



## **Millwall Rugby Club Selection Policy: 08/09**

As Millwall Rugby Club approaches the start of the new 08/09 season it is only right that all players familiarise themselves with the club's selection policy.

At a recent meeting of the club's coaches, Club Captain and team managers it was decided to strengthen and publicise the club's existing Selection Policy. It is hoped that by clarifying all eligibility and selection matters, any dissatisfaction or confusion amongst management and players will be eradicated.

Once again this year Millwall Rugby Club will operate a first team squad system. Players who wish to be considered for this squad and who are then selected will be asked to commit to additional criteria in order to be eligible for first team selection.

Please note:

- Any Venus eligibility and selection queries should be directed towards the Venus manager.
- The following Membership and match day subs rules apply equally to Venus players.
- First team eligibility via the Squad is not fixed for the season, players who put themselves forward or join the club during the season and fulfil the eligibility requirements will also be able to be considered for 1<sup>st</sup> team selection.

For all men's teams details as well as all eligibility and selection matters affecting the men's teams please see below:

### **Coaching and Team Management targets for the 08/09 season:**

<b>Target 1: "Promotion of all 4 teams" (3 Regular men's teams + 1 Venus team)</b>
First team: Essex 2 to Essex 1
Llamas: Merit 3 to Merit 2
Thirds: Merit 6 to Merit 5
Venus: SES 4 to SES 3
<b>Target 2: To get the Fourth team out more often than last season i.e. more than once.</b>

### **Selection Matters (Overview):**

The Selection Committee meets each Wednesday evening, after training, to consider which players should play in which team for the following weekend's games. This committee comprises the Club Captain, all the men's team managers, and the head coach. On certain occasions, others may be asked to step in should an individual not be available for the selection decision process.

All managers and the Club Captain have voting rights on the selection committee. The Club Captain has an additional casting vote that can be used in the event of tied votes around any selection decisions. It is hoped



that this casting vote will never be exercised and in effect the team managers will be left to make their decisions accordingly based on our eligibility and selection policy. It is important to note that the whole selection committee is involved the selection of each team.

Preparation for club games can only effectively be done at the club's training sessions; in particular on Wednesday evenings. It therefore follows that, if we want to be able to compete at a higher level, our players, and particularly the first team, must be regular in their attendance at Wednesday training sessions.

They must become familiar with team tactics, plays and strategies – and also with playing alongside one another.

## **General Eligibility and Selection Criteria:**

Selection decisions will be made based on the following criteria, in the order given:

### **(1) Registration:**

- Players of all First team fixtures, playing in cup or club games (but excluding pre-season and tournaments) MUST be made up of ONLY Registered Players whose names appear on the official list of Registered Players as supplied by the RFU. The onus is on individual players to ensure that they are registered. The RFU have made it easier to get registered by filling out and downloading forms from online. These forms can be accessed directly from the RFU site at: [www.rfu.com/playerregistration](http://www.rfu.com/playerregistration)
- Please note: This is applicable only to the first team. Players of all the other men's teams do not formally need to be registered in order to play. You are however encouraged to get yourself registered in order that should you be asked to play for the first team, you are eligible to do so.
- Registration is FREE and is separate from Membership.
- For all registration queries please direct your questions to the club Secretary. [secretary@millwallrugby.com](mailto:secretary@millwallrugby.com)

### **(2) Membership:**

Players are encouraged to become full paid-up Full Members before the end of October. Current membership rules state the following:

- Every new player is entitled to NOT pay match day subs (currently £10) on their first game for the club. This is referred to as the "First Game Free" rule. It applies only to a player's first EVER game for Millwall. For all other games, match day subs are payable (there are reductions for unwaged, students etc via agreement with the Treasurer on a case by case basis).
- Although the Annual Membership fee is payable by all players, we allow each player to play up to 4 games each season before their Annual Membership payment is considered "overdue". Therefore, every player must have paid their Annual Membership fee BEFORE they can be selected to play in their 5<sup>th</sup> game (there are also reductions for unwaged, students etc via agreement with the Treasurer on a case by case basis).



- In the same way players joining the club part way through the seasons must be paid-up Full Members BEFORE being selected to play in their 5<sup>th</sup> game for the club. There is a reduced Annual Membership fee for players whose FIRST game of the season is after January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Please note: Annual Membership fee and match day subs rules are applicable to all adult players irrespective of which team they play for.

### **(3) Attendance Record:**

Proposed attendance is stated as follows:

- **First team:** If you are planning on signing up to be part of the first team squad you will be expected to attend a minimum of 3 out of 5 of the previous Wednesday practice sessions prior to match day. Put differently this equates to approximately half of the training sessions in any given month. Any public holidays or cancellations of training will be taken into account. For a full account of eligibility specific to the first team squad please see section entitled **First Team Squad**.
- **Llama's team:** Whilst no specific attendance criteria has been put in place for the Llamas team, it is expected that as a feeder team for the firsts, that players will attempt to also attend 3 out of 5 sessions so they are also available for selection for the 1's. Additionally managers are in a better position to pick players who have attended training as this gives them an opportunity to view commitment, and skills.
- **Third team:** Whilst no specific attendance criteria has been put in place for the 3rds team, managers are in a better position to pick players who have attended training as this gives them an opportunity to view commitment, and skills.
- **Fourth team:** Whilst no specific attendance criteria has been put in place for the 4ths team, managers are in a better position to pick players who have attended training as this gives them an opportunity to view commitment, and skills.
- An attendance record will be kept for all training sessions in order to help managers make selection decisions based on who attends. Attendance to training is viewed as a commitment on your behalf and this forms the basis of selection. The management and coaches need to be able to assess players at training in order to pick the best teams week in week out.

### **(4) Skill during training and games**

- It goes without saying that the managers would like to pick the most able teams in order to get the job done over the weekends. Clearly some players are more skilled than others and accordingly this will be taken into account by management. **Having said this, attendance to training will be the overriding factor when it comes to making decisions as to who should play in the various teams.**
- **The management are firm in their decision that players need to train together in order to succeed on the pitch.**



#### **(5) Overseas players:**

- **There is no longer an overseas player rule in effect.**
- The only extra requirements for us is that we only play players (in the 1<sup>st</sup> team) whose names actually appear on the official RFU Registered Players list that we have available for inspection on the touchline of every first team game.
- Please note: Players from the following countries are not classed as overseas players
  - Players from countries in the EU, players who have an EU passport
  - Players from South Africa

#### **First Team Squad System:**

- The club would like to be in a position where it can cater for both the social player and the more committed player who wishes to take their rugby more seriously. By the establishing of a squad, this can address certain issues such as:
  - a. The need for key players at training: It is difficult to practice line-outs, scrums, set pieces without these players.
  - b. The need for familiarity with the players who you will be playing with on a Saturday:
  - c. The system will also boost healthy competition for team spots.
- With this in mind the following squad system will take effect:

#### ***Proposed First team selection policy:***

1. All playing members asked if they intend to play first team rugby this season. To be able to put their name forward they must intend to adhere to points outlined below:
  - a. To be able to attend training at least 3 Wednesday training sessions out of the last 5 at any given point.
  - b. If not able to attend training, a phone call or email to the first team manager should be made. (Wednesday training only and preferably by Wednesday midday)
  - c. When in attendance at training, players will fill in the training register.
  - d. To declare match day availability by Monday @ 2pm in order that initial selection can take place before training Wednesday.
  - e. If for any reason a player might have to pull out of the match day squad, they should contact the team manager by phone as soon as possible. Do not send a text message for this purpose – make the call.
  - f. Players can drop in or out of this squad at any time, but obviously team achievement would benefit from a more consistent fifteen on the pitch.
  - g. Please note: If a player makes themselves available for the first team squad but should not make the first team squad they are still able to play for any of the other teams.
2. Any unforeseen forced break in selection policy will be explained and justified to the players involved and the teams. All communication must be directed through the Club Captain who will explain any unforeseen changes. Any suggestions, comments or disagreements with selection must also be directed to the Club Captain.
  - a. Poor training attendance means being dropped from the first team squad system.
  - b. Poor communication with manager regarding not being able to attend training means being dropped to the bench. (Wednesday sessions only)
  - c. Poor communication/reason concerning dropping out of match day squad would mean being completely excluded from match day squad for the following game.



d. Failing to fill in the training register would simply mean the player would not be credited for attending training.

e. Failing to answer availability on time would mean selection might not know the player is available and the selection committee needs to potentially resort to other players outside of the squad. (If a player wants to play we need to know about it).

Everyone in the first's squad must know and understand all of these selection criteria.

Please note: As far as possible the management and coaching team will adhere to all outlined selection criteria. If however in the event of unforeseen circumstances the management need to break with this, all will be explained, and as far as possible, all will be transparent to all members and players.

Again a reminder that all communication must be directed through the Club Captain who will make the explanation.

Any suggestions, comments or disagreements with selection must also be directed to the Club Captain and not to individual team managers or coaches.

In return the management shall:

1. Stick to selection policy (please see point 1.a. above as well as section entitled **General Eligibility and Selection Criteria**)
2. Match day resources shall be extensive and maintained through out season from a full medical kit, Crash pads to other items such as deep heat and strapping tape to name a few.
3. Have a direct say in how the team is trained and making sure training is relevant to the needs of the team.
4. To work towards the club adding to, and improving training facilities.
5. To make communication between management and players a high priority.
6. Match day transport, travel and meet to be well organised.

### ***First team squad Q and A:***

Q: Why has a first team squad system been proposed?

A: To allow the club to cater for both the more serious player who wants to make a commitment to training as well as those that are happy to play more social rugby for the one of the other teams.

Q: Does this mean that the first team squad will be treated differently at training?

A: Not at all. There will be times when the squad will look to do drills such as line-outs etc as a squad so that they can prepare with the players that they will be playing with on a Saturday. All other training given will however be identical.

Q: If I put my name down to be a part of the squad what am I committing to?

A: It means that you have made a commitment to turn out at training as specified and provided that you are eligible on all other accounts, will be seen as available for the first team games.

Q: Can I drop out of this squad if I am unhappy?

A: Absolutely. There is no requirement to stay on should you wish to play more social rugby or are struggling to make the necessary commitment.

Q: If I make myself available for the squad but do not get picked for a game does that mean I don't play on a weekend?

A: No, you are still eligible for any of the other teams. It has and will continue to be the case that everyone that makes themselves available will be entitled to a game or part of a game.

Q: What happens if no one from the squad is available for a certain position e.g. a prop?

A: The management will resort to seeking players from outside of those that have committed to the squad.



Q: Will this not split the club in 2?

A: It is not the intention of the squad system to split the club in any way. As with many sports clubs, we recognise that the needs of different players differ and we aim to give each player the opportunity to play at a level of commitment which suits them. The 1<sup>st</sup> Team Squad System simply allows those that want to take it all more seriously to make that commitment to each other and to help the club continue to grow and progress up the league structure. In no way is this intended to divide the club in any way.

**General Q and A:**

Q: Who do I speak to about registration?

A: Club Secretary - [secretary@millwallrugby.com](mailto:secretary@millwallrugby.com)

Q: Who do I speak to if I have a question, suggestion or query regarding selection:

A: Club Captain - [clubcaptain@millwallrugby.com](mailto:clubcaptain@millwallrugby.com)

Q: What happens if I cannot make training or match day?

A: Please contact either one of the managers or the Club Captain who can pass the message on.

Q: How come the Llamas, Thirds and Fourths do not have minimum training attendance requirements?

A: Players are encouraged to attend training since it makes it easier for managers to make selections through seeing first hand those players that are in form, playing well, committed etc. You cannot be expected to be picked week in week out if you are the only one of your respective team that is not attending training. Whilst it is not a prerequisite, and we aim to give everyone a place in one of our squads so they get at least part of a game, clearly players attending will be at an advantage when it comes to selection.

***In summary:***

To reiterate the selection committee's stance, we have taken the view to offer as much transparency in the selection process as possible.

As you can appreciate, selection is not an easy job. The selection committee is empowered, under unforeseen circumstances and in situations where the good of the club needs to be put first, to exercise reasonable discretion in coming to their decisions. In the event of the committee needing to deviate from the stated selection policy you will be given a full account as to the decision making process.

Once again you are encouraged to raise any queries that you may have with the Club Captain. I look forward to your support and a successful season.

**Club Captain**  
**Millwall Rugby Club**