



THE BANDA SCHOOL

NAIROBI, KENYA
P.O. Box 24722
Nairobi 00502
Tel: (254 020) 8891220 / 260 / 8890337 /
3547828 / 2603929 / 5000728 / 9
School Mobiles: 0726-439909 / 0737-563438
Fax: (254 020) 8890004
E-mail: bandaschool@swiftkenya.com
Website: www.bandaschool.com

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Dear Parents,

RUGBY SAFETY WITH REGARD TO SIZE AND WEIGHT

Some parents have been aware of the growing concern about the above issue and indeed may have seen the correspondence between various Heads of the nine IAPS Schools.

These concerns were followed up diligently through asking for guidance, advice and meetings. I would like to clarify the position held by all the nine IAPS Schools in Kenya for this rugby season which started in April 2010.

1. **All schools adhere to the IAPS Sporting Guidelines which are available for all to peruse. In the section on Rugby, it clearly states that:** *"It is recommended that any school that has any notably over-sized players who could single-handedly affect the result of any match and/or place any member of the opposition in physical danger, should communicate this fact to the opposing school (Head or teacher i/c rugby) prior to the day of the fixture. It is only in exceptional circumstances that a preparatory school pupil should be excluded from playing the game of rugby. Note should be taken of the Rugby Continuum regarding winning margins in competitive matches not being too wide. Referees, coaches and Heads should feel at ease to suggest that a dominant player be moved to a less influential position or even side-lined."*

There is no set weight limit that must be adhered to in normal inter-school fixtures. It should be at the discretion of the two schools involved in the fixture as to whether a player should be allowed to take part in a match. Schools must remember that safety and enjoyment of the game for all players is paramount."

2. **The CEO of IAPS, Mr. David Hanson**, was forwarded all letters of concern and his reply was to ensure that all schools were following the IAPS Guidelines and those of the country's RFU.

I quote: "You will recall that the Kenyan District had reported to Council that there had been much concern regarding the size and weight of some boys playing rugby in Kenya. Council recognised that each separate RFU had its own policy regarding weight range and that this could possibly be considered for the Kenya District and that the issue should be taken to the next meeting of the Sport Committee. The Sport Committee met on 14 October 2009, when it was agreed that, if the country in question had a credible RFU, their guidance should be followed. If not, then the IAPS guidelines should be followed."

3. **Letters on advice and guidance** were also sent to Mr. Nick Yelland, Chair of IAPS Sports Committee, and Mr. Vernon Hales, Rugby co-ordinator IAPS. Interestingly, their own and that of UK Rugby Clubs' experience was that they are very much against any form of weight restrictions, indeed some people have suggested that if these are imposed, it could be discriminating.

4. **Kenya Rugby Football Union.**



Mr. Paul Odera, a rugby coach and an IRB Educator (one of the most qualified coaches and referees in Kenya) had a meeting with Mr. Frank Subwa, the Honorary Secretary of the KRFU and the Development Manager, Mr. Fred Ollows and the issue of size and weight was discussed. The conclusion of the meeting was, and to quote: "The KRFU does not discriminate against any child because of their weight or size."

5. **Action that has been taken by IAPS Schools.**

All coaches of rugby have been encouraged to attend Rugby Coaching and Refereeing courses that have kindly been organised by Kenton College. There was a Level 2 IRB Coaching Course that had been arranged for April 2010. In addition to the above, no coach will referee a 1st XV level inter school match unless he has a valid Referee's Certificate. At present, there are 24 such qualified people on the circuit.

6. **Weight limits at tournaments.**

Weight limits at tournaments (such as the Ndume 7's) have nothing to do with IAPS. It is an invitational tournament and schools set their own rules. There has been a suggestion from several schools that the weight limits be reviewed and potentially **increased** as children these days are heavier than yesteryear and that the bigger children are the ones that are being prejudiced against in this case.

7. **Age Groups**

Date of birth is taken from the 1st September of the academic year, however following IAPS guidelines, three months leniency is allowed in the U13 age category bringing the date to the 1st June, prior the academic year.

Schools must ensure that pupils do not play against anyone with more than a two-year age difference.

I do hope this clarifies the situation within the IAPS Schools. I would like to assure parents that a huge amount of deliberation and communication goes on between Heads and Heads of Sports Departments. We all see what you parents see: a huge discrepancy in size in some of the boys and it is up to referees and coaches to know when the match situation becomes dangerous.

In summary, there will be no weight restrictions in inter school fixtures between IAPS schools. It is through good management of the game that your children will remain safe rather than changing weight limits. Safety is our number one priority.

Yours sincerely,

M. D. Dickson
Headmaster