



# **Exeter Chiefs Rugby Academy Developing Player Programme**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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# Exeter Chiefs Academy

## Developing Player Programme (DPP)

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## Welcome

Exeter Chiefs are committed to developing young aspiring rugby players across our region of Devon and Cornwall. A big part of our pathway is the Developing Player Program (DPP). The DPP runs out of six centres across our region;

Devon = West Buckland, Exwick Hub (South), Exwick Hub (East) and Keyham  
Cornwall = Penryn and Callywith.

The DPP runs over two age groups (U15s and U16s). Whilst our dedicated staff are often seen out watching school and club games, the initial entry point is via nominations to attend centre assessment sessions. The pathway has multiple entry points throughout from 15 to 24 years old.

The DPP aims to challenge players in different aspects throughout the season. We are sure your son will enjoy the challenges that he will be offered and the playing opportunities that this programme presents him. We wish your son an enjoyable season of learning with us as well as at his club/school.

This document has been designed to provide you with answers to often asked questions that has arisen from previous seasons, it will explain to you the various phases of the DPP and outline how this is in fact a collaborative effort to ensure that your son has an enjoyable and safe experience that will allow him to explore and flourish within the rugby environment. To put simply, our task is to help the players be the best that they can be – irrelevant of where that means your son ends up playing his rugby.



## Staff Structure

Exeter Chiefs staff are dedicated to help players, parents, coaches and stakeholders across Devon and Cornwall. Below are some of the staff and contact information for you to use should you require any additional information.

Rob Gibson – [robjibson@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:robjibson@exeterchiefs.co.uk) - Academy Manager

Marc Dibble – [marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk) - Junior Academy Manager

Nic Sestaret – [nicsestaret@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:nicsestaret@exeterchiefs.co.uk) - Education Advisor

Matt Birbeck – [mattbirbeck@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:mattbirbeck@exeterchiefs.co.uk) - DPP Manager Chiefs South (Cornwall)

Lee Western – [leewestern@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:leewestern@exeterchiefs.co.uk) - DPP Manager Chiefs North (Devon)



## Education

At Exeter Chiefs we are passionate about our young aspiring players putting maximal effort into their education.

We have two education establishments affiliated to Exeter Chiefs Academy (Truro College in Cornwall and Exeter College in Devon), whilst we have these two, we promote all players to attend the best education establishment that suits their educational needs and courses to enable them to pursue their non rugby futures.

We have a dedicated member of staff in Nic Sestaret who's role is to provide unbiased information for players and parents on their son's best academic route within our pathway.



## What is the DPP?

DPP is a national programme managed by the RFU and delivered locally in partnership with the RFU, Regional Academy and Constituent Bodies.

The Exeter Chiefs Academy geographic catchment area is Devon (DPP North) and Cornwall (DPP South).

## What is the purpose of the DPP?

The DPP is player centred, development driven and competition supported with the wants and needs of young players at its core. Putting player enjoyment and rugby's core values first and foremost, the ambition is to ensure young people enjoy the game for longer and into their adult years. The DPP will help players find the right pathway to follow in the game, whether that is into professional rugby or long-term participation at a level appropriate to them.

The Exeter Chiefs DPP is the first stage on the academy pathway, it is a development led environment and allows basic principles to be introduced to the players. It focuses on the first pillar of the Chiefs development pathway and that is the principle of 'Explore' - *'Exploring the boundaries of the game, decision making capabilities and problem solving'*.







## Exeter Chiefs Academy Pathway

The Exeter Chiefs Academy Pathway has been simplified in order for players, parents, coaches and stakeholders to understand and gauge potential entry points.

The pathway provides opportunities for players within the region to enter the pathway at any point throughout their development. The entry point will vary for all young aspiring rugby players due to the maturation point being so varied with young males.

The pathway is never a straightforward route; the journey will have bumps along the way. The bumps along the way also show resilience levels within players.





## How do players get into the DPP?

To be eligible for selection into the DPP, a player must fulfil one of the following criteria:

- i. Have their permanent home address located in our region
- ii. Have their permanent school address located in our region
- iii. Be registered on GMS as a player at a rugby club located in our region

The main route of entry is by open assessment sessions at one of our centres. Invites to trial are sent to rugby clubs within each centre's catchment area by the centre Head Coach.

## Where does training take place?

We have six regional centres in Devon and Cornwall - West Buckland, Exwick Hub South, Exwick Hub East, Keyham, Callywith and Penryn. Each satellite centre is led by a Head Coach and supported by the DPP Managers and full time Academy staff.

To contact your centre coach please use the following email address:

- DPP West Buckland - Head Coach: Andrew Beacham  
[dppnorth@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:dppnorth@exeterchiefs.co.uk)
- DPP Exwick Hub South – Head Coach: Marcus Webb  
[dppsouth@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:dppsouth@exeterchiefs.co.uk)
- DPP Exwick Hub East – Head Coach: Paul Harvey  
[dppeast@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:dppeast@exeterchiefs.co.uk)
- DPP Keyham – Head Coach: Paul Todd  
[dppwest@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:dppwest@exeterchiefs.co.uk)
- DPP Callywith and DPP Penryn – Matthew Birbeck  
[mattbirbeck@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:mattbirbeck@exeterchiefs.co.uk)





## **DPP Season**

DPP delivery is aligned to the National Playing Calendar and in each County Rugby Calendar.

The contact time is spread between the September to May for the U15's and a shorter programme, September to April for the 16's who then will be advised to solely focus on their GCSE's

Training dates and times will be circulated.

## **Player Feedback**

Feedback is constantly provided by the coaches direct to the player during rugby activities. Players are also encouraged to self-evaluate against their strengths and development areas. Please see Individual and Development Reflection information (Appendix 1) for further information.

If a player or parent would like to speak to the coaches for specific, more in-depth feedback, please approach one of the relevant coaches at a session or alternatively email [marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk)

## **DPP Playing Opportunities**

In addition to the DPP training sessions there is also competitive opportunities which are encouraged to help support the learning and development of players. It is important for all to remember that these opportunities are not competitive fixtures nor is it about winning – the DPP is focused on development. There are various inter-centre games timetabled during the season; games are also played against their respective DPP teams from Cornwall.



## What is the Next Step?

The next step from the DPP on the pathway is Chiefs North and Chiefs South U16 groups.

There are a series of games scheduled into the U16's DPP season that will help Academy staff identify those players who would be eligible for selection into these two groups. Chiefs North and Chiefs South is an Academy led programme and offers coaching, conditioning and specialist support from Academy staff. Players will develop alongside their academic studies.

Chiefs U16 South is run from Truro College and Chiefs U16 North is run from the Exwick Hub.

Player development is still the main priority of these programmes although it is the first point that teams are created.

DPP players not initially selected for this programme will still have the opportunity to be selected through strong performance in DPP training.

The U16 Academy squad is then created with a selected few players from Chiefs North and Chiefs South.





## **Coach Development**

Exeter Chiefs Academy ensure that all coaches have appropriate coaching qualifications. To support continuing professional development throughout the season, Coach Development sessions are arranged and attended by our DPP coaches. The invite to these sessions is also extended to all community rugby coaches in our region (Devon & Cornwall).

For more information, please contact Lee Western – Exeter Chiefs Academy Coach Development Officer – [leewestern@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:leewestern@exeterchiefs.co.uk)

## **Player Safety**

Rugby is a physical contact sport. Like all sports, injuries may occur as a result of an isolated incident or through the continuous playing of the game over an extended period of time. Safety is of paramount importance and it is therefore essential for those involved in the game to consider their own safety and the safety of other at all times. All those involved in the game should consider their own fitness before participating in any rugby activity. The parents and guardians of a player under the age of 18 should consider the fitness of those for whom they have responsibility. It is recommended to seek medical advice after injury and before recommencing any rugby activity.

Exeter Rugby Club will ensure that there is appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover and equipment provided for the rugby activity that is taking place.

Exeter Chiefs Academy insist that all players wear a mouth guard during all activities (contact and non-contact).

All players must complete a Player Details Form before participating in any Exeter Chiefs Academy activity.



## Concussion / HeadCase

All head injuries with concussive symptoms will be treated in line the current RFU guidelines.

We recommend that all players and parents complete the Headcase e-learning module on the RFU website prior to participation of any rugby activity:

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/headcase>

Please also follow the links below and read the World Rugby Concussion Policies and Education: your child's safety is paramount, and we feel that it is essential that parents and or guardians also understand the dangers of and spot the signs of concussion. This will also reduce any misunderstanding between players, parents and coaches around the return to play protocol and the importance of following them.

- [Laws](#)
- [Regulations relating to concussion](#)
- [Guidance and Education](#)

## Over Playing and Training

It is recommended that a player does not play more than 5 games per calendar month and has 2 complete rest days each week. There should be no training and playing/training (double sessions) in the same day. Research suggests it takes 72 hours to recover from a match. Overloading as a youth athlete can have detrimental effects on your body in the long term.

Exeter Chiefs Academy promotes playing different sports but ensuring the 5-game recommendation is in place.

Parents/guardians and the player have overall responsibility on the amount played and trained. Any conflicts need to be brought to the DPP coaches' attention as it would be unreasonable for them to keep track of every player's playing commitments with school and / or club rugby.

To summarise:

- No games within 72hrs of the previous game
- No playing with injuries
- Make sure you have at least 2 complete rest days per week
- No more than 5 games in a calendar month





## Safeguarding

To view our Safeguarding Policy please click [here](#).

All Academy staff and DPP regional coaches have Enhanced DBS checks processed through and approved by the RFU.

### **Marc Dibble - Academy Safeguarding Lead**

[marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:marcdibble@exeterchiefs.co.uk)

07595 499298

### **Zoe Willmott - Academy Safeguarding Assistant**

[zoewillmott@exeterchiefs.co.uk](mailto:zoewillmott@exeterchiefs.co.uk)

## Concerns

If you have any concerns about a child please report to the Club Safeguarding Officer, Academy Safeguarding Lead or contact the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager whose details and contact information can be found on the Devon RFU website using link:

<https://www.devonrfu.com/safeguard>

If you wish to file a safeguarding concern/incident the following link will be of assistance, it is the RFU Safeguarding form and supplies you with requests for specific information that the RFU will need to assist them in directing your concern to the relevant individuals/organisations.

### **RFU Safeguarding Reporting Form**

## GDPR

To view the Academy Privacy Policy please click [here](#).

To view the Exeter Rugby Club Privacy Policy please click [here](#).



## Parents FAQ

### What should a player wear/bring to DPP training?

- i. Training kit suitable for the weather conditions on the day and footwear for the venue you are attending (the footwear policy for The Exwick Hub can be found on the Academy page of the Exeter Chiefs website)
- ii. Mouth guard (Exeter Chiefs Academy insist that all players wear a mouth guard during all activities)
- iii. Water

### Are players an Academy player if they attend DPP sessions?

The DPP plays a big part within the pathway however we reserve the terminology of Academy to players that are contracted with Exeter Chiefs.

### Will a player be removed from the programme if they miss a session?

Absolutely not! Please just let your regional coach know if you are not able to attend.

### Will players continue in their education?

Yes! It is essential players pursue their academic studies alongside their development as a rugby player.

### Will Exeter Chiefs stop players playing for their junior clubs?

No. We heavily promote players to play for their clubs/schools throughout their development including those that represent Exeter Chiefs Academy age groups.

### Will players become a professional rugby player and play internationally?

There are no guarantees – only a small number of players involved will progress to the professional and international game but the programme will seek to ignite a life-long passion for the game regardless of future progress.







## APPENDIX 1 - Individual Reflection and Development

When reflecting there are many things to consider, here are some helpful ideas:

- Physical attributes
- Mental strength (thought process in pressure situations)
- Emotional (response to pressure – frustration, anger, enjoyment etc)
- Tactical attributes
- Technical attributes

Regularly reflecting is part of life and is done in many ways. Discussions in the car with parents, writing notes down, thinking about training or the game pre and post are all ways that people reflect. It is an essential part of development as it is the way in which we process the information, de scramble it and move forward with a better way of coping or doing things.

A great habit to get into after training and games is on the drive home not to talk about who won and who the best player was but talk to your parents in the car about specific things you did well and things that didn't go too well. Discuss why they didn't go well or why they did and come up with plan to make them better.

Below are some questions to ask yourself post training and post matches. It doesn't have to be done every training or every game but is very much worth doing as often as you can. It might be worth writing down your answer to build a reflection log that coaches can go through with you.

- What did I learn today at training?
- Did I improve as a player? If so, why? If not, why?
- What is the biggest area I want to work on in the next month?
- What went well today?
- What areas of my game did not go well and why?
- What am I going to do in the next 4 weeks (specifically – session to session) to improve the above highlighted areas?