRFU. While traditionally clubs have been allocated two tickets per player this is changing given the increases in the popularity of the 7s and the growth in size of the Colts playing population. We expect changes will be made to the ongoing process year to year.

➤ **HKRFU Website**

The HKRFU website can be found at www.hkrugby.com and there is also a separate Sevens website at www.hksevens.com

On the Union website there is a Colts section which is maintained and updated by Edith Chung [edith.chung@hkrugby.com]. All amendments, news stories and media issues for Colts rugby and the Colts Association should be sent to Mark Shipman, the Secretary [Mark.Shipman@cliffordchance.com].

There is a weekly HKRFU e-newsletter “Rugby Update” which contains information on all levels of rugby – contact Robbie McRobbie [robbie@hkrugby.com] for more details.

[*To update*]

➤ **Representative Rugby**

The HKRFU provides a number of opportunities for local players to enhance their skill set and represent either the SAR or sub-parts of Hong Kong (e.g. Island or Peninsula Select teams).

Key Representative Events:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Description</i>
New Years Day	Since 1967 the HKRFU has hosted an all day event showcasing the best of HK rugby from ages 11 – 18. This includes HK versus Overseas Schoolboys (i.e. children of HK residents who attend school outside HK) games at the U16/18/20 level. In addition inter-HK teams will play competitive matches. This includes the Girls U14/16/19 and Boys U14s.
Incoming Tours	The HKRFU encourages and supports incoming touring sides to allow the best of HK or development sides to play.
Showcase 7s	The IRB Hong Kong Sevens is, without doubt, the premier IRB Sevens event. Prior to the matches on each day the Youth Sections conduct a series of 7s games featuring the best of HK players (both boys and girls) from ages 5 to 19.
Easter Tours	Each year the HKRFU select squads of 24-28 players to tour as a national squad to play appropriately challenging opposition a variety of places including: Dubai, Australia, Japan, etc. These tours occur during the Easter break and typically last 6-11 days.

Selection Policy:

With the growth of HK Schools and Colts rugby the process of selection has grown more complex. Today the Colts and School Associations and the HKRFU are committed to a number of clear objectives to ensure that HK can continually enhance local rugby. These include:

- Meeting clear fitness and skills standards
- Maximizing the opportunities for prospective players to show their abilities through trial and rep games
- Complete transparency so that prospective players, their coaches and parents understand where a qualified player is nationally ranked and what he needs to do to enhance his/her prospects for selection to the HK team for their respective age group.

- The representative coaches will utilize charts and position specific job descriptions as selection tools.
- The representative coaches will develop and adhere to a comprehensive watching programme that should be communicated to all concerned stakeholders.
- The representative coaches will hold regular selection meetings and discuss all age grade players.

Selection Process:

May	Set <i>Standards</i> – Performance Department issues position specific Fitness Standards
Early November	<i>Nominations</i> – Clubs, Schools and the Union (using the YAP) will nominate qualified players who have achieved the Fitness Standards.
Late November	<i>Testing</i> – Nominees will be divided into 2-4 centres where they will be tested on specific Fitness and Skills
To mid Dec	<i>Trials</i> – Each Centre team will play a series of round robins watched by National Selectors for their respective age groups. After each game the selectors will produce a 1 st and Shadow XV based on their assessment. This will be made available to the schools and Colts Association.
Mid December	<i>Selections</i> – Performance Department will issue a <u>Depth Chart</u> listing the top players by ranking in each position. Players for NYD will be chosen from this depth chart.
January – March	As the National Squads train towards the Easter tour players will have the opportunity to be re-assessed and change their position on the Depth Chart.

Trials and Pre-Tour Matches:

Increasingly the HKRFU are sending the Boys teams to play in locales where the opposition are both physically bigger and exposed to more competition at a higher level (e.g. Australia & Japan). To better prepare the players the Union (supported by the Colts and Schools Associations) is promoting a variety of games designed to be played under controlled circumstances and to challenge the best players in HK.

U14s – [*Robbie/Brandon to provide*]

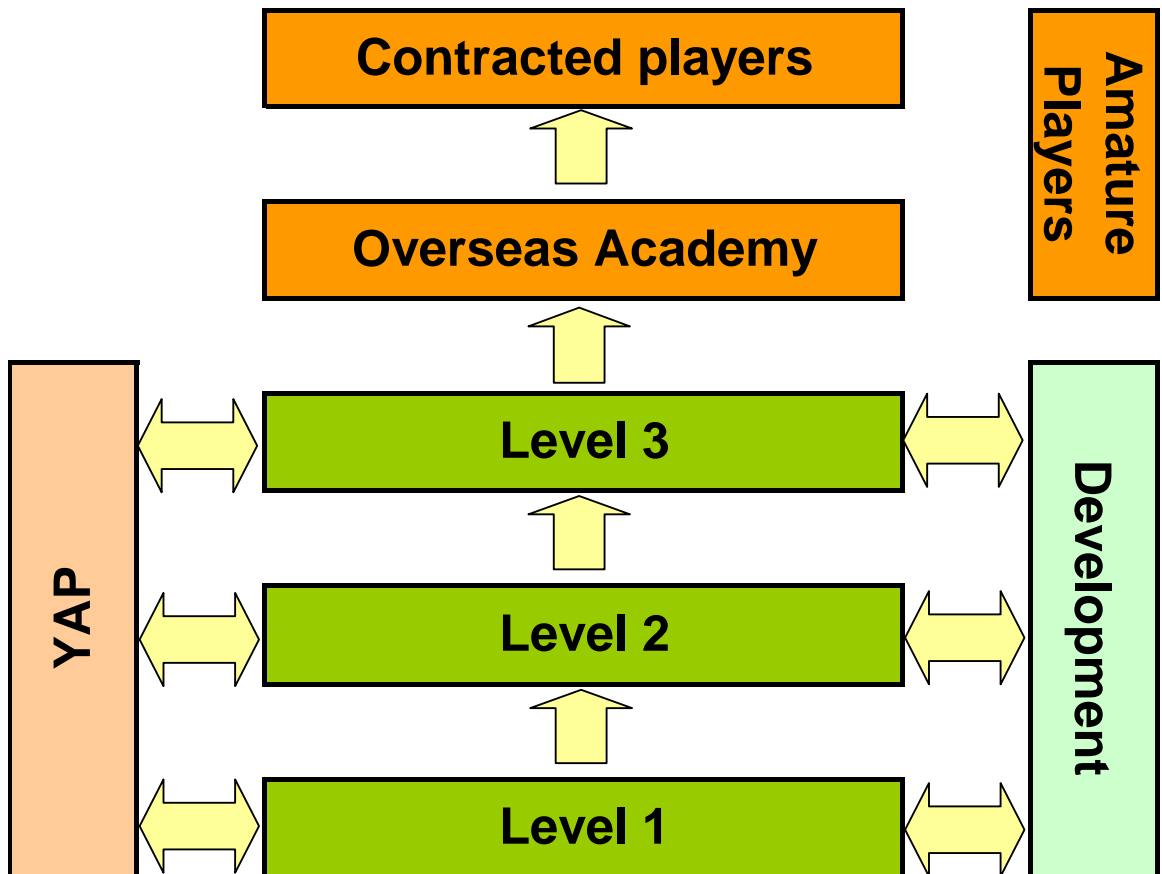
U16s – The HK U16 team may play a series of one off matches with the HK U18 team prior to the tour. In general (but not always) the players selected will be the younger U18 team members. It should be noted that to date most U16 players are also playing Schools A grade rugby and therefore competing on a regular basis with all U18 players.

U18s – The U18 League is the smallest and least developed part of HK Youth rugby and therefore the place where players get the least amount of challenging games. To address this the Union will select what is initially a 50 person squad. This will be divided into 2 Centres (Island and Peninsula based) of equal size who will train mid-week. Each Team will train individually and play the other U18 Centre as well as 3-4 carefully selected senior Club Development Teams or Tertiary Select Teams.

Hong Kong Academy

The HKRFU is in the midst of revising the structure and purpose of the HK Academy. Once clarified this will be added here.

Tentative Structure for the HK Academy



➤ **Development Rugby**

A key initiative for both the HKRFU and Youth Committee is to promote more rugby in the local population which has less direct access to the sport. The key to this effort is greater exposure in both local schools and regional teams who tend to lack the coaching depth provided by the ESF and larger Clubs. This effort focuses on two key initiatives:

- a) **Direct Coaching** – Staff of the Community Rugby Office of the HKRFU on a regular basis hold clinics and seminars at local Chinese schools and Clubs to promote the sport and teach the basics to interested players.
- b) [**Young Athlete Program** (“YAP”) – From August to November the Union funds more intensive and higher skill classes for 120 young players through the YAP. This is a program funded by the LCSD where players aged 12 to 18 are coached by leading local players/ coaches/ HKRFU staff. The process is broken into several steps:
 - a) Nomination – This is done through the players school/club/Union
 - b) Testing – Players must pass minimum skill and fitness tests
 - c) Training – A 10 week Programme held at 2 training centres on Wednesday evenings starting in early September and continuing through to early November.]

➤ **Youth Rugby Laws**

Youth rugby XV and Sevens rugby in Hong Kong follow the iRB laws variations for youth rugby, see [here](#) in English, [here](#) in Chinese.

Local HK variations include:

Squeeze Ball - Law 14 and 15

No player involved in a match at any age level from under 19 downwards shall use in training or in a match the technique known or referred to as Squeeze ball.

Note: "Squeeze ball" is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents) usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushes the ball back between the legs.

Sanction: Penalty Kick

Match length

Match length in Youth XV rugby shall be

- U14 – 25 minutes per half,
- U16 – 30 minutes per half,
- U19 – 35 minutes per half.

Substitutions and Yellow Cards

In order to establish a consistent set of rules with respect to substitutions and yellow cards, the following principles shall be applied:

- Substitutions
 - Rolling substitutions are allowed
 - Substitutions can only be made when the ball is dead
 - Substituted players should only run on to the playing field from the half way line
 - Referee's attention should be drawn to any substitution
- Yellow Cards
 - Player sin binned after a yellow card should serve his/her time at the half way line
 - A sin binned player cannot come on as a substitute
 - Opposition coach/team manager should police the player who has been sin binned.

➤ ***Health and Safety in Rugby***

The following is adapted from the HKRFU website but is equally applicable to older players.

Whilst everyone associated with Colts Rugby wants the players to have fun, the need for safety in play and in equipment is paramount.

All players for Clubs should wear mouthguards to protect the teeth and, whilst optional, the use of approved headgear and shoulder pads is promoted. All of these are easily available in Sports Shops or through the Clubs.

The coaching itself also involves safety through well trained play. Teams will be adopting virtually full adult rules for their matches, but coaches and referees are empowered to change some areas of play (e.g. non-contest scrums) if they consider any danger of injury exists.

At all times, players should be coached to a suitable standard for safe and enjoyable competition. The risk of injury is less when children learn the skills in a structured way. Coaches and parent should strive to avoid physical mismatch. Players should not be pushed beyond their reasonable capability.

➤ ***Disciplinary Procedures and Guidelines***

There is both a “Code of Conduct” and a “Disciplinary Procedure” specifically for Youth rugby. The Code of Conduct is published on the Union website [http://www.hkrugby.com/system/files/community_dept/Youth_Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf] under the Colts Section, and is reproduced at Appendix 3 – all coaches, parents and players are expected to adhere to the Code at all times. All clubs must remind their coaches, parents and players of the Code of Conduct at least at the beginning of each season and, should the case require, more frequently during the season. Breaches of the Code will be viewed very seriously. The Disciplinary Procedure is also on the website under the Colts Section [<http://www.hkrugby.com/en/Refereeing/youth-disciplinary-regulations.html>].

➤ **Insurance**

The Union has two areas of insurance cover (excluding coverage provided to national team players) which cover two distinct areas of HK rugby:

- 1) Covers Mini, Schools, Colts only – Covers all players playing in Union approved games against similarly covered players but **not** against people outside the age group limit (which is anyone over 19 years of age). The actual maximum coverage provided by the Union is as follows:
 - a. Death - HK\$100,000
 - b. Permanent Disablement - HK\$100,000
 - c. Medical Expenses - HK\$ 50,000
 - d. Dental Expenses - HK\$ 12,000

Eligibility – Anyone aged 4 - 19 playing in a HKRFU approved fixture. This includes returning Overseas children playing in HKRFU approved games (e.g. New Year's Day)

- 2) Covers all players playing Senior Rugby (note HK is covered under a policy of the England Rugby Union and amounts are in pounds) – Coverage is for:
 - a. Death - GBP 20,000
 - b. Permanent Disability - GBP 500,000

Additional Coverage – There is no coverage for medical or dental related rugby injuries at the adult level.

Eligibility - This is limited to people 18 or older playing Senior Rugby and any 17 year olds who has followed the Protocol Senior Rugby and properly completed the Underage Player Form. Please note the link below to the Union website for more information and where to retrieve the forms.

In addition, the Union has public liability insurance which covers accidental bodily injury to any person, up to a limit of HK\$80 million for any one accident. This covers referees, touch judges, coaches, trainers, instructors and voluntary medical attendants (but not qualified medical practitioners) whilst at a rugby match or training session organized by a Club. With regard to the Youth Insurance Policy (including Colts), there is also personal and legal liability coverage for coaches, referees and supervisors up to HK\$12 million [for any one accident].

[*website link*]

It should be also noted that all HK residents have access to low cost health care through the Public Hospital System where care typically costs HK\$100 per treatment. This includes emergency care and the cost per night of stay at the hospital itself is a further \$100. Please note that HK residents (or their parent for a minor) need to provide a HK ID card to receive treatment at any of Hong Kong's 31

public hospitals. For the location of any of these please use the following link for the Hospital Authority website [<http://www.ha.org.hk>] and then follow the instructions.

➤ ***Incoming Tours***

It is the intention of the HKRFU and the School and Youth Associations to increase the number of Touring teams coming to Hong Kong and Playing HK teams (whether Schools, Clubs or Representative). The success of the International Youth (10-a-side) Tournament (IYT) is testament to the popularity of HK as a visiting site for International teams.

Affordable accommodation is a challenge in Hong Kong, and home stays are difficult but not impossible. The Union can give some suggestions on cheaper hotels and hostels, but visiting teams need to make their own bookings and travel arrangements.

➤ **Other**

The HKRFU provides a number of specialized training events aimed at very specific audiences including: players, coaches, parents, potential referees, etc:

1. Coaching Clinics:
 - a. U8 coaching
 - b. Level 1 Coaching
 - c. Intermediate Towards L2 course
 - d. Level 2 Coaching
 - e. Advanced Towards L3 course
 - f. Scrum Safety
 - g. Coach the Coaches sessions
 - h. Tailored sessions at the request of Clubs
2. Health Day – This is typically held at the start of each season, i.e. September. For more info please contact Robbie McRobbie [robbie@hkrugby.com]
3. Referee Tutorials – the HKRFU Referees' Development Officer, Bernard Fienberg, runs a range of Referee and Touch Judge courses throughout the year. To find out details and dates of upcoming courses, contact Bernard [bernard.fienberg@hkrugby.com] or call 25048636

Appendix 1

Age Grouping

For the 2010/11 season eligibility it is based on the players birth date as follows:

Under 14s – players who were born in 1997 or 1998

Under 16s – players who were born in 1995 or 1996

Under 18s – players who were born in 1993 or 1994

Under 19s – players who were born in 1992, 1993 or 1994 (Boys lower division and Girls only)

Schools Grade rugby

Schools grade rugby is played under the [HK School's Sports Federation](#) rules which bands youth players [slightly differently](#):

A grade – Under 20, players who were born on or after 1 Jan 90

B grade – Under 16, players who were born on or after 1 Jan 94

C grade – Under 14, players who were born on or after 1 Jan 96

COLTS RUGBY
 球員升 / 降批核證明書

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO PLAY UP / PLAY DOWN

- (1) 當球員可能因留在正確歲數組比賽令他/她本人有機會受傷或對其他人造成危險，才可以以安全為理由批准該球員升或降至另一歲數組。
 Approval to play up or play down will only be granted for safety reasons, when a player may present a danger to others or him/herself being at risk of injury by remaining in the proper age group.
- (2) 任何不在其年齡組別作賽的球員，將可能無法在任何年齡組別中申請代表香港參賽。
Anyone playing out of their age group may not apply to represent HK in any age group.

會籍年份 Membership Year : 2010/2011		呈交日期 Submission Date :	
球會名稱 CLUB NAME :			
球員姓名 Player's Name :		會員編號 Membership No.:	
出生日 Date of Birth :		性別 Sex : M or F	
身高 Height :		Photo required Paste photo here 須要相片 請將相片貼在此處	
體重(請說明磅或千克) Weight (specify lbs or kilos) :			
升 / 降 UP or DOWN			
這表格不適用於 U18's 申請打成人欖球 This form does not apply to U18's wishing to play Senior rugby			
適當歲數組別 Proper Age Group :		(根據出生日期) (by Birth Date)	
建議歲數組別 Proposed Age Group :		有效期 Effective Period :	
原因 Justification :			
球會主席 / 代表姓名 Club Chairman/Representative's Name :		簽署 Signature :	
總教練姓名 Head Coaches' Name :		簽署 Signature :	
家長 / 監護人姓名 Parent's/Legal Guardian's Name :		簽署 Signature :	
批核 Approved (主席) (Chairman Colts Rugby)		日期 Date :	
Reference minutes of the Colts Rugby meeting of :			

請注意: 一旦某球員獲准在,或曾在比自己應屬的歲數組 (以出生日期計) 較高一組作賽,除非有特殊原因,否則,他會獲批准返回自己適當的歲數組作賽的機會極微。
Note: Once a player has been approved to play or has played in an age group above which he should, by date of birth, naturally play within, it is extremely unlikely that he will be permitted to revert to his proper age group without exceptional reasons.

Appendix 3

CODE FOR COACHES

- You have the responsibility for your team and supporters – EXERCISE IT!
- Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment. Don't overload them with technical information and tactics
- Be reasonable in your demands on young players' time, energy and enthusiasm. Remember that they have other interests and demands on their time
- Ensure that all players get a game. The 'just average' players need and deserve equal time
- Players develop at different times and in different ways – make allowances for their physical, emotional and mental maturity and development
- Winning isn't everything – teach your players to enjoy taking part and performing to the best of their ability. Encourage each player to reach his or her potential
- Never abuse, yell, criticise or ridicule children for making mistakes or losing a game
- Remember that young people need a coach that they can respect. Be generous with praise when it is deserved and set a good example
- Teach young players that the laws of the game are mutual agreements that no one should evade or break
- Create opportunities to teach sportsmanship, just as you would in teaching the basic skills
- INSIST ON FAIR PLAY. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting, or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player
- Develop a team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches

CODE FOR PARENTS

- Do not force an unwilling child to participate – Young people are involved for their enjoyment, not yours
- Encourage your child to understand and play within the rules
- Teach your child that taking part and trying their best is more important than winning
- Focus your child on practising skills, sportsmanship and being part of a team. Winning isn't everything and not everyone can score the winning try
- Support and encourage your child – never criticise them for making mistakes. Console them for losing, but encourage them to try harder next time
- Turn defeat into victory by helping your child work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship
- Do not publicly question the referee's judgement and never his/her honesty. There is no place for 'touchline rage' in Youth Rugby
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from Youth Rugby
- Young people learn best by example. Applaud good play by your team and by members of the opposing team
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches, referees and administrators. They give of their time and resources to provide recreational activities for your child

CODE FOR PLAYERS

- Play to enjoy rugby, not just to please you parents or coach
- Always try your best to improve your skills and play well
- Play within the rules and laws of the game
- Never argue with referees or coaches – their decision is final, even if you think that they are wrong. Let your coach or your captain ask match officials any questions
- Control your temper – do not 'mouth off'
- Treat everyone as you yourself would like to be treated. Don't bully or take unfair advantage of any player
- Rugby is a team game – do your best for yourself and your team. Your team's performance will benefit and so will your own
- If you lose, accept it with good grace and try harder next time
- Be a good sport. Applaud all good play, whether by your team or your opponents' team
- Cooperate with your coach, team mates, referee and opponents, for without them you don't have a game.

Match Report from Kevin Overton