**ENGLAND LACROSSE - YOUNG PEOPLE PLAYING IN SENIOR TEAMS GUIDANCE**

**Introduction:**

England Lacrosse (EL) believe that all players should be provided with opportunities to improve their lacrosse. Young individuals playing club lacrosse are often introduced to senior teams and development sides, allowing them to gain experience playing with and against older players. This step up can be pivotal to their lacrosse playing career however decision can be made hastily without proper consideration for the young person involved.

**Regulations**

*As agreed by NLC and the England Lacrosse Board 2018, that junior boys may not play for a senior men’s team until they reach their 16th birthday and girls may not play for senior women’s team until they reach their 14th birthday until further notice (Juniors playing in adult league teams, 2018)*

Whilst we understand that young people develop physically at different times, we can be certain that their emotional and psychological state prior to the age of 14 if female and 16 if male is unlikely to be mature enough to support them adequately in an adult competition. Furthermore, it seems sensible to have a concrete age for young adults to regulate participation and avoid subjective decisions.

**CONSIDERING THE YOUNG PERSON**

All clubs should recognise that they have a duty of care towards all young members of the club. Young people need to be consulted before any decision is made to include them within an adult team.

**Over Training –** young players may have their age group training session on top of an expectation to attend senior club training and matches causing a training overload meaning a risk of long-term injury and fatigue.

**Willingness to play –** A young person’s willingness to play can mean they switch between teams resulting in attending a number of away games in a row

**Playing Position** – young players are often played in unfamiliar position, for example a promising young low defender may be played as a midfield to be ‘blooded’ into an adult team. Whilst learning all positions is to be encouraged as is interchange through playing lines, denying them the chance to develop their game within the increase pressure of a new environment through playing strings, denying them the chance to develop the chance to develop their game within the increase pressure of a new environment is not helpful to their development. Playing minutes – sometimes a young player will be given brief shifts of a few minutes her and there. This is not helpful to their learning and is physically poor practice.

**Parent Pressure** – It’s essential that sports clubs communicate regularly with parents so that both coach and parent work towards the same goals. Guidance around how to achieve this is available at: https:/thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/parents-in-sports/

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Who is responsible for the young adult?**

Normally the Captain however this doesn’t have to be. The nominated person needs to be someone who can communicate with young players and will support them whilst acting in their best interest in that playing environment (on and off the pitch). Permission needs to be gained before giving lifts in a personal vehicle. Adults, and U18’s alone in a car is not recommended.

**Does the captain of the team require a DBS?**

Yes, if the young person is likely to feature in the team for most of the season.

**What do you (as a club) need to consider?**

Make parents aware of how young people involvement works within the club. Do you have development ideas?

Are the Captains/Team Managers aware of the social environment that the young person will be place in e.g., involving alcohol?

**Who is responsible for holding emergency medical information?**

Either the Captain or a nominated member of the team should be given all medical information when travelling to away fixtures.

**SUPPORTING GUIDANCE**

**Photography –** juniors playing on senior teams are more likely to be involved in content that appear in newspapers or social media. For more information on this see ***Photography.***

**Changing Rooms –** arrangements for changing pre and post-game can very especially when travelling to away games. See **Best Practice guidance**

**Communication –** notification of selection/availability should always include parents when young people are involved. Further information can be found in Best Practice guidance