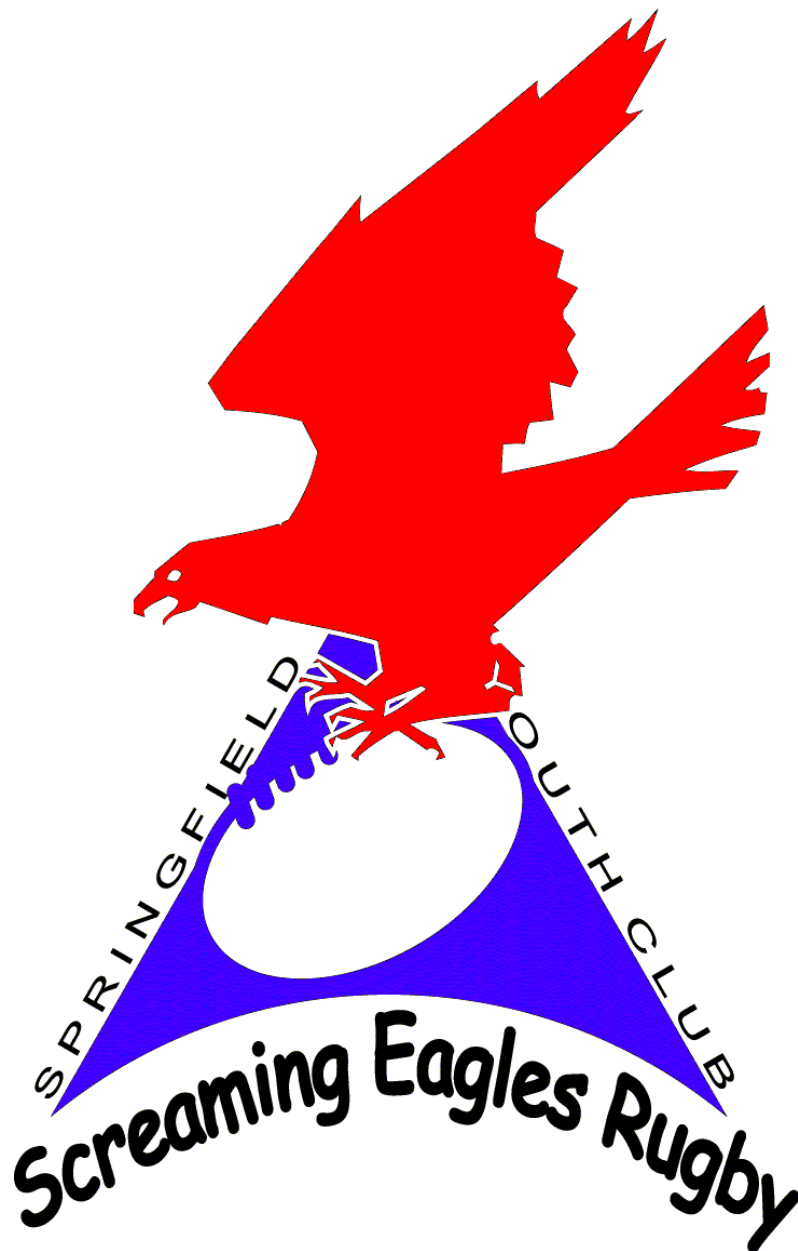


2009 SYC Rugby Program Guide



"Kids Play Rugby!"

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1. Introduction & Mission

The mission of SYC Rugby is to teach kids and their parents about rugby, teamwork, fitness, and sportsmanship in a fun, relaxed environment.

SYC Screaming Eagles Rugby offers touch and tackle rugby for boys and girls. Touch rugby is available for boys and girls ages 6 to 16; tackle rugby is available for girls ages 11 to 16 and boys ages 11 to 18.

2. Rugby Committee

The SYC Rugby program is managed by the Rugby Committee, which in turn reports to the Board of Directors of SYC. The Rugby Committee consists of seven members: the rugby commissioner, deputy commissioner, and five at-large members. Members of the Rugby Committee are appointed by the Rugby commissioner to three-year terms.

3. What Is Rugby?

Rugby is a fast-paced, creative game in which players attempt to score "tries" by touching down the ball in the end zone, much like a touchdown in football. Players may move the ball by carrying it, kicking it, or passing it laterally or backward to teammates. The action is constant, and players must play both offensively and defensively (as in basketball or soccer) because possession of the ball can change hands at any time. And, in rugby, all players get a chance to run with the ball if they can keep up with the play.

Touch rugby, played with 7 players per team on the field, differs from the standard game only in that two-hand touch replaces the tackle. Nearly all other elements of rugby—including scrums (uncontested), mauls, and lineouts—are allowed.

Tackle rugby is played under standard rugby laws modified to emphasize safety. Depending on age group, anywhere from eleven to fifteen players per team take the field at any given time.

Players and parents should be aware that rugby requires a lot of running, and even in the touch game involves some incidental contact. The tackle game is a full contact sport.

4. Touch Rugby Program

SYC Rugby offers a developmental touch rugby program in the U-9, U-11, and U-15 age groups. All teams are co-ed, with girls and boys playing together.

Age group breakdowns are as follows:

- U-9 (for ages 6-8)
- U-11 (for ages 9-10)
- U-15 (for ages 11-14)

Players must be the appropriate age for the age group as of July 1 of the calendar year. For example, a player must still be 10 as of July 1 to be eligible for the U-11 age group; a player who turns 11 on June 30 must play in the U-15 age group. See the "Age Group Chart" on the SYC Rugby web site for applicable birthdate ranges. Proof of age is required as part of the

registration process (see section titled "Registration & Paperwork" for details).

Note that players may generally play up one age group with parental permission. Parents should notify the Rugby commissioner directly in writing of the player's desire to do so. No player may play down an age group.

The touch program plays a Summer season within the Rugby Virginia Youth League. The season runs from mid-June through early August, culminating with a league tournament usually held the first weekend in August.

Touch rugby teams consist of 10-15 players per team. All players on a team will play at least half of the match. Teams are formed by random draw of names of players signed up. Siblings are placed together on the same team if they are in the same age group, but no other "same team" requests will be honored.

5. Tackle Rugby Program

SYC Rugby offers a tackle rugby program in the U-13, U-15, U-17, and U-19 age groups. All tackle teams are boys-only and girls-only. Age group breakdowns are as follows:

- U-13 (for ages 11-12)
- U-15 (for ages 13-14)
- U-17 (for ages 15-16)
- U-19 (for boys in 8th through 12th grades only, ages 13-18; Spring season only)

Players must be the appropriate age for the age group as of July 1 of the calendar year. For example, a player must still be 14 as of July 1 to be eligible for the U-15 age group; a player who turns 15 on June 30 must play in the U-17 age group. See the "Age Group Chart" on the SYC Rugby web site for applicable birthdate ranges. Proof of age is required as part of the registration process (see section titled "Registration & Paperwork" for details).

Note that players may generally play up one age group with parental permission. Parents should notify the Rugby commissioner directly in writing of the player's desire to do so. No player may play down an age group.

The tackle program is divided into two seasons:

- Spring tackle season: U-19 program for boys in 8th-12th grades
- Summer tackle season: U-13, U-15, and U-17 program

The U-19 team plays a Spring season within the Rugby Virginia High School League's northern conference. The season runs from mid-February through late May, with the league championship game in early June. All players who register for SYC's U-19 program make the team; there are no tryouts or cuts. Depending on numbers, the team may be split into multiple sides including a competitive "A" side as well as developmental sides so that all players get playing time. Selection is up to the coaches, and may vary from week to week depending on various factors. Criteria include athletic ability, rugby skills and knowledge, enthusiastic participation in practices and matches throughout the season, and sportsmanship.

The U-13, U-15, and U-17 teams play a Summer season within the Rugby Virginia Youth League. The season runs from early June through early August, culminating with a league tournament usually held the first weekend in August. Tackle teams in these age groups consist of 10-20 players per team, depending on overall registration numbers. All players may expect to play at least half of a given match.

6. Practices & Matches

In-season practices for all teams U-11 and older are typically held on Tuesday and Thursdays; U-9 teams on Tuesdays only. During the Spring U-19 season, timing will be approximately 3:30-6:00 from mid-February through early June. During the Summer season, timing will be approximately 6:30-8:00 from early June through early August. Practice locations will be announced as the season approaches, but lately the program has been fortunate to use Hooes Road Park in east Springfield.

Spring U-19 matches are usually held Friday afternoons or Saturdays. Home match locations will be a FCPA park in the Springfield area; away matches may take place anywhere in northern Virginia and occasionally in Maryland or DC. U-19 matches feature two 35-minute halves.

Summer touch and tackle matches are usually held on Thursday evenings and Saturdays. Home match locations will be a FCPA park in the Springfield area; away matches may take place anywhere in northern Virginia and occasionally in Maryland or DC. Summer touch and tackle matches are 30-40 minutes in length, divided into four quarters.

7. "Challenge Cup" Team

The Challenge Cup team is an SYC "all-star" team at the U-15 level that competes for the Northern Virginia Youth Rugby Challenge Cup. The Challenge Cup trophy bowl signifies this competition among northern Virginia's youth rugby programs.

All players may be considered for the Challenge Cup team based on coaches' nominations. Criteria include athletic ability, rugby skills and knowledge, enthusiastic participation in practices and matches throughout the season, and sportsmanship. Final selection to the Challenge Cup team is made by the Rugby commissioner in consultation with all SYC Rugby coaches.

The Challenge Cup match is scheduled based on a challenge issued by another northern Virginia program to the current Cup holder. The match may take place immediately before or after the regular season, but not during, and may involve touch or tackle rugby depending upon the challenge. SYC Rugby currently enjoys possession of the Cup, having beaten back challenger SYA in the most recent Challenge Cup match in August 2005. This match featured the first tackle game in Challenge Cup history. SYC has always held the trophy since inception in 2001.

Any questions, comments, or suggestions related to the Challenge Cup team, match, or overall competition should be directed to the Rugby commissioner.

8. Equipment Needs

SYC Rugby players must provide their own practice shirts, mouthguards, and cleats ("boots") suitable for athletic activity. Rugby and soccer boots (molded or screw-in) work best; all boots and studs must conform to International Rugby Board (IRB) laws (e.g., no toe cleat). When in doubt, check with the SYC Rugby Commissioner.

Mouthguards are *required* for all players who play tackle rugby, and are recommended for everyone else.

Team shirts, rugby shorts, and matching socks will be provided to all registered players; a rugby ball will be provided to all new players.

9. Inclement Weather Policy

SYC Rugby practices and plays in the rain (but not thunderstorms) unless the fields have been closed due to inclement weather. When in doubt, check the SYC Rugby web page or call the Fairfax County Parks Authority field closure hotline at 703-324-5264.

If the fields are open, assume that the practice or match will go on. Any further decision about cancellation will be made *at the field* by the Rugby commissioner based on current field conditions.

10. Safety, Insurance, & Injuries

SYC Rugby and Rugby Virginia emphasize safety at all times. Touch rugby allows a broader range of kids to play together; without the distraction of contact, it emphasizes running, passing, kicking, and team skills. The modified tackle game provides kids with a safe introduction to tackle rugby. However, injuries can and do occasionally occur.

SYC Rugby carries general liability insurance coverage. But additionally, all players and coaches must have adequate medical insurance and will be required to sign a waiver accepting the inherent risks of participation in touch or tackle rugby.

When injuries occur, the steps taken immediately afterward can minimize their impact.

The head coach is responsible for ensuring that, if necessary, an injured player receives immediate medical attention. The head coach must also report all injuries to the Rugby commissioner within 24 hours of occurrence. The Rugby commissioner will, in turn, immediately notify the Rugby Committee and the SYC Board of Directors.

The player's parents should be notified immediately. However, immediate medical attention for the injured player takes priority. When any doubt exists relative to the nature or extent of the injury, immediate medical assistance shall be obtained. Safety of the players takes precedence over all other situations, including continuation of a scheduled match.

11. Laws & Referees

Youth touch rugby follows the non-contact variations to the USA Rugby Lawbook. Youth tackle rugby in the U-13/U-15/U-17 age groups follows the USA Rugby modified youth tackle laws. U-19 rugby follows the U-19 variations to the standard laws. For further reference to all laws, see the "What Is Rugby?" section of the SYC Rugby web site.

SYC pays qualified referees, but the lack of candidates also requires the program to follow rugby's "club referee" tradition in which the clubs participating in the match provide the referee. Hence, both teams' coaches or qualified parents may alternate refereeing duties during the match, changing off each quarter or half. Training is available each season to those interested in learning how to referee a rugby match, whether touch or tackle. The emphasis, as always, is on player safety and fun.

The Potomac Society of Rugby Football Referees may also provide referees on occasion.

12. Coaches

SYC Rugby actively welcomes volunteers who wish to act as head or assistant coaches. Coaches must first submit an online coach's application, which is used to conduct a background check. Final approval and placement of coaches falls to the Rugby Committee.

Head coaches should ideally have previous rugby experience; this is not necessary for assistant coaches. Head coaches of tackle teams should have a minimum of Level I USA Rugby coaching certification (or plan to seek it within the following year—SYC Rugby offers a subsidy for this). Informal training clinics in the touch/non-contact laws for coaches, referees, and players may be offered if there is sufficient interest. Contact the SYC Rugby Commissioner for more information about this or any training opportunities offered by USA Rugby.

Coaches will be reviewed annually by the Rugby Committee, and continued suitability will be determined based on attitude, ability to provide the necessary leadership and role modeling, and how well the coach supports the objectives of the Rugby program. By majority vote of the Rugby Committee, a coach may be removed for cause. Cause for removal of a coach may include a demonstrated inability to carry out the responsibilities of the position effectively, misconduct, or any other reason deemed just by a majority of the Rugby Committee.

13. Volunteers

Volunteer efforts are the lifeblood of the SYC Rugby program and help ensure its success. Per SYC policy, SYC Rugby requires a minimum of eight (8) hours of volunteer activity to fulfill the volunteer participation requirement. Many volunteers provide more, but all should strive to meet the minimum.

Rugby volunteer activities include (but are not limited to):

- coaching positions
- referees
- Rugby Committee positions
- team parents

- field maintenance and preparation
- merchandise sales (t-shirts, magnets, etc.)
- tournament help (e.g., tournament director, concession stand)

Contact the Rugby commissioner for more information about these and other volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers may also fulfill their hours by working for SYC in general. Contact the SYC office for details.

14. Registration & Paperwork

Online and walk-in registration is available each season, usually a month or two before the season begins. For the Spring season, registration is open early January through March; for the Summer season, registration is open mid-April through late May. For online registration, visit the SYC web site at www.sycva.com. For walk-in registration, visit the SYC office during business hours.

The rugby registration fee is usually around \$100 per player, per season, with a family discount of \$10 off the registration fee for each additional child registered in the same season. This is simply an estimate for purposes of this program guide; the actual registration fee in any given season may vary

Note this registration fee does not include any Fairfax County fees (currently \$5.50 per player), SYC club initiation fees, or SYC volunteer fees. Contact the SYC office for details about add-on fees.

Also note that registration is not complete until the player additional paperwork as follows:

- Player information form (includes emergency/medical info)
- USA Rugby registration form
- USA Rugby waiver form
- Codes of conduct
- Photocopy of photo ID with proof of age (e.g., driver's license, passport, child ID)

Blank forms are available on the SYC Rugby web site. This paperwork should be completed and submitted to the SYC Rugby Commissioner, in person or in care of SYC, 7075 Newington Road, Unit G, Lorton, VA 22079.

Note that the USA Rugby registration fee is covered as part of each player's SYC Rugby registration. No need to pay again.

15. Refunds

SYC Rugby follows the official refund policy of the Springfield/South County Youth Club:

- The volunteer initiation fee is non-refundable.
- Upon written request via the U.S. Postal Service or email, participants will receive a full refund of the activity fee(s) prior to the final in-person registration or at the close of online registration, whichever concludes last.
- Upon written request via the U.S. Postal Service or email, 50% of the activity fee will be refunded during try-outs, drafts, pre-season clinics or uniform distribution.
- No refunds will be issued after the official draft (in football) and/or the first game (remaining sports).

Requests for refunds may be sent to:

Via email: CarolynBrennan@sycva.com

Via mail: SYC, 7075 Newington Road, Lorton, VA 22079

Note: Under extenuating circumstances, the individual sport commissioners and/or members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors may approve deviations to the official SYC refund policy.

16. Complaint Procedures

Concerns, questions, and complaints about the Rugby program should be directed to program leaders in accordance with SYC's Complaint Procedures, which are available on the SYC Web site at www.sycva.com. In sum, these procedures call for addressing the complaint at the lowest level possible.

Problems should first be brought up with your child's coach. If not resolved, the complain may then be directed to the Rugby commissioner and Rugby Committee. Further escalation can be brought to the SYC Board of Directors.

Note that these complaint procedures do not apply to issues related to the SYC Refund Policy or the SYC Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Players, and Spectators.

17. SYC Codes of Conduct

SYC Rugby endorses and abides by the Springfield/South County Youth Club's Codes of Conduct for players, coaches, and spectators. These codes of conduct help to ensure that the principles of sportsmanship, fair play, skill development, and mutual respect among players, coaches, officials, and spectators are the primary considerations governing competition in Springfield/South County Youth Club sports activities.

SYC Players Code of Conduct -- Each player will ensure that his/her playing conduct is that of a young lady or gentleman fairly competing to the limit of his/her ability. To satisfactorily meet these responsibilities, the player is expected to:

1. Know the rules and abide by them.
2. Respect the game officials and refrain from addressing them or commenting on their decisions during the play of the game. The team captain may address the officials during the game but only within the provisions of the rules, and in a courteous, respectful manner.
3. Maintain control of his/her emotions, avoiding the use of abusive language or profanity, humiliating remarks, and/or gestures of ill temper, and physical assault upon another player at any time.
4. Respect the coaches and players of the opposing team. Demonstrate appropriate gestures of sportsmanship during and at the conclusion of

the game, being humble and generous in victory, proud, and courteous in defeat.

5. Follow all building and facility rules and regulations, respecting at all times the property of others.
6. Realize, accept, and practice the principle that a team's reputation is built not only on its playing ability but also on sportsmanship, courtesy, and manners of each individual player.

I (print name)_____ agree to abide by the Springfield/South County Youth Club Code of Conduct whenever participating in an SYC sponsored activity. I also acknowledge that failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension or banishment from SYC activities.

(Signature)_____

SYC Coaches Code of Conduct -- Each coach will ensure that his/her conduct is that of a lady or gentleman, demonstrating at all times the highest level of sportsmanship and fair play. To satisfactorily meet these responsibilities, the coach is expected to:

1. Know the rules and abide by them.
2. Instruct team members in the rules of the game and motivate each player to compete according to the rules at all times.
3. Respect the game officials and refrain from questioning their decisions or from addressing them in a loud, disrespectful, or abusive manner.
4. Ensure that the players and spectators follow all building and facility rules and regulations.
5. Ensure that the fans of his/her team conduct themselves with sportsmanship and maturity at all times while in attendance at game sites. Assist game officials in maintaining control of spectators and players during the games.
6. Respect the coaches and players of the opposing team both during the play of the game and at its conclusion, win and lose.
7. Teach each player, especially through personal example, to be humble and generous in victory and proud and courteous in defeat.
8. Maintain control of his/her emotions and avoid actions, language and/or gestures that may be interpreted as hostile or humiliating.

9. Instruct team support personnel (e.g., assistant coaches, line persons, scorekeepers, and timekeepers) in their responsibilities in accordance with established rules and procedures.
10. Not consume or allow being consumed alcohol at SYC activities or being in an inebriated state during practices, games or in the presence of my players.
11. Never encourage, tolerate or indulge in substance abuse.
12. Never smoke or use tobacco products in front of players during practices or games.
13. Realize, accept, and practice the principle that a team's reputation is built not only on its playing ability but also on its sportsmanship, courtesy, and manner.

I (print name) _____ agree to abide by the Springfield/South County Youth Club Code of Conduct whenever participating in an SYC sponsored activity. I also acknowledge that failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension or banishment from SYC activities.
(Signature) _____

SYC Spectators Code of Conduct -- Each spectator will ensure that his/her conduct is that of a lady or gentleman while observing the competition and after its conclusion. To satisfactorily meet these responsibilities, the spectator is expected to:

1. Respect the rules of the game.
2. Respect the game officials and refrain from questioning their decisions or from addressing them in a loud, disrespectful, or abusive manner.
3. Cheer for their team in a positive, supportive manner, refraining at all times from making hostile, negative, or abusive remarks about the opposing team.
4. Refrain at all times from coming onto the playing surfaces or from throwing objects or other foreign materials onto the playing surfaces. Exit in an orderly manner at the conclusion of the activity. Enter indoor facilities quietly and remain seated during the conduct of the activity.

5. Follow all building and facility rules and regulations, respecting at all times the property of others.
6. Demonstrate appropriate gestures of sportsmanship at the conclusion of the game, win or lose.
7. Realize, accept and practice the principle that a team's reputation is built not only on its playing ability but also on sportsmanship, courtesy, and citizenship of its fans.

I (print name) _____ agree to abide by the Springfield/South County Youth Club Code of Conduct whenever participating in an SYC sponsored activity. I also acknowledge that failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension or banishment from SYC activities.

(Signature) _____

18. Disciplinary Procedures

SYC Rugby expects the highest order of sportsmanship in all rugby practices, matches, and related activities. In addition to the guidelines spelled out in SYC's Codes of Conduct for players, coaches, and spectators, all persons associated with SYC Rugby should abide by the following disciplinary procedures:

1. Misconduct and/or abuse (physical or verbal) by coaches, players, officials, and spectators will not be tolerated. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their teams' sidelines, and responsible for the behavior of their teams' parents during the game.
2. Misconduct by a player, coach or spectator will be referred to the Rugby Committee for resolution.
3. Any club member may file a grievance provided it is in writing (e-mail is appropriate). Once receiving the official grievance, the Rugby Committee will schedule a hearing within 7 days to seek appropriate disciplinary action. A panel of at least 3 members of the Rugby Committee will conduct the hearing. The Rugby Committee shall provide the individual with written notification of its action.
4. The Rugby Committee has the authority to bar any or all members of a family from participating in SYC Rugby. Any person or family banned

- from participating in SYC Rugby may file a written request for review by the SYC Board of Directors.
5. Any person suspected of violating the disciplinary action levied by the Rugby Committee will be asked to appear before the Committee. Failure to appear at the date and time set by the Committee will be grounds for immediate removal of all members of the family from all SYC Rugby activities.
 6. Head coaches may administer playing time restrictions to players for unexcused absences from practices or misconduct during practices or matches. In the House program, the Rugby Commissioner, prior to implementation, must approve such action. In the Travel program, the coach will notify the Rugby Commissioner and the player's parent.

19. Annual Review of Program Guide

The Rugby Committee will review and re-submit the Rugby Program Guide for approval by the SYC Board of Directors on an annual basis prior to each season.

The Rugby Committee always welcomes constructive, written comments about how to improve the SYC Rugby program and/or program guide. Please submit them to the Rugby Commissioner in care of SYC, 7075 Newington Road, Unit G, Lorton, VA 22079; or by email to SYCRugby_Committee@yahoo.com.