

Exeter Chiefs Rugby Academy Newsletter



Greetings all and hope you are well.

With the season and rugby activities coming to a close I would like to take the opportunity to wish you well for the spring and summer and hope the winter has provided you with all the rugby you wanted.

I would like to provide you with a few updates and a copy of the 2025 – 2028 Performance Plan.

The weather wasn't too kind with various storms preventing some scheduled activities but that has not stopped the Chiefs and Academy Players representing at many levels, including international recognition.

Richard Capstick (Exeter College, Exeter University and Exeter Chiefs) along with Greg Fisilau and Josh Hodge being named in the England A Squad. England U19 and U20 are featured below in the newsletter.

New Facilities at Exeter College are tantalisingly close and the Academy are looking forward to using the new artificial surface, gym and classroom facility at Flowerpots from May 2025. This will provide a full-time base for the Devon based Academy staff.

Truro College continues in their support and supply of facilities in Cornwall which sees the Academy being able to use two state of the art environments for the Chiefs Academy Players progression. These partnerships are valued and we appreciate all the support.

Academy staff attended a Mental Health First Aid course supported by BraveMinds and all qualified as Mental Health First Aiders. We would like to thank Simon and his team for a valuable 2 days training.



Changes to the Developing Player Programme (DPP) have now taken place and the new 'Foundation Phase' is in full swing and working very well. We thank all the clubs and schools for their support through these changes.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all the Academy Staff and PDG Coaches who are dedicated in bringing enthusiasm and innovation, you are valued and simply brilliant.

The next newsletter will provide a full update on the new Foundation Phase programme findings – U16 & U17 reports.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone and wish you all well for the summer.

With best wishes

Rob Gibson
Exeter Chiefs Academy Manager

In this newsletter you can expect:

College News

International Representation

Academy U18 League Fixtures 2025-26

Exeter Chiefs Academy Performance Plan



College News

Exeter College Rugby were crowned England College (Southern) 7's Champions in March with victory at Cheltenham Tigers RFC. Victories over Hartpury College (26-19), City of Oxford (33-26), Henley College (29-19), Truro College (40-5) and Richard Huish College (45-17) meant a clean sweep of victories to finish unbeaten throughout the day in a round robin format.

Exeter College also won the performance competition, staying unbeaten throughout the day with victories over Huish and then BTC to win the pool, and then victories over Barton Peverell in the semi-final and Hereford College in the Final.



Elite Squad: Back Row: Reuben Ramirez (Exeter Saracens), Andrew Cuthbert (Torquay), Ben Rogers (Newton Abbot), Sheldon Higgins (Devonport Services), Ned Brown (Co-Capt. Exmouth), Charlie Hill (Barnstaple), Ben Matthews (Sidmouth)
Front Row: Jonny Styrin (Dorchester), Noah Sutton (Co-Capt. Newton Abbot), Noah Driesen (Topsham), Claude McKeown (Newton Abbot), Henry Gascogne (Newton Abbot).



Performance Squad: Back Row: Marley Parker (Okehampton), Hudson Cooper-Thompson (Torquay), Alfie Johns (Bude), Keiran Docherty (Sidmouth), Jed Smith (Crediton), Rohan Johnson (Devonport) Charlie Cookson (Crediton), Nathan Hallowell (Torquay), Jacob Price (Topsham), Freddie Arnold (Exeter Saracens).
Front row: Co-Capt. Harvey Willis (Newton Abbot) and Joe Knight (Torquay) with the trophy.

College News Cont.

Exeter College ACE Women's team won the national final against Hartpury College at the Allianz Stadium in Twickenham in March. They arrived at the final unbeaten, having topped the league table this season. Hartpury College have been the most dominant side over the last decade, so it was always going to be a tightly fought game. The final score was 41-33 to Exeter College - huge congratulations to the players for their sensational performance and thank you to all the staff who coached and supported them.



Squad: Reese Williams, Evie Constable, Lily Taylor, Maisie Masquelier, Charlotte Heath, Mikka Haskins Hall, Poppy Harrison, Alice Gray, Erin Roberts, Bonnie Purchall, Lottie Reid (Capt.), Ayla Black, Honey Kerlake, Poppy Symons, Demelza Short, Charlotte Wreford, Ellie Campbell, Scarlett Murgatroyd, Megan Polverino, Katherine Dyke, Izzy Firth, Charlotte Mansfield, Rosie Ellis White.

Further congratulations to the Exeter College Women's Rugby Team who were the winners of the Rosslyn Park 7s U18 ACE tournament in March.



College News Cont.

This season saw the introduction of the Tamar Cup which is a new competition held between Exeter College and Truro College with both boys and girls games being part of the competition. They both played two games, one game at Truro and one at Exeter and the College with the best combined score over the four fixtures were the winners. This year Exeter College won.



Truro College Women's Rugby Academy programme is going from strength to strength; thanks to Charlie, Lachie, Davy and Phil.



Back Row (Left to Right) : Mia Silgram, Izzy Huggan-Frost, Amelie Fice-Thompson, Ruby Lambrick, Oceayana Spargo, Rosie Allen, Delilah Talbot, Isla Bruce, Sophie Kiernander, Leah Coleman.

Front Row (Left to Right) : Brianna Williams, Harriet Paul, Rhiannon Kevern, Emily Sanguinette, Floss Manley, Elizabeth Watson-Gover, Freya Richards



International Representation & Academy U18s

England 6 Nations U20s Campaign

- Kane James (Exeter Chiefs, St Peter's RFC)
- Ben Coen (Exeter Chiefs, Teignmouth RFC)
- Nic Allison (Exeter Chiefs, Bishops Diocesan College)
- Louie Gulley (Exeter College, Crediton RFC)
- Nick Lilley (Exeter College, Ivybridge RFC)
- Campbell Ridl (Exeter Chiefs, Sharks)
- Oscar Beckerleg (Exeter Chiefs, Penzance & Newlyn RFC)



Wales U20s

Exeter Chiefs Academy and Exeter College lock, Luke Evans represented Wales in the U20s 6 Nations.



England U19s

Three Exeter Chiefs Academy Players named in the England U19 Squad:

- Josh Mann (Exeter Chiefs, Penzance & Newlyn RFC)
- George Newman (Exeter Chiefs, Truro RFC)
- Israel Akinrowo (Exeter Chiefs, Devonport Services RFC)



Exeter Chiefs Academy U18s

Exeter Chiefs U18s ended their 2024-25 campaign on a high as they beat RGC at Kingsholm on Finals Day. The final game saw the Chiefs U18s play a Welsh invitational side RGC, who proved to be tough opponents, however the Chiefs came away with the spoils 19-0 with tries from Reuben Ramirez (Exeter College/Exeter Saracens RFC), Rory O'Kane (Truro College/Penryn RFC), and Ollie Batson (Exeter School/Exmouth RFC) with O'Kane converting two of the three tries.



Academy U18 League 2025/26

The 2025/26 U18 Academy League offers a larger fixture list with the National League starting in August. This provides a great opportunity and experience to play against the northern academies also.

15.08.2025 Northampton (A)

22.08.2025 Sale (H)

25.10.2025 Gloucester (H)

02.01.2026 Bristol (A)

10.01.2026 Bath (H)

17.01.2026 Harlequins (A)

31.01.2026 Yorkshire (H)

07.02.2026 Leicester (A)

Finals Day 21/22 February 2026

Exeter Chiefs Academy Performance Plan



Objectives & Strategies

- 1 Elite Home-Grown Local players to become the Stars of the Future**
Legacy of Academy Players representing Exeter Chiefs
- 2 Aligned and robust management business structure**
Accelerating the Academy and club into a high-performance market leader in the delivery and Management production across the multifaceted departments
- 3 Evolve Strong Partnerships and Stakeholders Relationships**
Within an already established culture and support base the aim is to create Sustainable Systems and greater associations with powerful partners
- 4 Retain & recruit staff that fully support & drive our ambitions**
Placing good people at the heart of our strategy. People are omnipotent – Support Them

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023

Foundation Phase

Integrating Experiences to Develop the Stars of the Future

Providing experienced professional coaching that not only nurtures but retains a large percentage of targeted players through the pathway.

The Region is rural and large – The inclusion of the players from outside the main centers is well catered for through quality central bases in both counties

Development Phase

-----Better Earlier-----

Creating individuals that understand the competencies and requirements of competing at National & International levels.

Optimise the Development Phase through a high level of contact time that allows the control of the cyclic nature across the age groups.

Individuals will be rewarded who display a high quality and rounded capacity who also apply themselves in trying to gain the highest grades possible for the individual at recognised elite education providers

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023

Confirmation Phase

To cultivate and confirm the next generation of elite players who are fully prepared to compete at the highest levels for Exeter Chiefs in both Premiership, European competitions and on the international stage.

To be recognised as the premier development club in England, dedicated to ensuring that over 50% of our senior squad comprises homegrown talent year after year. We commit to fostering well-rounded individuals by prioritising not just athletic excellence but also academic and off-field growth, empowering our players to thrive both on and off the rugby field.

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023

Aligned and Robust Management Business Structure

Create a strong sense of leadership

Streamline processes to enhance efficiency

Aligning the departments across multiple sites

Robust and open reviewing process and accountability assigned

Direction: Setting the vision
Operation: Aligning the team
Control: Staying the course

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023

Evolve Strong Partnerships and Stakeholders Relationships

Within an already established culture and support base the aim is to create Sustainable Systems and greater associations with powerful partners

A key driver is bringing stakeholders together across our region to enhance added value with proven expertise with our many partners

Effective communication, both internally and externally

Developing Effective Relationships and Partnerships for mutual success

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023

People are omnipotent – Support Them

Recruit and retain people with a player centric approach that fully support and drive our ambitions
Placing good people at the heart of our strategy

Grow our clear values and behaviours that will encourage and empower great people to achieve great things

Through their actions, innovations and values they will drive us forward to achieve the shared goals of the club and the academy players alike

Support employee and player wellness through ongoing Mental Health training

Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging, while Safeguarding the procedures and Code of Conduct that drives our culture

Focus on learning & development
Conduct CPD and upskilling initiatives for coaches
Drive employee engagement

Exeter Chiefs Academy STRATEGY 2023



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