



GOGGLES UPDATE

DATE: 31 MARCH 2014

To: CB Honorary Secretaries, ERSFU and Referee's Union

Background

As you may be aware, the RFU and Constituent Bodies have received a number of complaints over the last season relating to the prohibition on sports goggles in all contact rugby at all ages. Discussions and considerable efforts have therefore been taking place internally for some time and the RFU has been liaising closely with the Association of British Dispensing Opticians to develop a practical solution to provide a wider degree of flexibility to enable great social inclusion in Rugby Union.

The RFU has therefore decided to introduce in England a trial that would enable the wearing of certain sport goggles (dispensed under professional supervision) by players playing contact rugby at the Under 13 age grade and below. This trial is a variation of the RFU's current regulations which prohibits all types of goggles to be worn in contact rugby.

Whilst for the most part the trial will not take full hold until next season, the RFU recognises that some players may be in a position to adhere to the conditions of the trial in this current season. If this is the case, the RFU sees no reason why such players should be prevented from participating in the trial this season, provided all of the trial conditions are satisfied.

To this end, the trial will commence with immediate effect and will last until the end of the 2014-15 Season, whereupon the position will be reviewed further.

Conditions of the trial

The trial will permit players playing contact rugby at the Under 13 age grade and below to wear specially designed and manufactured sports goggles subject to the following conditions (all of which must be met):

- (a) The sports goggles must be dispensed by a registered dispensing optician who is a member of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians* ("ABDO"); and
- (b) The player must have written confirmation from the ABDO dispensing optician that the sports goggles:

- i. Are required to correct the vision of the player or are required to protect the player's eyes due to a medical condition, to enable the playing of Rugby Union; and
 - ii. Do not substantially restrict any normal field of vision and are suitable for use in evasion contact sports; and
 - iii. Do not constitute a physical danger to the player or other players; and
- (c) The match referee is entitled to object to the player wearing the sports goggles if the referee reasonably believes that they are unsafe; and
- (d) Clubs must notify the RFU Legal Officer of all players participating in the trial by emailing AlysLewis@rfu.com; and
- (e) Clubs must report any injuries caused as a result of the sports goggles to the RFU Community Medical Team by emailing sportsinjuriesadmin@therfu.com and the player's parents must report the injury to the ABDO dispensing optician who prescribed the goggles.

**If an optician is registered with the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, the optician will be listed on the General Optical Council's list of registered members which is available at <http://www.optical.org/>. Please check the list by inserting the name of the individual optician or opticians practice.*

Onward communication

In light of the number of upcoming festivals (including CB festivals), we wanted to inform Constituent Bodies, the ERSFU and the Referee's Union as soon as a decision was made and in advance of the rest of the Game so that you have the opportunity to raise any queries directly with us if you so choose.

In due course, we will be notifying clubs of the implementation of the trial but should you wish to inform your clubs directly in the meantime, the RFU would have no objections to that.

Queries

Should you have any queries or require further clarification and guidance in relation to the proposed trial, please contact Alys Lewis on AlysLewis@rfu.com.