



Read Rugby

Ideas for schools, libraries and rugby clubs to encourage reading for pleasure



2015 IS A MASSIVE YEAR FOR RUGBY UNION IN ENGLAND AS THE RUGBY WORLD CUP COMES TO OUR SHORES. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US ALL TO WATCH THE WORLD'S GREATEST PLAYERS AND DIFFERENT TEAMS' STYLES OF PLAY AND - JUST MAYBE - TO SEE ENGLAND WIN THE ULTIMATE HONOUR FOR A SECOND TIME

Whether that happens or not, 2015 gives rugby union the chance to encourage the children and adults in your schools and libraries to try the game - either on the pitch or from the stands.

But the Rugby World Cup can do more.

Much more.

For one, the Rugby World Cup can get children - and their families - reading for pleasure. In Read Rugby you will find dozens of ideas about how to use rugby to encourage children to read. It is divided into the places in your library, school or rugby club and features ideas for displays, book

groups, activities, visits and things that families can do at home. It includes links to free online resources that will hopefully do a lot of the work for you, meaning you can spend more time talking about reading with the children. It also offers advice as to when are the best times to use rugby to encourage reading, focussing on the RBS Six Nations and the Rugby World Cup.

We hope you find it useful. We also hope you and the children enjoy the Rugby World Cup.

Happy reading!

Tom Palmer

IDEAS FOR THE STAFFROOM

IF YOU WANT READING FOR PLEASURE CAMPAIGNS TO WORK IN YOUR SCHOOL OR LIBRARY, YOU NEED ALL, OR AT LEAST SOME, OF YOUR COLLEAGUES ON BOARD. AND THAT STARTS IN THE STAFFROOM.

Staff rugby reading training

In the lead up to a major rugby tournament, use one of the school's staff meetings as a chance to train or inform your colleagues in the joys of rugby reading.

Take three ideas from this toolkit. Ones that will work well in with your pupils. Ask your colleagues to help you tailor those ideas for the children in your school. As well as helping you to make the ideas work best for you, it may also bring some of them on board with delivering the ideas.

Then talk about what else you can do, using this toolkit.

Staff rugby readers

Ask your colleagues if they would like to join you as rugby reading champions. Are some of them rugby fans? Or general sports fans? Can they be persuaded?

They could be encouraged to look out for reluctant readers in school and talk to them about rugby – or other – reading, help you run rugby reading book groups, talk to parents about your plans in the playground.

Ask them to generate their own ideas – or to choose some from this toolkit.

Staffroom poster

Create a poster for the staffroom, reminding your colleagues of your rugby reading activities.



Staff reading selfies

Kids love to know what their teachers are reading. Ask all your colleagues to do a rugby reading selfie for your school display areas. Ideally rugby books, magazines or newspapers. But – if they are not into rugby – a selfie of them reading something that they are passionate about.

Reluctant reader posters

In the same way you have posters in staffrooms about children and their allergies or health issues, put up some posters of children who aren't keen on reading, but who do like sport. Say what sports they like. Encourage your colleagues to talk to them about things they have read.

Rugby Readers

Employ pupils as Rugby Readers, so that they can help you champion rugby reading during 2015, allow them into the staffroom as special children during their role as champions.

IDEAS FOR ASSEMBLY

YOU CAN USE THE SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES TO REACH THE WHOLE SCHOOL WITH IDEAS ABOUT READING FOR PLEASURE THROUGH MAJOR SPORTS TOURNAMENTS. PANEL DISCUSSIONS. QUIZZES. NEWSPAPER REVIEW SESSIONS. EVEN LIVE MATCHES. THEY CAN ALL WORK.

Regular Rugby references

During major rugby tournaments, rather than delivering rugby-dominated assemblies that may not appeal to everyone, pepper each assembly with features around rugby reading. Encourage teachers, sports coaches or children to tell everyone about something they have read about the sport. A magazine interview. A match report. A story. A rugby read of the day.

You could also update the school on any ongoing rugby reading challenges you are running with. Sweepstakes. Predictions. Reading races.

Reading events

Use assemblies to deliver short and snappy rugby reading events. Twenty minute interventions that could include your rugby reading champions, P.E. teachers or even guest speakers. For instance:

- a what-the-papers-say style discussion, where a teacher, a pupils and a librarian to talk about their highlights from the weekend's rugby newspapers – then asking the children to say what they have enjoyed reading
- a panel discussion about (for instance) the Rugby World Cup – invite a guest to join someone from your P.E. staff and your lead rugby reading teacher. Talk about the games, the controversies and feed in tips on how the children could read more.
- host an assembly out of school hours, when one of the matches is on, with a half hour open mic conversation about the game coming up, trying to eke out of people what they have read in preparation for the game.

All the above events could happen in normally assembly time – or they could happen after school, inviting parents to come along and take part.

Rugby Reading Champions

Create a group of rugby-mad children and use them to promote reading for pleasure to the rest of the school. Call them World Cup Reading Champions. You can deploy them during regular or special school assemblies. Their role could be to:

- encourage other children to take part in activities and displays in the school
- tell other children about what World Cup reading they have been doing
- read one of the Rugby World Cup story (see below) chapters to the rest of the school
- run a whole assembly, devising the content for themselves

Rugby Assembly Speakers

Having someone from outside your school come in and address an assembly is usually exciting. A new face. Especially someone with an exciting job or role in the community. But who to ask in?

Talk to your colleagues. Do any of the parents have sport related jobs? Does someone know someone who knows someone else? Can you approach an outside organisation to help you?

Here are some ideas for guest speakers:

- ask your local rugby club if they can offer you a player, coach or member of the staff to come in and talk about themselves and the club – rugby clubs can be very keen to engage with the community. Contact the club and ask to speak to the community officer. Any person in a club tracksuit immediately has presence in a room, as you will see. Ask whoever comes to speak a little about how reading sports books, magazines and other things have helped develop their career.

IDEAS FOR THE LIBRARY

RUGBY LIBRARIANS (OR CHAMPIONS): SOME LIBRARIANS AT SCHOOLS MIGHT NOT FEEL THEY KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT RUGBY TO DELIVER ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTIONS AROUND RUGBY AND READING. WE'VE ALREADY MENTIONED USING CHILDREN TO HELP YOU. THIS IS THE TOPIC COVERED IN A BIT MORE DEPTH.

- local sports journalists can be great speakers. Many children will be surprised that there are people in their area whose job it is to watch sport and meet players, then write about it. If a journalist can be encouraged to talk about being a professional writer – and what they read to get themselves there it can have a huge effect.
- There are a few rugby authors in who speak in schools. (See the guide to rugby authors and books in the appendices.) Authors charge a fee for a visit, usually. But it can be well worth it having an author in for a whole day working on reading and writing with all the age groups. It will inspire children to try their books – and perhaps to try writing themselves.

From within

Do you have members of staff in school who love rugby? Can they be encouraged to do a slot in your school assembly? They could talk about their rugby or sports reading lives. Is there anyone from the PE department? Often children don't see P.E. teachers as readers, so it would be a good opportunity to use them as positive role models. If you don't have a P.E. teacher, you could invite one from a local high school, a community rugby coach or someone from the nearest leisure centre.



Think of the most rugby-obsessed children in your school. Would they be good temporary rugby librarians, champions or buddies? Choosing children who aren't natural readers might work: might encourage them to take ownership of rugby reading in the school.

Work with the P.E. teachers. Identify some children. Get them together and ask them if they'd be interested. Tell them that as rugby role models in school they could be reading role models to children who aren't yet switched on to reading. Bribe them.

They will be able to help you devise and deliver and promote some of the following ideas.

Rugby reading posters

Make rugby reading posters for the library. Use computers, collage or whatever it takes to promote what you are doing in the library. Ask your Rugby Readers to help you.

Rugby book/read of the month 2015

2015 is a massive year for rugby union. Can you run a Rugby read of the Month promotion? If you can order sets of one book or magazine for children to borrow – and a couple to keep in the library for reference – it could be a great way of challenging the children to take on one read a month. And also of creating demand through a lack of resources.

In the appendices we have made a suggestion of a range of types of reading that might fit each month of 2015, bearing in mind publication dates, the stage of the rugby season cycle and other factors. But, by all means, use existing stock if you have it in good numbers.

Rugby reading display

Use some of the ideas from the display section of this guide to create a rugby reading display in the library. Ask your Rugby Readers to curate and update it for you. Their ideas and input will make them proud – and they will spread the word.

Put an arrangement of books and other reading material underneath the display.

Rugby reading treasure hunt

The Rugby reading treasure hunt only works in larger libraries – or your local public library. It is a good way of making children aware of all the different reading material around rugby – and other sports – in any library.

Identify several places in the library where you have rugby material. Fiction. Sports. Biography. Newspapers. Magazines. Online. Place a letter from a famous rugby player's name or a country in each section. For example WALES.

Then set the children on a treasure hunt with the following questions:

Where can you find a book about Jonny Wilkinson's life?

Where can you read about today's breaking rugby news?

Where are books on how to play rugby?

Where are match reports from recent games printed for you to read?

Where can you read stories about rugby?

Once the children have solved each clue and found the letter they have to put the letters together to make the mystery word.

Offer a prize for everyone who finishes.

Rugby reading groups

Setting up a reading group is not easy. Nor is recruiting members. But it can be a very effective way of encouraging people to read whole books – or another reading material – and to talk about it, leading them on to read more widely.

These fifteen questions about running a rugby reading group that could help you to make the right choices:

ONE: Give the reading group a good name. Calling it a reading group or a book group may put people off. Ask your Rugby Readers or the prospective members of the group to name it. Think of rugby concepts. The Pack. Scrum Readers. Something like that.

TWO: Ask yourself why you are running a book group. Is it for children who love reading and you want to get them talking? Or is it for reluctant readers and you are using rugby as a way to stimulate their interest? Approach the children that you are most looking to help.

THREE: Who will the group leader be? A Rugby Reader? The P.E. teacher? A teacher with an interest in rugby? Who will the children want to join to talk about books?

FOUR: How will you promote it? Put posters in the school, the library, in the P.E. part of the school? Send letters home to parents? Ask the rugby coaches to recommend the group to the children: to say it'll help their game. Host a big event to start the group and to build excitement around the idea. See the events and activities pages for ideas.

FIVE: How many children do you want in your group? Five may be too few. Twenty too many. The idea number for adult book groups is 10-12. But can you be sure everyone will come every time?

SIX: When will you meet? At lunch? After school? During an English lesson? When is the best time for you, other teachers and the children?

SEVEN: How can you encourage the children to come back to the next group? Is there a way of rewarding loyalty? Can you bribe them, with biscuits – or pieces of fruit? What will it take?

EIGHT: How will you start each session? Can you read the book or magazine first and jot down a few questions to ask them? Or can your Rugby Readers be charged with this task?

NINE: Do you need to warm the session up before you launch into a conversation about a book? Ask each of the group to bring a newspaper article or something off the web to tell the others about.

TEN: What will you choose to read? Will you decide? Or the Rugby Readers? Can you find something they would all like to read in the appendices below? You could choose our suggested Book/read of the month for 2015.

ELEVEN: How can you make sure everyone speaks in your book group? If there is someone quiet, ask them a direct question, something gentle, to build their confidence.

TWELVE: Be controversial. If everyone says the book is great, that they love it, find something to criticise about it. Get the group's passions going. Make it into a book argument.

THIRTEEN: Talk about books in a rugby way. Ask children to say why they didn't finish a book. What was wrong with it? Can they ascribe a rugby injury to the book's weakness? Was it slow and boring – unfit? Did not make sense at the end – a broken leg?

FOURTEEN: How will you finish? What can you do to make the children come back? Talk about what you are going to read next. Ask them to choose it for you. Keep changing what it is you read. Not only fiction. Try a magazine. Try a book about playing the game.

FIFTEEN: Does the piece of reading material lend itself to a guest you could invite to the school. A journalist? An author? Or a rugby coach if you are talking about a rugby tactics book? Having an expert alongside you would enhance the children's experience of what they are talking about.

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM



Show and tell Rugby

Encourage the children to bring something in to do with the Rugby World Cup – or Six Nations. Ask them to search out things that you could read to the rest of the class to help them get the most out of the tournament. A newspaper article. A magazine interview. A webpage. A book.

Leave aside a few minutes every day or week to read these out.

Rugby World Cup scrapbook

Keep a classroom scrapbook about rugby during 2015. Ask children to find images and words to add to some of the show and tell material they bring in. Fill the scrapbook during the year or a tournament. Keep it on your desk so that children can read and add to it as they wish.

Daily rugby read

Read something aloud to your class every day during a major tournament. A part of a story. The newspaper headlines. Quotes from a player off Twitter. A match report. Talk about what you read. Have a debate.

Rugby reading sin bin

Sometimes children read books they don't like. Books that are poorly written. Books that some kids love, but aren't right for others. It is important to empower children to feel like the book isn't right for them, as opposed to them feeling they have failed as a reader.

Offer the children a chance to put a book in the sin bin. But for them to be allowed to put it in there they have to articulate what they didn't like about the book. And – as long as it is a good reason – let them out it there. Perhaps ask other children to vote on whether their reason for sin binning is good enough.

Rugby World Cup story

During the Rugby World Cup the RFU will be publishing a free downloadable cliffhanger story to be read aloud in schools. It will be available every morning during the tournament. The story will be written live during the tournament and – as a result – will feature the events as they unfold.

Class wide reading challenge

Set your class the challenge of reading 100 rugby things during the Six Nations or Rugby World Cup. Keep a chart of the wall with their tally. In the shape of a rugby pitch or rugby posts. Ask the children to speak about what they read and what they liked or didn't like about it. Every time they read a rugby book, magazine, newspaper or website add to their tally.

It's up to you as a teacher what level you want to pitch this at. Whole books or chapters might count. Whole magazines or just one article.

Challenge other classes to a competition to see who can do the most rugby reading over a fixed period of time.

Displays

Combine the material the children bring in for the Rugby show and tell with some of the display ideas in this pack and create your own rugby reading display in class.

IDEAS FOR THE WALLS

USING A MAJOR SPORTING TOURNAMENT AS A HOOK FOR A DISPLAY IS A GREAT WAY OF ENGAGING NEW CHILDREN WITH READING.

A Six Nations or Rugby World Cup display

Combining a giant score-chart, a world map and photographs of sporting heroes along with encouragement and prompts to read for pleasure is guerrilla reader development at its finest.

Below are XV ideas for a rugby reading display. You can – of course – add your own ideas. You can also work with your rugby team or Rugby Readers, asking them to act as curators for the display.

The wall display can go where wall displays work best for you. In the library. In the classroom. In the hall. In reception. A place where the children – and maybe their parents – can revisit it, taking advantage of its interactive elements.

XV rugby reading ideas

Centrepiece

You need something visual at the centre of the display. Something to catch the eye. To excite the imagination. A World Map featuring all 20 teams taking part in the Rugby

World Cup. A Rugby World Cup wall chart – from a magazine or homemade. A huge image of the trophy or a player. An England (or other) rugby top. One you have your centrepiece you can build you display around that.

Rugby reading goal

Use strips of white paper on a green background to make a giant – or medium sized – set of rugby posts in the classroom, library or hall. Ask children to fill in book reviews on the free downloadable rugby ball shaped review sheet [see appendix], then challenge them to put the ball where it belongs. Between the posts if it was great. Wide of the mark if not so good. Leave it up to them.

This can be part of or a compliment to the main display.

It will attract lots of attention – children wanting to see what was successful as well as not.

Newspaper match previews and reports

It is important to constantly refresh a tournament wall display. Choose the best online or print daily articles and pin them up towards the foot of the display so that everyone can read them.

Book and magazine covers

Include cover images of books and magazines to do with rugby. Make them as important parts of the display as what is going on in the tournament. Try and make sure the books are relevant to the tournament. For instance biographies of participating players. Histories of teams involved. Include some rugby fiction.

It is okay for you to use cover images printed off the internet or photocopied. Publishers and authors see it as promotion, not a copyright issue. As long as you don't alter the cover – or use only part of it, then go ahead and use it.



Rugby reading selfies

Ask children and teachers to take rugby reading selfies of themselves reading rugby books, newspapers and magazines. Perhaps in rugby settings like stadiums, with a rugby ball, on a rugby pitch. Challenge them to come up with extreme rugby reading ideas. Offer a prize for the most original.

Prediction league

Challenge individuals or whole classes to predict all the results of the tournament. Keep a chart of which class or rugby fan is in the lead on your display. Offer a prize for the winner. Update it every day to encourage children to check it – and the other aspects of the display – out.

Table of books and magazines

If you can, place a table of rugby books, magazines and newspapers underneath the display, then everyone coming to have a look at it can be tempted to borrow a book or at least have a browse. Put magazines and newspapers on there too.

Rugby props

Decorate the display with familiar rugby props. (No pun intended.) Balls. Shirts. Shorts. Socks. Skullcaps. Mouth guards. Anything you can find.

Websites

If you can put the display up in front of a computer terminal, then make sure the home page on the terminal is one of the main rugby websites (see the list of good sites in appendix). Encourage children to browse the website, hopefully attracting more online rugby readers.

IDEAS FOR P.E. OR THE RUGBY CLUB

THE RUGBY OR P.E. STAFF OR COACHES IN SCHOOL CAN (OFTEN) BE REALLY GOOD ROLE MODELS TO THE CHILDREN. THEY ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH FITNESS, SPORT AND POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDES. BUT THEY ARE LESS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH READING.

Coach’s favourite reads

For the duration of major rugby tournaments, ask the P.E. staff to promote reading. Have them start each session by briefly reading something from the day’s newspaper. Help them to make a poster telling the children what they have been reading. Suggest they reference something they have learned in a magazine or book within their training. Invite them into assembly to talk about what they like to read to further their sporting life.

It may be a cliché to use non-reading people to make reading seem cool. But it works.

You could also include the first XV or other coaching staff in this promotion. And if you can extend these recommendations into school assembly or the main display, all the better.

P.E. library

Set up a rugby or sports library in your P.E. facilities. Many children do not go to the library. These children are often –

though not always – ones who do feel more comfortable in the sports part of the school.

Give them a library of their own.

Stock it with rugby stories, books on how to play sports, general fitness, player biographies and rugby magazines.

Each school will have their own issues as to who does it, where it goes, etc. But if you can work it, it could be a great way of getting books to those who don’t normally use the library. See our appendix booklists to give you ideas of great rugby reads.

P.E. reading display

If you have an entrance to the P.E. department – or a notice board – include rugby reading suggestions or materials on it. Put posters up in the changing rooms. Where the parents gather. If you can deck your rugby parts of the school out with rugby reading materials it won’t just benefit the schools’ literacy performance: it’ll benefit their rugby performance too.

See the display section of this toolkit for more ideas.



Two ideas for P.E. based reading workshops in P.E.

Rugby Reading Game

The Rugby Reading Game is a game of two halves! The first half is a quiz about rugby reading, the second half is a kicking competition. The children accumulate points in teams, or as individuals, as the quiz progresses. In the second half, the children take penalties: one shot for each point they got in the quiz. The winner gets a prize.

Round one: Black out words from the day’s rugby newspaper headlines and ask the children to guess the missing words. Before you start, ask the children what they like reading about in newspapers.

Round two: Magazines: again, get the children to say what magazines they enjoy, encourage them to tell their classmates about what is in those magazines. Show them the covers of football magazines like Rugby World and The Rugby Paper, then ask them questions like: Who is on the cover of Rugby World? (covering up his name). What are the special magazines that rugby clubs sell before games called? (Programmes).

Round three: Books: get the children to talk about books they like to read. Then show them

the covers of rugby books (printed from the internet if you don’t have them to hand), blacking out key words like players’ names, and ask them questions about the books. Who is this on the cover of his autobiography? Which rugby team is this book about? Read a section from a rugby story then ask the children questions about the bit you read out.

You can have the children doing the quiz solo or in teams. With a group of up to 30 children, teams of four work well. With any larger groups ask all the children the question, and then choose the first hand up to answer.

Once you know who the children are who will be kicking for goal ether go outside and use the school rugby posts (if you have some) or tape a rugby goal shape onto the wall of the hall and use that.

You will need to get hold of a small or normal sized rugby ball. Soft if it is going to be used indoors.



IDEAS FOR THE IT SUITE



Screen saver
During key periods of the year set your school screen savers to a rugby page. BBC Rugby. The RFU’s home page. Something the children could decide on themselves.

Great rugby websites
Please see appendix for a list of rugby websites that children will enjoy.

Online rugby reading poster
Next to every computer terminal put up a rugby reading poster. Ask your rugby reading champions to make one.

The school website
This is a great opportunity to get children reading – and writing for – your school website. If you can involve the website in your promoting of reading in the same way you use the school walls and the classroom itself, it’ll be a boost to the children’s engagement with reading and will up the traffic to the website too.

Here are some ideas for content:

- a rugby read of the day – an updated daily book, magazine or website
- a rugby reading chatroom for pupils – with another for adults
- reviews of books children are reading
- news and updates about any rugby related reading challenges going on

Encourage your rugby reading champions to lead on this.

TMO – book reviews on screen
Rugby is used to that breathless pause in a game when the referee speaks to his Test Match Official to decide if a try is good – or not. Develop the same idea for reading and challenge the children to judge the books they have read in the same way.

Film the children giving a short judgement on a book. Watch how a TMO and referee interact on the TV. Then try and replicate the same thing with a book. Create tension by asking the reviewer to run through what worked and didn’t work in the book. Then ask them to press the TRY/NO TRY button.

Show all the latest TMO book judgement videos in assembly.

IDEAS FOR OUT OF SCHOOL

TRIPS OUT OF SCHOOL STAY IN THE MEMORY, STANDING ABOVE THE HUNDREDS OF ORDINARY DAYS IN SCHOOL, HOWEVER GOOD THOSE ORDINARY DAYS MIGHT BE.

What is learned on school trips stays in the memory too, making it the perfect opportunity to create positive ideas around reading for pleasure.

Here are four ideas for school trips that involve rugby.

Visit a rugby stadium or club
Many rugby clubs employ someone to work within the community. Their brief is to give the club a positive image in the area and to encourage new supporters. They do this by working with partners, like schools, on what they know are the partner’s priorities. In our case, literacy.

You can contact the community officer by telephoning the rugby club or by emailing. It is worth checking out the club website to see what they offer and who your best contact is. And to make yourself aware of any other work them may have done.

Essentially, a visit to a working sports stadium gives a lot of children a huge buzz. That energy can be tapped.

There are several things to do on a visit to a rugby club, depending on what the club has to offer:

- a tour of the stadium, including dressing room
- meet players who can be primed to answer questions about what they like to read
- visit the club’s education room (if they have one)
- take advantage of any reading activity sheets or projects the club does (and, if they don’t have any, work with them to devise some for your visit, using the contents of this pack)

If you do get to meet a player, brief him about what you are trying to do, that he is a role model and that you are promoting reading for pleasure.

Visit a public library
It is highly likely that the best collection of rugby reading near your school is in your public library. Rugby reading can be found in the following areas of the library:

- Biography (books by and about great and local rugby players)
- Sports (rugby history books, books on training for rugby, humour titles)
- Children’s non-fiction (how to play the game, fact books)
- Children’s fiction
- Newspapers (the day’s newspapers, headlines, scores)
- Online (websites like BBC rugby, Rugby World)
- Magazines, if the library stocks them (either on paper or an online subscription platform)



IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS

IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS THAT CREATES CHILDREN THAT READ FOR PLEASURE IS THEIR PARENTS. IF THERE IS A READING CULTURE AT HOME - IF THERE ARE BOOKS AT HOME - THEN THE CHILD IS FAR MORE LIKELY TO BE EXCITED BY AND CONFIDENT ABOUT READING.

Most libraries love to have schools visit them. Many children have never been taken to the public library by their family and, if they have, they might be nervous of going in. Libraries offer children a tour of their library, joining forms and help children feel more comfortable in a place that they might feel intimidated by or that they don't belong there.

Contact the Central Library in your authority and ask for the children's librarian or Schools Library Service. If the library can offer a rugby expert from among its staff, all the better.

Try the library Rugby Treasure Hunt above.

Visit a bookshop

If you have a bookshop in your area, you can apply some of the ideas about visiting a library. Although bookshops are not as well equipped to take in school groups, some booksellers and bookshop managers will be open to you bringing a class of children in for a short tour of what the shop has to offer.

Many children have never been in a bookshop and genuinely think either that it is not for them or that they are too afraid to go inside. A pleasant trip to a bookshop with school might encourage a lifetime of dropping into bookshops and reading for pleasure.

Call your local bookshop. Ask them if you can visit. There will be a lot of books out about rugby in the build up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup, something the bookshops may want to show off. Suggest you will invite the local newspaper to come too. That could swing it.

Other schools

If you have away rugby - or other sporting fixtures - too fulfil, you can turn it into an opportunity to create passion around reading.

Challenge the other school to a sports reading quiz, using some of the ideas for the Rugby Reading Game. Use a quiz show format and see which school knows most about the game. Prime the children to read about rugby online, in newspapers and in specific rugby magazines and books. Make reading as competitive as rugby.

In addition, to involve adults in their child's learning and reading has a huge impact. On the children - and the parents too.

Here are a few ways that the school can reach out during major rugby tournaments to encourage parents to support their child's reading.

Home Time

Employ your Rugby Reading Champions to work the playground and engage parents in conversations about their child's reading. Ask the champions to run a stall with information about what the school is doing to promote reading through rugby. Include a raffle, information sheets, drawing the parents in to finding out more about their child's reading. Suggest the children drag the parents to the stall.

Homework

During the Six Nations or Rugby World Cup set rugby reading homework. Ask the parents - especially dads - to help their children with it. We have created six short homework exercises that can involve adult input. They cover reading newspapers, magazines, websites and books. One of the pieces of homework is asking a family member about their rugby/sports reading life. They have all been designed to take the habit of reading for pleasure into the home. See appendix.

Letter home

The RFU has created a pro-forma letter that schools can adapt and send home to parents. It suggests ways that parents can support their children's reading during a major sporting tournament like the RBS Six Nations or the Rugby World Cup. It includes ideas like delivering newspapers to children's doors, great websites to look at together and the best rugby fiction for kids. See appendix.



Family book groups

Many schools run book groups either for the parents or for parents and children together. They are not easy to set up because of adults' work commitments, but it is worth trying to attract a few parents.

Send a letter home inviting parents to the book group. Sell it as a chance to talk with other parents. Offer tea and biscuits. Plan it for the end of the school day or immediately after the children are dropped off in the morning. Whatever works best for your parents. You could even kick the whole book group idea off with a visiting author.

The school display

If you have created a reading display to tie in with the Rugby World Cup, invite the parents to come along and have a look. They could even contribute to it. If you have included interactive elements in the display, encourage the adults to take part, bringing their children along. And if you can persuade a parents who is into rugby to act as one of your rugby reading champions and contribute to the display, even better.

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ONE: LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent or Guardian

In school we have been doing some work around the Rugby World Cup. It is rare that the UK hosts a major sporting occasion like a World Cup. But when it happens it offers us the chance to harness the enthusiasm of the moment and encourage children to read for pleasure.

If you children are at all interested in rugby – or sport – some of the ideas below might help get them enjoying reading even more. We asked the children’s sports fiction author, Tom Palmer, to think up seven top tips on reading through rugby.

Choose a rugby story from a library or bookshop and read it aloud together every night during the tournament. Rugby fiction authors are Dan Anthony, Chris Higgins, Tom Palmer and Gerard Siggins.

Deliver a newspaper Rugby World Cup preview to your child’s bedroom on Saturday or Sunday morning to get them reading before the big kick off.

Borrow one of the many the guides to playing rugby from your local library. You can find them among the children’s sport or adult sport shelves.

Go to your child’s school and look at their Rugby World Cup reading display.

Buy them a copy of one of the popular rugby magazines – such as Rugby World or The Rugby Paper. Or one of the special World Cup magazines published in August 2015.

Set your home page on your computer to a decent rugby website like www.bbc.co.uk/rugbyworldcup.

Find one of the child-friendly autobiographies of rugby players, full of statistics, pictures and clean stories. Ask at the library, school or a bookshop for advice. Or look at reviews from parents online.

We hope these Rugby World Cup reading tips help you and your family read even more for pleasure this autumn. Happy reading!

Tom Palmer
www.tompalmer.co.uk

TWO: RUGBY HOMEWORK

These six short rugby homeworks relate rugby to reading at home.

A Rugby Reader at Home

Tell the children to interview someone in their family or community about their rugby reading (or, failing that, their sports reading). Do they know someone who loves sport? Ask them to devise a list of questions to ask. Make sure they cover newspapers, magazines, websites, books and other materials. Work in class beforehand to work out a list of questions that will recover interesting answers. Perhaps suggest that the best one can invite in their interviewee and interview them in front of the class or assembly?

Rugby Non-fiction comprehension

This is the opening chapter of Jonny Wilkinson’s autobiography. Use this piece as a comprehension. Work out a set of questions based on the text that fit the reading levels of your children. (Then have the book ready for any of the children who might want to borrow it and read it.)

I’m not sure if I was born a perfectionist, or if I decided subconsciously that was the way I was going to have to be.

When my dad pulls up the car at a mini rugby game, I immediately leap out and spring for the nearest hedge because I need to be sick. Sometimes we have to pull over in a lay-by on the way there; sometimes we have got to the club car park by then. The thought of the game ahead just gives me a kind of panic, a deep fear and a sense of doom about what will happen if it doesn’t go well.

I am seven and I play mini rugby for Farnham, where Bilks – which is what we call Dad – is one of the coaches. I am mad about rugby, particularly during weekdays, when Sparks, my brother, and I mess around with the ball in the garden during daylight hours, and then in the living room when it has got too dark outside.

But Sundays are different. On Sundays, we either have a training session or we play matches. The training days I love. I can’t wait to get to the ground for training. When a game is scheduled, though, I sometimes feel I can’t bear it.

Comparing Rugby Websites

Work with the children to choose three rugby websites that they will want to spend some time looking at. (Our tips are the BBC, England Rugby and Sky.) Ask the children to go home and work out five ways they can judge the websites against each other. For instance, layout, content, etc. Then ask them to judge which website is the best in each category.

Then – the next day – add all the votes together and see which website comes out best. Have a debate about your results in class.

Create a Brief for a Kids’ Rugby Magazine

Ask the children to bring a magazine into school each. Talk about magazines together. What do they like about magazines? Which are the best – and why?

Then set the homework. Tell the children that there are no rugby magazines for children alongside Beano, The Simpsons Comic and Match of the Day. Ask them to prepare a brief for a rugby magazine: to name ten things that should be in the magazine. It can be words, magazines, competitions, free gifts. Whatever they think children would like in a rugby magazine.

Rugby Fiction Comprehension

This is a Twickenham-inspired passage from Combat Zone by Tom Palmer. Use this piece as a comprehension. Work out a set of questions based on the text that fit the reading levels

of your children. (Then have the book ready for any of the children who might want to borrow it and read it.)

Twickenham towered over the school bus as it turned into the car park. Massive stands. England flags. A giant statue of a line-out – five rugby players leaping for the ball. And there were five words engraved around its base. Teamwork. Respect. Enjoyment. Discipline. Sportsmanship.

All chat had stopped as the bus drove through the streets of outer London. But now there was something more than silence.

It was awe.

That was what Woody was feeling. Jaw-dropping eye-popping awe. To think that they were going to play here. And not only that – they were playing for the National Schools Trophy.

They walked through the players’ entrance past a huge St George’s flag and into one of the dressing rooms, where they put their kitbags down on the floor.

Each player had their own place – a piece of card with their name and number above where their shirt was hanging.

The What When How in a Rugby Newspaper Article
Ask the children to source a newspaper article – on paper or online – that appeals to them. Then ask them to answer the following questions about it.

- What is it about?
- Where is it set?
- When was it written about?
- Who is the subject?
- How did the writer approach the subject?
- Why is it worthy of being in a newspaper?

Talk to the children about how most newspaper articles are based around those six questions. Ask them what other questions could be asked.

APPENDIX 2

READING LISTS

ONE:

A short guide to rugby reading that will appeal to children. This is just for kick off. Ask at your local library or bookshop for more ideas.

Fiction

Dan Anthony – the Rugby Zombie series (Pont Books)

Shamini Flint – Diary of a Rugby Champ (Allen & Unwin)

Chris Higgins – Pride and Penalties (Hodder)

Tom Palmer – Rugby Academy series and Scrum (Barrington Stoke)

Gerard Siggins – Rugby Spirit series (O’Brien Press)

Non-fiction

World Rugby Records by Chris Hawkes

England Rugby Annual 2015

Jonny: My Autobiography by Jonny Wilkinson

Playing the Game

Know the Game: Rugby Union by the RFU

Haynes Manual: Rugby Union by Howard Johnson

Rugby for Dummies by Nick Cain

Magazines

The Rugby Paper – weekly newspaper (£1.50)

Rugby World – monthly glossy magazine (£4.50)

There is also an online rugby magazine called Touchline on the RFU website at <http://www.englandrugby.com/news/newslisting/rugbypost-and-touchline-newsletters/>

Websites

Some of the best rugby union websites for children are:

www.englandrugby.com

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/o/rugby-union>

<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/ruckley>

Newspapers

Most newspapers cover rugby union to an extent. The most in depth are the Times, the Mail and the official England Rugby newspaper, The Telegraph. The only children’s newspaper – First News – covers rugby occasionally in its sports pages.

TWO

If you want to establish a Rugby Reading Group in your school, library or rugby club, this might a useful structure. I’ve picked out a variety of fiction, non-fiction and other reading materials that fits with each month in the rugby or reading calendar during 2015.

January

The England Rugby Annual 2015

Non-fiction. Start the year with an easy-read manual for young England fans.

February

Rugby World Six Nations special

Magazine. Published early February, the top rugby magazine’s guide to the Six Nations.

March

The BBC Rugby Union website

Online. Trawl the BBC’s articles, films, audio files as the Six Nations reaches its climax.

April

Combat Zone by Tom Palmerw

Fiction. A rugby union story in short punchy chapters.

May

The Rugby Paper end of season special

Magazine. With the domestic and European season over, read a summary of the action.

June

Rugby Spirit by Gerard Siggins

Fiction. A rugby story with ghostly twist, set in sunny Dublin.

July

Guinness Book of Rugby Records

Non-fiction. Tie in with the UK libraries’ Summer Reading Challenge theme of record breakers.

August

Official Rugby World Cup magazine.

Magazine. Get into the mood for next month’s World Cup kick off with the official publication.

September

Official World Cup Guidebook

Non-fiction. An in-depth comprehensive TV side book for the tournament.

October

England Rugby Magazine

<http://www.englandrugby.com/news/newslisting/rugbypost-and-touchline-newsletters/>.

Online. An online magazine published by England Rugby.

November

The Rugby Zombies by Dan Anthony

Fiction. A comic story about zombies and rugby

December

A non-fiction Christmas book

Non-fiction. After the Rugby World Cup, books will be published about rugby union.

APPENDIX 3

AUTHOR VISITS

There are four authors of rugby-centric fiction based in the UK and Ireland. They are all willing and able to visit schools, libraries, festivals and rugby clubs to promote reading and writing through a passion for the game. Please contact them direct if you are interested.

Dan Anthony The Rugby Zombie series

Base: South Wales

Dan Anthony began writing for young people as a scriptwriter on CBBC's Tracy Beaker show. He writes books for children and continues to develop scripts and stories for grown-ups.

During Rugby World Cup year, Dan is running a series of Rugby World Cup themed workshops.

The mysterious Rugby Zombies can be found in the woods outside Aberscary, Wales' most frightening village. Dan runs workshops to provide children with an opportunity to experiment with team writing, dialogue, organising stories and finding inspiration from their own back yard.

<http://www.dananthony.co.uk>

Chris Higgins Pride and Penalties

Base: Cornwall

Chris Higgins was born and brought up in South Wales, now living in Cornwall. An ex-English teacher, she is a married four-children award-winning writer of 19 books for children and teenagers.

Chris' rugby reading event include a talk, readings and discussion on rugby, women's rugby, rugby dynasties, stereotypes, sexism, families, friendships and secrets. Also, a quiz about rugby, Chris' personal story, how Pride and Penalties was thought up, researched and written. Selected readings. Q and As.

Contact: chris@chrishigginsthatsme.com
Website: www.chrishigginsthatsme.com

Tom Palmer Rugby Academy

Base: Yorkshire

Tom is the author of the three-book series, Rugby Academy and a stand-alone book, Scrum. All published by Barrington Stoke. Tom uses his Rugby Reading Game to enthuse sports fans to enjoy reading for pleasure. A quiz about rugby reading in newspapers, magazines and books is followed by a highly-competitive indoor kicking competition over rugby posts imported from New Zealand. Tom weaves in writing tips and encourages word-of-mouth about great reads among children. Tom is a season ticket holder (with his daughter, 11) at Championship team Yorkshire Carnegie.

Tom also writes football books (for Puffin Books) and Rugby League books.

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