



Cheshire Rugby Football Union

(EST. 1876)

OPERATION OF THE CHESHIRE RFU SCHOOL OF RUGBY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The management of the SoR programme is the joint responsibility of the Cheshire RFU through the Operations Manager; the RFU through the Coach Development Officer; and the England Rugby Academy (Sale Sharks). Their respective responsibilities are set out in the School of Rugby implementation guidelines 2009 (downloadable from [here](#))
- 1.2 The SoR is staffed by representatives of the RFU, Cheshire RFU and the England Rugby Academy at Sale Sharks. They may be assisted by other specialist staff as appropriate for the programme being followed.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE SoR

- 2.1 There is one SoR for Cheshire. Its efficient operation is the responsibility of the Operations Manager (Reg Unsworth). The Administrator is Jane Cliff. Jane is the first point of contact for players, their parents and their school or club representative. The prime method of communicating to players, schools, clubs and representative squad officials is by email. Jane's email address is janecliff@therfu.com. Announcements will also be made periodically on Cheshire RFU's [dedicated SoR web page](#).
- 2.2 It is expected that each session will be attended by the SoR Operations Manager, the RFU's CDO and representatives appointed by and from within the England Rugby Academy at Sale Sharks. The RFU's RDO for Cheshire should also attend SoR sessions.
- 2.3 In addition there will be a number of coaches at each SoR session. Specialist staff may also attend, depending upon the session's programme for the day.
- 2.4 There should be a physio in attendance whose role will be to attend to any injuries arising on the day. They are not engaged to treat pre-existing injuries (other than to advise whether an injured player should take part in the physical activities of the session).

3. APPOINTMENT OF COACHES

- 3.1 In recognition of the elite nature and to achieve the aims of the SoR, the recommended ratio of players to coaches should not exceed 8:1. Professional coaching resources may come from the RFU and Sale Sharks.
- 3.2 In addition, potential volunteer coaches are identified by the RFU's Coach Development Officer for consideration by the Cheshire RFU coaching committee. The coaching committee nominates volunteer coaches for appointment to the SoR by the CBRDP.

3.3 SoR coaches will normally possess a minimum level 2 coaching qualification.

4. TIMETABLE

4.1 SoR sessions will be timetabled, as far as possible, during school holiday periods, as follows:

SoR 1	October half term
SoR 2	Christmas
SoR 3	February half term
SoR 4	Easter
SoR 5	Summer (July/August)

However, the first SoR session for the U13 age group will be SoR 3 (February half term).

4.2 It is recognised that the dates of half term holidays may vary between schools. In such circumstances, every effort will be made to schedule the SoR so that the majority of players will be able to attend.

4.3 The SoR will normally run from mid-morning to mid-afternoon with a break for lunch. Players are expected to bring their own lunch and refreshments. SoR 5 (Summer) may be extended to enable final assessments to be completed.

4.4 Details of planned SoR sessions will be published on the [Cheshire RFU website](#).

5. PLAYERS IN THE SoR

5.1 The SoR programme aims to identify and develop young players and athletes who have the potential to play at the elite levels of the game in England. The programme is for players in the U13 to U16 age groups and is the start of the single elite player development structure. It provides a route for players into the England Rugby Academy system through the Elite Player Development Group (EPDG). With this in mind, it has been determined that the target maximum number of players in the Cheshire SoR should be 10 per age group. The limited number enables the SoR staff to deliver more effectively the programme based on the RFU's National Core Curriculum. In setting this target, the CBRDP recognises that the number of SoR players in most of the age groups currently exceeds this target. This does not preclude the nomination of further players to the SoR. However, the SoR has been tasked to use its assessment process (see paras 7.1 to 7.3) to reduce the number of SoR players to the target maximum as soon as practicable.

5.2 The SoR is distinct from and runs in parallel with Cheshire RFU's representative squads. The programme develops core skills away from the pressures of preparing for a game. As the SoR does not play matches, membership is regardless of playing position. Whilst it is to be expected that many SoR players, particularly at U15 and U16 may also be members of representative squads, this is not a precondition for being a member of the SoR. There is no inconsistency in an SoR player not being in a County representative squad nor for a County player not being a member of the SoR.

6. **PLAYER NOMINATION**

General

- 6.1 To be nominated for the SoR a player will normally be a member one of the U13 or U14 district development squads, the U15 district or County representative squads or the U16 County squad **and will be nominated by those responsible for running those squads** (see paras 6.3 to 6.6 below). Exceptionally, a school or club may nominate a player direct – see paras 6.7 and 6.8 below. A completed [SoR nominee assessment form](#) and an [SoR player registration form](#) (completed by the player's parent/guardian/carer) must accompany each nomination.
- 6.2 The SoR is not obliged to accept a nominee. It will not issue general invitations to schools and clubs to nominate for the SoR. Nominations will normally be in accordance with the process outlined in the following paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6.

Under 13

- 6.3 U13 players may be nominated to the SoR from the three U13 district development squads by the RFU's community rugby coaches via the RFU's Rugby Development Officer. *It is, therefore, imperative that schools and clubs nominate players of appropriate skills to the district development squads.* The nominations process and outline programme for the U13 district development squads may be accessed on [this webpage](#).

Under 14

- 6.4 U14 players in the SoR comprise those previous season's U13 players assessed following the Summer SoR to be retained in the SoR, together with players nominated from the three U14 district development squads by the RFU's community rugby coaches via the RFU's Rugby Development Officer. *It is, therefore, imperative that schools and clubs nominate players of appropriate skills to the district development squads.* The nominations process and outline programme for the U14 district development squads may be accessed on [this webpage](#).

Under 15

- 6.5 U15 players in the SoR comprise those previous season's U14 players assessed following the Summer SoR to be retained in the SoR, together with players from the County's U15 district representative squads or the U15 County squad nominated by the County U15 Team Manager/Lead Coach. *Schools and clubs are invited to nominate players to trial at the start of each season for selection to a district representative squad.* A copy of the invitation letter and forms can be downloaded from [here](#). The County squad is selected from players in the district squads.

Under 16

- 6.6 U16 players in the SoR comprise those previous season's U15 players assessed following the Summer SoR to be retained in the SoR, together with players from the U16 County squad nominated by the County U16 Team Manager/Lead Coach. *Schools and clubs are invited to nominate players to trial at the start of each season for selection to the County squad.* A copy of the invitation letter and forms can be downloaded from [here](#).

Additional nominations

- 6.7 At each age group schools and clubs may nominate direct to the SoR Administrator a player who has not been invited to the SoR under paras 6.3 to 6.6. However, this alternative route is for “exceptional talents” only. Examples would be that the nominee has:
- (a) recently moved into the area and, therefore, not previously been seen/nominated or
 - (b) exceptional potential but (i) is not yet ready to play representational rugby or (ii) does not currently play rugby.
- 6.8 This route should not be viewed as a means of bypassing the processes outlined in paras 6.3 to 6.6. A nomination made through this exceptional route should use an [SoR nominee assessment form](#) and supporting information should accompany the nomination explaining why the nominee should be considered, bearing in mind that they have not previously been nominated via a district (development) or County squad. Where the nominee is a rugby player it is expected that the player would have been observed by an SoR representative before being invited to the SoR. In all cases, an [SoR player registration form](#) must also be completed by the player’s parent/guardian/carer.
- 6.9 A diagram showing the SoR nomination (and assessment feedback routes) can be found [here](#).

7. SoR ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 Players in the SoR are assessed regularly. The [SoR assessment criteria](#) and a [sample SoR assessment](#) can be found on the Cheshire RFU website. Assessments will be fed back to players and are to be shared with their school/club/district and/or County coach as appropriate.
- 7.2 The assessment will contain a summary recommendation which will be one of the following:
- (a) EPDG/Potential Academy
 - (b) Trial for EPDG
 - (c) Retain in SoR
 - (d) Return to development/County squad or to school/club for further development
- 7.3 It should be noted that any invitation to attend the EPDG is at the sole discretion of the Sale Sharks England Academy management.