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Description automatically generated**[Age Grade Rugby Team report 2022-23](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Our team of volunteers has expended during 2022-23 to manage the increased workload related to the raised profile of girls’ rugby and other recruitment and retention activity.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[As before, we have hosted regular Mini & Junior Forums and Girls Rugby Forums and continued to develop and maintain the NLD website, as well as introducing the means to share and manage data across the organisation I a more efficient manner.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[U16 to U18 recruitment and retention](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

**[ColtsFest 3](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)[rd](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141) [September 2023](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[200 players from 12 clubs were involved in the early season 10s festival run by the x9 U18 men and the RFU Pilot team. It was organised with music and awards for TREDS and teamwork in particular rewarded with prizes. It was a good, enjoyable event to introduce the season with one tea declaring that it made it possible to run a team that season.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[NLD Youth Council Relaunch](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[The NLD Youth Council had dwindled over COVID. Using the momentum of ColtsFest, we retained 3 volunteers and recruited 8 more, including girls. NLD Age Grade Team members facilitated monthly meetings and online discussions. The Council set up a festival for U12 girls and boys and are planning to run ColtsFest again in September. One member also set up a schools’ event at a club in Lincolnshire.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[Next steps for the NLD Youth Council will be to give the group greater structure and autonomy with the election of Chair and Vice Chair and the creation of a clear terms of reference for the group including a new terms of reference.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[Further work is also needed to develop the group’s online presence and influence amongst their peers, but this was a great start.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[It would also be good if we could build on Youth activity in primary schools.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[We were grateful for the help and support of Kirsten Flower of RFU Youth Council and Jenna Bonser of the RFU Midlands Club Development Team.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Schools Links](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

**[NLD School Charter (Club-Schools Links programme)](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[This initiative, run by Alan Staines of the Age Grade Team (Newark RFC) seeks to recruit young players and promote clubs in their communities. Four clubs came forward to claim £500 to support schtheir activities in schools.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[We took the decision to spend the remaining budget for this on paying Nottingham RFC coaches to set up coaching programmes at four clubs who were wanting to focus energy on developing U12 girls for 2023/24. This is set to run after half term (June / July 2023) in 6 schools per club and will include boys in most cases although the emphasis will be to build U12 numbers at clubs. Each programme will end with a festival at the local club. We anticipate the programme to involve over 700 children in school and up to 300 at the club festivals. Clubs will follow this up with non-contact rugby events over the summer.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Rejuvenation of the NLD Schools Representative Committee](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[With the support of Jenna Bonser of the RFU, representatives for each of the 3 counties were recruited and meetings held to plan activities in schools. The initial focus was on secondary schools with competitions set up leading to final festivals at club grounds in March.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[We will plan to build on this initial work. It would seem that there has been some initial growth in schools’ rugby where competitions have been held.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Girls’ Rugby development](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

**[Expanded group to manage growth in the game.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Siobhan Peeling started the season as Girls’ Coordinator and has done an excellent job holding regular forum meetings. She spent much of her season setting up the U16s Girls’ DPP which was a complex project and the programme had excellent feedback (see below). We have decided to free up Siobhan to work on strategic growth by expanding the girls ‘team.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

* [Siobhan Peeling has been promoted to Head of Girls’ Rugby](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)
* [Debbie Linn is appointed as Girls Rugby Coordinator. Debbie’s primary focus will be overseeing the Girls’ DPP programme and ensuring its standards and development focus are maintained. Debbie has experience of administering rugby in Ireland, She has already carried out research in by contacting clubs across the CB. Debbie will also be supporting the management of the Loughborough Lightning Centre of Excellence (COE). She was mindful of any conflict of interest in her NLD appointment. We are of the view that her involvement will benefit NLD by improving our communication with the COE](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)
* [Girls’ Competitions Coordinator role will be advertised in June. The appointed person will manage the introduction of waterfall competitions in each age group. Dates for this are already in the Age Grade Calendar](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Pitch Up and Play Promotion](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Pitch Up and Play events are a vital element of the girls’ rugby playing calendar. Chris Briggs and Richard Waterhouse of the Age Grade Team do an incredible job setting up the programme and promoting events to the East and West of the CB. We have supported by arranging for Jess Weaver of Loughborough Lightning to coach at some of the sessions. The final event at Nottingham RFC attracted 290 girls, despite competition from Red Roses playing and the largest club being on tour. This was an improvement of around 30% on the total from last season. Chris did an excellent job setting this up and we are grateful to Nottingham RFC for hosting.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[The success of the end of season event raises the question of how to accommodate further growth in the game](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[NLD Girls’ Conference](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[After consultation with clubs at the Girls’ Forum it was agreed that a competition structure would help playing activity in the second half of the season. The competitions will have a waterfall format to ensure teams are engaged throughout the season. Many clubs cannot support a team on their own. Clubs will be given the opportunity to create hybrid teams and train so they can compete effectively in the competition. This may offer the opportunity for clubs to work together more so they have greater strength by combining forces.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Girls U16 DPP set up by NLD Age Grade Team.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Siobhan Peeling, Girls Rugby Coordinator led this implementation. Siobhan made every effort to establish parity with the investment already enjoyed boys’ rugby. Feedback from players and parents was very good. The RFU also endorsed the approach that was taken with some positive feedback from Martin MacTaggart when he met the management team. An excellent coaching team, including assistant coaches, a strength & conditioning coach and manager was led by Head Coach James Hamilton, Head of Rugby at Nottingham High School. The emphasis has been firmly on skills development regardless of playing position and recognising the desire of players desire to improve.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[It is hoped that lessons from the U16 DPP programme can be carried forward for the benefit of U18 girls.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Priorities for future action in girls’ rugby](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[U12 and U18 numbers are less strong than U14 and U16.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[U12](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[RFU have funded the promotion of coaching in schools to promote girls’ rugby. 4 clubs have successfully applied for funding.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[NLD Age Grade Team will also investigate the viability of clubs combining forces and also opportunities for developing U6 to U11 girls’ teams.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[U18](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Numbers are not helped by many girls playing up in women’s’ teams. The NLD Age Grade Team will investigate ways to help by supporting the development activity at the age group.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[18+ transition and recruitment from Universities](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[This is an area we have not been able to tackle due to the workload associated with the U16 DPP. We aim to give this focus in 2023/24. Initial talks have already had with Nottingham University.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[NLD website and social media development](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Danny Cardew, of the Age Grade Team has worked very hard to ensure that the NLD website has been rejuvenated so that it reflects the needs of the NLD rugby community and is updated frequently.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[The site structure reflects the core areas of the NLDRFU responsibility and balances information with news content.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[Innovations have included the O’Neill’s sponsorship of ‘Volunteer of the Month’ and ‘Team of the Month’ to encourage engagement with the site. Danny has also initiated an NLD Newsletter sent to members which increases engagement with the website and communicates with a broader readership than emails sent to club role holders.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Developments](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[Lots of NLD activity goes unreported which means we miss the opportunities to communicate with players, volunteers, parents and supporters as well as promoting rugby to a wider audience. We are proposing the recruitment of a team to manage social media and marketing to coordinate communication of NLD activity more effectively.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[We have discussed the potential of the Youth Council coordinating their work with the marketing and social media team.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[The results service is very popular. Danny is striving to find ways to make the prompt reporting of results more efficient.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Masterclass series for U14-U16 players](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[RFU training courses were set up for this age group which meant our efforts were not required.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Club Development Team and University Intra-Mural Team playing offer](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[This initiative aimed to provide a playing offer for club U23 players where they can play in matches with players of similar physique and experience. Engagement was low so the two festivals were cancelled. We will investigate the opportunity to promote a pre-Christmas festival for university returners.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Data security](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[A Microsoft 365 account was set up for NLD to aid the secure sharing of files.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[Pitch side environment](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[During Age Grade Forum discussions, it was evident that the atmosphere at some games was intimidating to children and parents. I have spoken to Tim Bembridge about the production of posters to be at respect barriers or in clubhouses with QR codes so people can record their mood online relating to their day’s experience (scale of 1 to 10) and with online options to record more specific information if they wish to.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

[Tim and I felt this might help to gather data that gave a picture relating to the atmosphere at clubs as well as offering the means for people to report detail if it was required.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

1. **[GMS](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

[While we are trying to target recruitment and retention across NLDRFU, the continued inaccuracy of GMS data makes it difficult to accurately gauge where help is most needed or to measure our performance as a CB.](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)

**[Tim Wilbraham](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

**[NLD Age Grade Rugby Team](http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141)**

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