



## Youth Consultation Findings

IRFU, in conjunction with NSPCC, ISPCC and Sport Ireland, held a very successful and interesting Youth Consultation Day on Saturday 12th November in Dublin. 72 young players between 13-18 years of age gathered to share their thoughts on the modern game and voice their opinion on how it should be shaped in the years ahead. Players, both boys and girls, came from 28 different clubs across the country, both urban and rural rugby representing teams from AIL Division 1 to junior teams.

The purpose of the session was to consult with Age-Grade Players so we could understand their thoughts, concerns and issues in relation to rugby. By the end of the day we had gathered information on why they play, (Friendships, Fun, Enjoyable, Physical, Team Sport), why they think their friends drop out ("playing on bad pitches", games getting cancelled and 'unfair games') and what they would like to do more of and less of in their rugby clubs. It is intended to share this information in more detail with relevant Union and Branch Committees. In the meantime some of the quotes below give a flavour of their thoughts.

### Suggestions:

These young players voiced their desire to play more rugby, they would like more games and more game-like training sessions with a desire to share facilities or play on neutral venues where necessary, they suggested:

- Blitzes – "put in place regularly for teams with less numbers to play with other teams" and training sessions where "boys and girls mixed during non-contact drills, game of touch and passing drills".
- They would like less 'sprints' and "passing drills up and down the pitch" and things they would like to change include,
- Referees who don't know the rules" and "unfair teams – when you only have 12 players play 15-a-side".
- Better education of coaches, referees and medical personnel was frequently mentioned with comments such as,
- "Injuries were obtained from matches and people didn't know how to treat them so the injuries were made worse".

#### Irish Rugby Football Union

10-12 Lansdowne Road | Ballsbridge | Dublin 4 | D04 F720

T +353 01 6473800 | F +353 01 6473801

[www.irishrugby.com](http://www.irishrugby.com)   



- When asked what they would do if in charge of youth rugby at their club facilities was resources and facilities were priority,
- “Change jerseys”, “better pitches” and “more changing rooms” and gyms, with sharing of facilities mentioned among “cluster of teams” to allow all players to benefit from facilities

This was the first consultation day that IRFU hosted for Age-Grade players. For more information, please see the [Youth Council](#) section.

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