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Exeter Chiefs Academy Newsletter October 2024

To whom this may concern:

I hope you are all enjoying the start of the 2024/25 season.

I wanted to start by congratulating players who have come through the Exeter Chiefs pathway who represented England over the summer. Firstly, a huge congratulations to u20 WORLD CHAMPIONS Joe Bailey (Exeter College / Newton Abbot RFC), Louie Gulley (Exeter College / Crediton RFC) and Benjamin Coen (Blundell's School / Topsham RFC) on their successful World Cup in South Africa. A fantastic achievement and memories that will stay with them forever.

Also, congratulations to George Newman (Truro College / Truro RFC) who represented England u18s in the summer tour of South Africa. All four players doing themselves, their junior clubs and Exeter Chiefs proud.

Continuing the congratulations, a big congratulations to Josh Mann (Truro College / Penzance & Newlyn RFC), Nick Lilley (Exeter College / Ivybridge RFC) and Israel Akinrowo (Exeter College / Devonport Service RFC) who were offered contracts with Exeter Chiefs at the end of their u18s campaigns, we wish them well for what I'm sure is going to be bright futures for all three.

The RFU Professional Game Board Agreement has finally been put into place. The Exeter Chiefs boundary has not changed and still covers Devon and Cornwall.

Summary of key System changes

11 Programme Regional System Providing National Coverage (Regional Club Academies)

20-year commitment and revised licence agreement

Clearly Defined **Continuum Approach** to Development Managed by the **Professional Game**.

DPP to be **Absorbed** into Foundation Phase of Pathway

No U14 Intake, **Pathway to start** at Year 10 (15)

Minimum requirement of **two state school** partnerships per academy.

Requirement of **4-year strategic** planning, review and **enhanced audit**

Pathway Phased Approach



Foundation Phase

Foundation Satellites
Age Banding U15 & U16
U15 to start no earlier than August of U15 year



Development Phase

Development Hubs
Age Banding U17 – U18
EAP Status to start at U17
EAP & PDG player to have IDPs

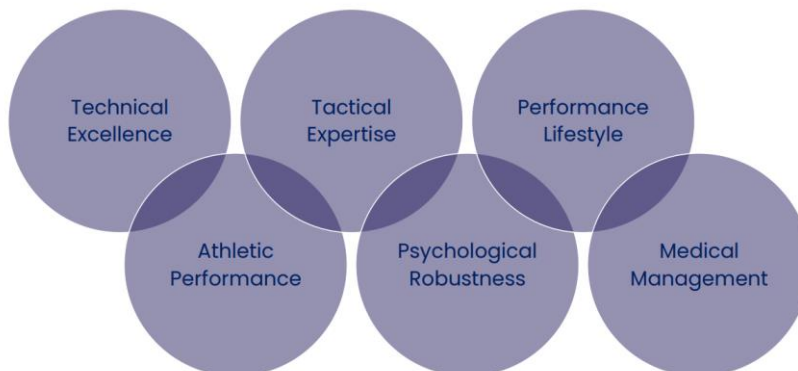


Confirmation Phase

Age Banding U19 – U20+
Fixed Academy Wage (U19 & U20)
All EQP to be EAPs
IDPs for all EAPs

Individual Development Plan

• 6 Key Pillars of Performance



Individual Development Plans

- Consistency from Pathway to Performance (6 key pillars of performance)
- Same but different (Review Process)
- Differential decision making (Enhanced EPS)
- Working towards a more integrated collaboration between Club & Country (RugbyCo)
- Enhanced EPS
 - England Head Coach final say on medical & athletic performance matters.
 - Club DOR retains selection priority
- Senior EPS & U20 EPS
- Confirmation Phase EAPs, Development Phase EAPs & PDGs (25/26)
- Housed on Elitehub with access defined for relevant coaches, practitioners and players



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Player Development Group (PDG)

As I'm sure many of you will be aware, there have been some changes to the pathway which have been introduced in alignment with RFU guidelines. The changes will see the end of the Developing Player Program (DPP) and a Player Development Group (PDG) installed in its place. The rationale for these changes can be found on the Exeter Chiefs website - [PDG Programme \(exeterchiefs.co.uk\)](https://www.exeterchiefs.co.uk).

Whilst these changes will come with its challenges, we are excited for the new format to take shape in our region.

Pre-season has seen both Exeter College and Truro College run extensive programs throughout the summer with a selected group of u18s attending the RFU Malvern Festival in August. The squad were tested in games against Yorkshire, Gloucester and Harlequins. All those involved did themselves and their junior clubs proud. With the ACE games starting on Wednesday 11th September this was valuable learning experiences for all those involved. Good luck to both Colleges in the ACE competition.

PDG Chiefs South season pre-view: Matty Birbeck (Chiefs South PDG Manager):-

The PDG 2024-2025 is going to welcome some exciting changes to Cornwall. This year there will be a real emphasis on developing not only a more rounded player, but also the technical and tactical nuances of the game. Both U15s and U16s PDG have opportunities to excel across the season despite the introduction of trials and extensive groups (Central group and Chiefs South). The emphasis this year is on watching these players play rugby. The curriculum at U15s and U16s has changed in Cornwall to try and allow more opportunities to play the game in controlled environments. We have equal opportunities for all players to enter the PDG throughout the season. We still believe in having a fluid pathway system meaning players can come and go with performances. As the PDG lead for Cornwall, I am very excited to get started this year.

PDG Chiefs North season pre-view: Lee Western (Chiefs North PDG Manager):-

We are currently sat in the nomination process of players to take part in our trials. The trials this year are multistage with a mixture of unit specific, game-based scenario and a full game. We can play a straight game this season as we are taking advantage of a PDG playing opportunity which is in the time frame of our trials.

The first unit trial is to take place in October and the game-based trials start in December.

Players are nominated from either their club or school to attend the first unit-based trials and then selected players will be invited back to enter the second trial, this will follow through each stage until selection is made in December.

We have 6 new PDG coaches who will coach closely alongside the Academy this season.



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Coach Education:

Exeter Chiefs Academy kicked off their coach education programme at Truro College on Tuesday 3rd September with staff delivering nuances of defence and defensive systems in our pathway. Matty Birbeck reported: "On Tuesday 3rd September 2024, there was an open coaching session which specialised in defence ran at Truro College by Matt Birbeck. The evening allowed 35 club and school coaches from around Cornwall and Devon the opportunity to come along and listen and watch what happens in the Cornwall PDG around defence. The session looked at the 3 main areas of defence; tackle tech, breakdown, system. Each section involved a classroom-based approach to listen and ask questions about the key points within the section, along with an on-field example of various drills and games used by the PDG to coach the section. The PDG coaches would interact with the players and the coaches watching to help better the young athletes and help clarify anything required from the coaches watching. Feedback from the evening was brilliant and well received which was the main aim of the evening. Hopefully, in the near future, Cornwall PDG will plan on running further courses similar to the defence theme".

If you missed out on the first coach education of the season please do not worry as we have more to come. If you are a coach and interested in receiving information about up and coming coach education events, please register your interest by completing the following form: [Coach Development Interest Form](#)

Good luck to everyone this season.

Exeter Chiefs Rugby Academy