



News

New AASE League kicks off at England's top colleges

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by Duncan Wood



The top 12 rugby playing colleges in England today kicked off their bid for the inaugural Advance Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) League title.

Oaklands (Herts), Prince Henry's (Otley), Hartpury, Myerscough (Preston), Moulton (Northampton), Worcester SFC, Filton, St Paul's (Sunbury-on-Thames), Truro, Ivybridge, Twyford C of E, and Exeter are competing in the all-new Under 18s competition.

The colleges are divided into North and South regions and will play each other home and away before play-offs are followed by a final in April to crown the winners.

The AASE programme is designed to offer young people the chance to pursue rugby excellence and education at the same time.

Each of the colleges is linked one of the 14 England Rugby Academies - for example Twyford with London Wasps, Filton with Bristol Rugby and, of course, Hartpury with Gloucester Rugby - and the AASE League will provide them with a high level of regular competition to facilitate elite player development.

Terry Burwell, the RFU's Tournament and Competitions Director, said:

"I am delighted that we are launching the new Under 18s AASE League. The competition has been created to offer the ideal competition structure through which a number of England's potential elite young players can develop." (Cont'd)



"The AASE programme offers the opportunity for some of these young players to combine continued education with a tailored individual-specific rugby development programme and the AASE League is the foundation on which the programme is built."

"This programme is a further indication of the RFU's commitment to ensuring our competitions meet the needs of our players, and complements the outstanding Daily Mail RBS Schools competition, which is now in its 21st year."

Stuart Lancaster, the RFU's Head of Elite Player Development said:

"The AASE programme gives this group of young players the education they need and the chance to excel at rugby and we know that they're operating at a good level already with sides like Truro and Exeter winning the Daily Mail Schools Cup in recent years."

"The programme has been running for more than two years now - with 12 of the original intake representing England at age group level and 34 offered professional contracts. We believe the AASE League will accelerate the development of their successors and breed more future international stars."

You can follow the teams' progress this season at www.rfu.com

AASE League teams

North: Oaklands (Herts), Prince Henry's (Otley), Hartpury, Myerscough (Preston), Moulton (Northampton) and Worcester SFC.

South: Filton, St Paul's, Truro, Ivybridge, Twyford C of E, Exeter.

Today's first round of games

South

Filton College v Exeter College (2.00pm)

St Paul's v Truro College (2.30pm)

Ivybridge v Twyford C of E (2.00pm)

North

Hartpury College v Oaklands College September 30th 2.00pm)

Moulton College v Prince Henry's GS September 30th 2.30pm)

Worcester SFC v Myerscough College September 30th 2.00pm)

