

SPORT

First Chinese school to join rugby programme

John Carney

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The principal of the first local Chinese school to sign up for the inaugural School of Rugby programme in Hong Kong has said it will broaden the horizons of his pupils.

Dr Yeung Wing-hon, principal of Confucius Hall Secondary School in Causeway Bay, called it an honour to work with the Rugby Football Union, which introduced the scheme in its community rugby programme.

"We're pioneers," Yeung said. "It's an opportunity for our students to learn more about what has always been seen as a middle-class, expatriate sport.

"It's a chance to integrate with a different culture. It'll also help the students to develop discipline and teamwork."

The programme, which begins in September, will involve a local player coaching 13- to 14-year-old pupils once a week.

It will focus first on the boys, but Yeung hopes that the girls will also get involved as the programme grows more popular in the school.

"My students are excited about it already," he said. "Many know rugby only as part of the Hong Kong Sevens, so to be taught the game is a real plus ... They're looking forward to it."

The School of Rugby programme is aimed at using sport to help youngsters tackle a range of social and educational issues. It is modelled on a similar project in Scotland that had a positive impact on local youth development.

Union chairman Trevor Gregory said sport had a prominent role to play in Hong Kong's school communities, not just in terms of elite achievement, but also in providing a learning context to support youth education in and out of the classroom.

"We believe rugby, in particular, can make a positive contribution to enhancing achievement, attendance and behaviour and fostering discipline, together with creating a sense of commitment and pride both among pupils and the school itself," he said.

Other union programmes use rugby to reduce juvenile delinquency, teach English, combat discrimination and build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.



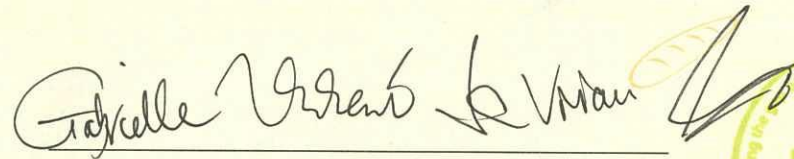
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The FHK Team

November 6, 2013

