June 2026 - College Update



Dear Colleagues,

This season has been a very busy and successful one for the college sector in growing the game of Rugby Union across the sector. We have had more teams participating in various levels of competition over the year, Planned v Played is up on previous seasons, the festivals provided a safe and friendly environment to introduce the game to a record number of learners and registration of players is increasing every year. Thank you everyone for your hard work in the colleges to support this very positive progress.

June will bring the England Colleges RFU Conference which celebrates the success of the Red Roses in the RWC and endeavours to drive forward the growth of the girls game within the sector and continue to drive forward the development of the highly competitive U18 girls game.

This season has also seen an increase in the number of Rugby Ambassadors all of whom have made positive impacts in introducing T1 Rugby into their colleges. A wonderful example of this work being delivered into the primary schools community is enclosed in this newsletter.

Preparation for the 2026/27 season is underway in all colleges as you register your teams for the various competitions on offer. Please find in the newsletter details and the entry form for the England Colleges 7's tournament scheduled for Wednesday 24th March 2027 and being held both at West Park Leeds RUFC and Trowbridge RFC.

It remains for me to wish you all a very enjoyable summer break and I look forward to continuing the positive steps made this season as we continue to grow the game from T1 through to the elite performance across the sector.

Best Wishes

Martin Tucker
ECRFU Chair
(Principal, Truro and Penwith College)

England Colleges Conference 3rd June 2026

'RWC Legacy: Enrichment to Performance - Women & Girls Rugby in Colleges'

Time	Activity	Key Note / Workshops		
09.15am	Registration opens	Delegates to arrive and check in – coffee etc available in the lounge area		
09.55am	Welcome	**Martin Tucker** *(England Colleges RFU Chair)*		
10.00am	Keynote 1	**Alex Teasdale** *'Women's Rugby World Cup leading to the new Women's and Girls development plan'*		
10.45am	Coffee			
11.00am	Keynote 2	**James Cooper** *'How coaching at the Elite level can be transferred into developing College programmes'*		
11.45am	Workshops	Brave Mind	T1 Rugby (Practical)	ACE Girls Programme
12.45pm	Lunch			
13.45pm	Keynote 3	**Sarah Cox** *'Pathway into refereeing through to International level'*		
14.30pm	Workshops	Brave Mind	Rugby Ambassador Programme	Playing Opportunities 2026/27
15.30pm	Closure	**Martin Tucker** *(England Colleges RFU Chair)*		
15.45pm	Coffee	Enjoy a coffee with your colleagues before departing		

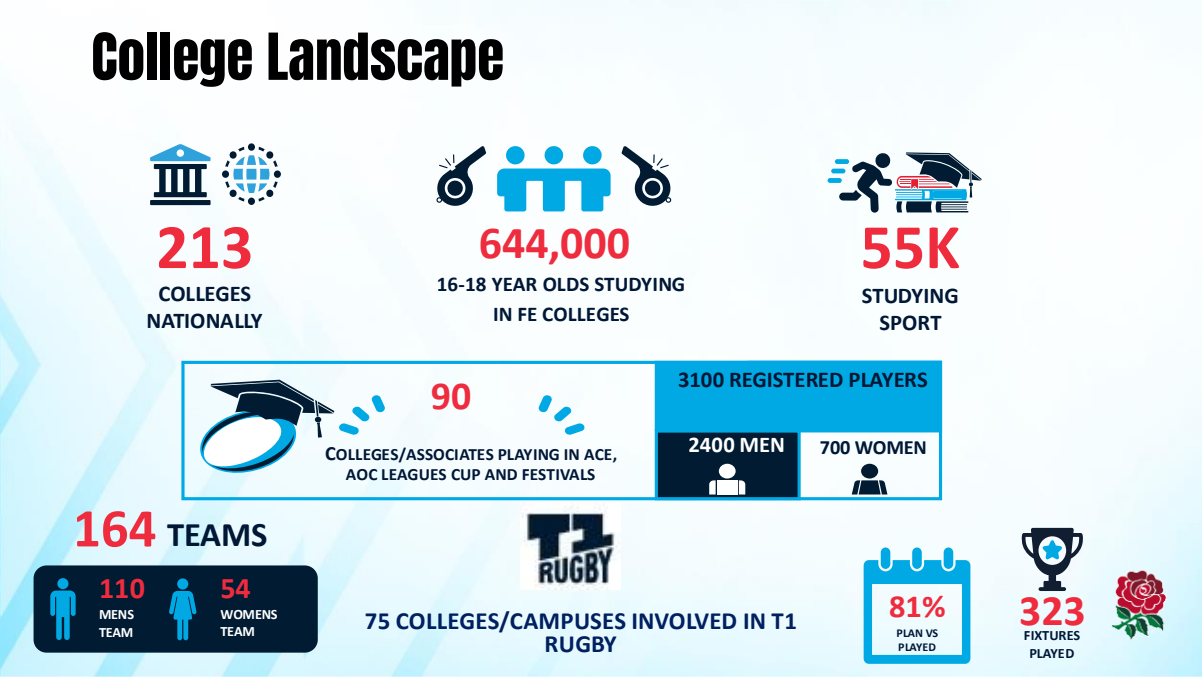
England Colleges Finals 2025-26

Finals 2026:

Event	Venue	Date	Teams
ECRFU 7's	Doncaster RFC Trowbridge RFC	Wednesday 4th March 2026	**Boys Performance** **Boys Development** **Girls Performance** **Girls Development**
Girls ACE Play offs	Ealing Trailfinders	Wednesday 11th March 2026	**All ACE teams except the two Finalists**
Finals Day	Stourbridge RFC	Wednesday 18th March 2026	**Cup:** Hartpury VI v Thomas Rotherham College

			Girls Prem: Hartpury College v City of Oxford College **Boys Prem:** Exeter College 2nd v Hartpury College 2nd
Girls ACE Finals	Twickenham (Allianz)	Thursday 19th March 2026	**Worthing College v Hartpury College**

England Colleges Landscape 2025-26



SANIX World U18 Rugby Tournament 2026

England Colleges were represented by Exeter College (Boy's U18) and Worthing College (Girl's U18) at The SANIX World U18 Rugby Tournament from 16th April – 6th May 2026 in Manakuta City, Fukuoka, Japan.

Worthing College:
From the moment the squad touched down in Japan, the SANIX Youth Tournament proved to be far more than a rugby trip. It became a week of world-class competition, cultural discovery, and team memories that will stay with every player and coach for years to come.

The tour began with an extraordinary opportunity: staying at Japan Base, the official training centre for Japan Rugby. For three days the team lived, trained, and bonded in the same environment used by international professionals. The facilities were immaculate, the pitches pristine, and the atmosphere

inspiring. Every session felt like a step into the world of elite rugby, and the players rose to the challenge with energy and focus.

The rugby truly ignited as the team faced a mix of local Japanese sides and top international teams from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The standard was fierce, the pace relentless, and the experience invaluable. Each match brought new lessons—about physicality, precision, and the unique style of rugby played across the globe. The players represented themselves brilliantly, showing resilience, skill, and a growing confidence with every fixture.



The tournament's presentation evening was nothing short of spectacular. Every participating team—male and female—took to the stage to perform. What followed was a joyful, hilarious, and unforgettable night. From cultural dances to comedy skits, the room was full of energy and camaraderie. It was a celebration not just of rugby, but of the friendships and connections formed throughout the tournament.

After days of intense rugby, the team enjoyed a well-earned cultural day in Fukuoka. The first stop was the serene Fukuoka Shrine, where players experienced a moment of calm and tradition. Next came the towering heights of Fukuoka Tower, offering panoramic views across the city and coastline. The afternoon wrapped up with some relaxed shopping—souvenirs, snacks, and plenty of laughs.



Before heading home, the team made one final ascent—this time to the top of Mt. Sarakura. The views were breathtaking, a perfect final chapter to a week filled with challenge, growth, and adventure. Standing together at the summit, the players reflected on everything they had achieved and experienced. It was a fitting end to a remarkable tour.



The SANIX Youth Tournament offered far more than rugby. It gave the team a taste of international competition, a deeper appreciation for Japanese culture, and memories that will last a lifetime. From the pitches of Japan Base to the heights of Mt. Sarakura, every moment strengthened the team—on and off the field.

Mark Rugman, Worthing College

Exeter College Rugby Academy reflections on representing England at the SANIX World Rugby Youth Tournament, Japan

Having put in an application of interest, Exeter College Rugby Academy received the amazing news that we would be the Men's Rugby representative College from England for the SANIX World Rugby Youth Tournament in Fukuoka, Japan. Fundraising and thoughts around selection and logistics started in earnest in preparation for the prestigious international schools' competition taking place in April.

Hosted annually by the Japan Rugby Football Union, the SANIX tournament is recognised as one of the world's leading international schools' rugby events and brings together top youth teams from across the globe. Exeter College was selected to represent England at this year's tournament and faced sides from countries including New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Fiji, Tonga and Namibia.

The 30-player squad travelling to Japan featured athletes from this season's unbeaten ACE teams including three current England U18 players. Three additional players, were to receive England Training Camp call up's whilst we were in Japan.



Post Game with Ratu Kadavulevu (Fiji) W26-3

The support from more than 60 businesses and organisations, combined with fundraising efforts of players and Sports Academy staff, raised over £51,000 towards the trip, helping make this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the players possible.



Half Time Team Talk on the Main Stadium Pitch

With suncream packed in the hope of good weather, we started our journey to Japan in the early hours of Saturday 25th April. The next 10 days were packed with competitive Rugby and experiences to enrich and

humble all. The whole tournament was so well organised and 90% of the games at the tournament were super competitive with so many close games finishing within one score. This is remarkable when you consider that 16 teams have come from all around the globe, playing different brands of rugby and from different cultures. The Japanese people were extremely friendly, polite and patient. The SANIX employees, and the Global Arena employees demonstrated a work ethic beyond anything seen before to ensure the tournament was a huge success with all minute details considered and catered for. This 'work ethic' also extended itself to the Japanese Rugby teams who maximised every and any opportunity to train ahead of games, and for lengthy periods of time. It was certainly a big eye opener for our Strength and Conditioning Coach and so many learnings for all!

In all, we played 5 games:

- Tuesday 28th April Game 1 v Toin Gakuen (Japan) W28-24
- Wednesday 29th Game 2 v Tenri HS (Japan) L15-17
- Friday 1st May Game 3 v Ratu Kadavulevu (Fiji) W26-3
- Sunday 3rd May Game 4 v Oita Tomei HS (Japan) L17-19
- Tuesday 5th May Game 5 v Osaka Toin (Japan) W25-24

In addition to the five games we fully emersed ourselves in the cultural opportunities available and through fundraising efforts, we were able to take the guys to a baseball game in Fukuoka, and also visit Hiroshima and Miyajima Island. We were also treated to a visit to some local shrines and shopping malls on behalf of SANIX. Our players and coaches delivered a training session with some local School children and a number of our players and staff were involved in the World XV representative game at the end of the Tournament, which was similar to a Barbarians fixture with players from all across the globe.
This was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity and the personal development in all of our players, and staff was visible for all to see. It truly was an honour to represent the England Colleges on the other side of the world and fully recommend this opportunity to any college should the lucky invite arrive!

Chris Wall and Jon Hill, Exeter College

The Principal of Exeter College was able to attend some of the SANIX Tournament this year and wishes to share:

I would wholeheartedly recommend any eligible school or college putting forward a team and taking part in the SANIX World Youth Rugby Tournament. In short, it is both a life changing and a life shaping experience for the young people that visit Japan and take part.

The professionalism of the event, cultural experience of visiting Japan and different country collaboration; make for a magical experience.

It is also inspiring and humbling in equal measure seeing a College (in this case Exeter College) team representing England in such a prestigious tournament.

I would like to thank England Colleges Rugby, SANIX and everyone involved for making this a possibility for Exeter College and our rugby team.

John Laramy CBE DL

Group Principal
Exeter & North Devon Colleges Group

England Colleges 7's Tournament 2027 – ENTRY FORM

Wednesday 24th March 2027

England Colleges will be running two rugby 7's Tournaments to cater for all colleges, offering both performance and development level competitions for both U18 Boy's and Girl's. Two tournaments will take place on the same Wednesday 24th March 2027 with one situated in the north and one in the south of England.

The two venues have been confirmed as the following:

North: West Park Leeds RUFC

South: Trowbridge RFC

Please put the date in your fixture diaries now for Wednesday 24th March 2027 and complete the entry registration for the competition below:

England Colleges U18 7's Tournament Wednesday 24th March 2027 – Fill in form

Rugby Ambassador Programme

Shrewsbury College Rugby Ambassadors organised and delivered a rugby day where 223 girls from six primary schools attended a rugby day consisting of training sessions and T1 games.



A total of 223 Year 9 girls from six primary schools across Shrewsbury took part in an inspiring three-hour rugby morning, led by England College Rugby Ambassadors Dan Mitton and Oli Wright from Shrewsbury College. The event was supported by a tutor group of a further 13 coaches, with T1 Rugby playing a key role throughout. Activities were delivered across six pitches, featuring an hour of coaching followed by three T1 rugby games.

T1 Rugby Finals – May 2026

Year 12/13 – T1 Rugby Finals

As part of our ambition to grow rugby in colleges, T1 Rugby is opening the game to new audiences, inspiring greater participation, and helping new people experience the game.

On Wednesday 6 May, the National Year 12/13 T1 Rugby Finals was a celebration of the college T1 rugby programme, bringing together the energy and progress built through enrichment activity and regional stages on the journey to a national showcase.

This programme is about far more than creating opportunities to play; it is about engagement, inclusivity, and opportunity. Supported by Rugby Ambassadors as part of the AoC Sport Student Leadership Programme, it is helping new colleges and new participants experience the game in a way that builds fun, confidence, connection, and a sense of belonging.

The impact is already something to celebrate:

- **75 colleges** are now bringing T1 Rugby to their students
- More than **50 Rugby Ambassadors** are championing delivery within their colleges
- Students have a powerful pathway to grow as leaders, enhance enrichment, and inspire greater participation

These ambassadors are not only driving activity within their colleges, but also building the confidence, skills, and ambition that will support them in the next stage of their journey, whether that is university, employment, or beyond.

Link to Videos
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdGRie02fkoGIevkT5ejby_NiOTXwZLU6&si=n9Wtml0VGqSCMHTY

Regulation 15 – Important Update on Changes for 2026-27

AGE GRADE RUGBY REGULATION 15 - WHAT'S CHANGING

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Regulation 15 Review during the last 9 months. With over 600 survey responses and many conversations with clubs, schools, colleges and partner organisations, the community game has been integral to the changes which the RFU Council have approved.

The approved changes fall into two categories - those coming in for 2026/7 and those that will be introduced in 2027/8.

Changes coming in 2026/27

These are the priority changes for next season. There was strong agreement across the game for these, and they can be put in place straight away. They include:

Playing Out of Age Grade (POOAG) - A standard risk assessment will apply to all POOAG applications, along with a 10-day approval window to reduce the burden on administrators.

Girls' rugby at Under 11/12 - A new dual girls' Under 11/12 age band is being introduced to help clubs retain more young female players who want to play girls-only rugby at that age. Mixed rugby at Under 11s will remain, giving clubs and girls greater flexibility and choice.

Schools' 7s - A defined spring term window for schools 7s combined with avoiding tournaments taking place on Sundays will help to strike a better balance between school and club rugby.

Simplified Language - Significant work is being undertaken to simplify the language used in the regulation, making it more accessible and easier to follow.

A full picture of the changes will be in the new-look Regulation 15, which we will publish in July, alongside some helpful guidance and resources.

Changes coming in 2027/28

This smaller set of changes have also been agreed but won't come in until 2027/8, to allow more time to put things in place to support their introduction. You'll hear more about these over the next year, once we have the playing season underway.

Areas for further engagement

During the age grade regulation review, a few topics sparked significant debate and a range of different views. Rather than rush, we will be running additional engagement with the game over the next 6-9 months to discuss these further before we put any firm recommendations forward for a decision.

We're looking forward to the new regulations that make age grade rugby safer, clearer and simpler for everyone involved and to engaging further with people from across the community game.

Keep an eye on the RFU Regulations and Age Grade Rugby pages for updates.

Age Grade Summer Activity Plan - June

Age Grade activity in the off season needs to be in line with the Summer Activity Plan, shared last month. June's plan is as attached. All the detail and support for your summer activity can be found here(opens in a new tab).

The plan includes what can be played in training and in any matches for each month across all summer activities in clubs, schools, colleges, playing opportunities and camps. As explained last month, there is more scope this year for younger ages to keep up some rugby which helps particularly with summer term schools activity and club recruitment/outreach programmes.

Please remember that age grade rugby activity out of the season is completely optional. Many players, parents and volunteers will want a rest, but for those that are keen to do so, the Summer Activity Plan defines the regularity and maximum level to be included in training and any fixtures or festivals.

GMS Information

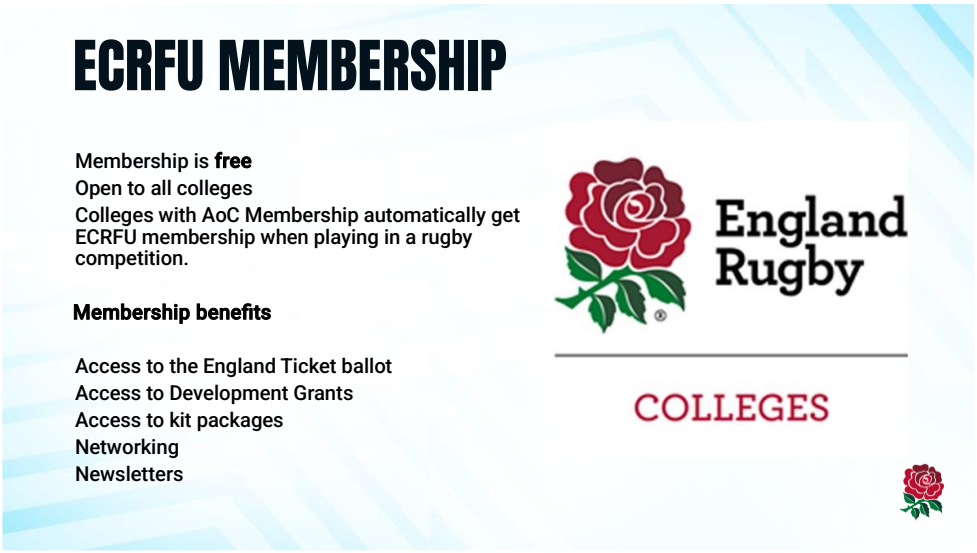
Important:

Please ensure that your college details are correct and up to date on your GMS page. This is vital to ensure you receive communications in a timely fashion and also receive the ticket ballot details.

Please do check names, emails and all contact details are up to date.

England Colleges Membership

Colleges already registered as members **please ensure that you log onto your GMS account and update all details** to ensure that you receive all communications and information about developments as well as details regarding the International Ticket Ballot. The individuals assigned to the Golden Roles are key contacts and need to be regularly updated when staff change or you will not receive the information you require.



Your Regional ECRFU Rep

England Colleges RFU is the advocate of College Rugby within the RFU and, as the national Constituent Body, works hard to ensure the voice of the college sector is heard.

The role of the England Colleges Rep is a key one in ensuring this dialogue takes place and all views are clearly represented.

ECRFU Reg Rep	College	Contact Details	Region
James McKeown	Runshaw College	McKeown.J@runshaw.ac.uk	**North West**
Andy Douthwaite Dale Smallman	Hereford VIth Form Shrewsbury College	AD@hereford.ac.uk dales@shrewsbury.ac.uk	**West Midlands**
Naz Deen Trevor Martingell	Corams Kent	naz@coramsfields.org.uk t.martingelll@btinternet.com	**London & Kent**
Tim Peck	Leyton	Timothy.Peck@leyton.ac.uk	**London & East**
Mark Rugman	Worthing College	M.Rugman@worthing.ac.uk	**South East**
Chris Wall Glenn Channing	Exeter College South Devon College	chriswall@exe-coll.ac.uk glennchanning@southdevon.ac.uk	**South West**
Evan Woodworth	Bishop Burton College	Evan.Woodworth@askham-bryan.ac.uk	**East**
Robert Green	Bede Sixth Form College	robert.green@stockton.ac.uk	**North East**

Stay in Touch **@EngRugColleges**