



DUBAI EXILES RUGBY CLUB

Sport & Wellbeing for the Community

Since 1966

dubaixiles.com





Club History

Established in Dubai in 1966 under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club is the oldest sports club in the UAE.

The first, early, rugby matches were played against various British military sides, based in neighbouring Sharjah. The military provided not only the pitch, the referee and the refreshments, but often some of the Exiles' team as well. From these early encounters in the late 1960s, the nucleus of today's club was formed.

With the help of Dubai Municipality and through the good grace of His Highness Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the then Ruler of Dubai, the early Exiles were granted the use of a small plot of land in Bur Dubai and set about grading, levelling, and marking it as well as erecting the rugby posts. With the appearance of the familiar shaped uprights the number of new players increased every month.

By 1977 the Exiles had over 200 members. That year the Benson & Hedges 7s tournament also provided a record entry 23 teams and over 5,000 spectators turned out to enjoy two days of rugby in true rugby traditions; it was even reported on in The Times newspaper in London.

The 1977 season also saw the first official overseas tour for the club to Sri Lanka. By 1979 two, good quality, sand pitches were in use, floodlights were also erected to allow the club members to train and play in the evenings. The Dubai Exiles were truly on the march...



Rugby being played at the 'original' Exiles' ground in Al Awir.



Exiles' Peter Muir being presented with his trophy in 1974 by a young Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.



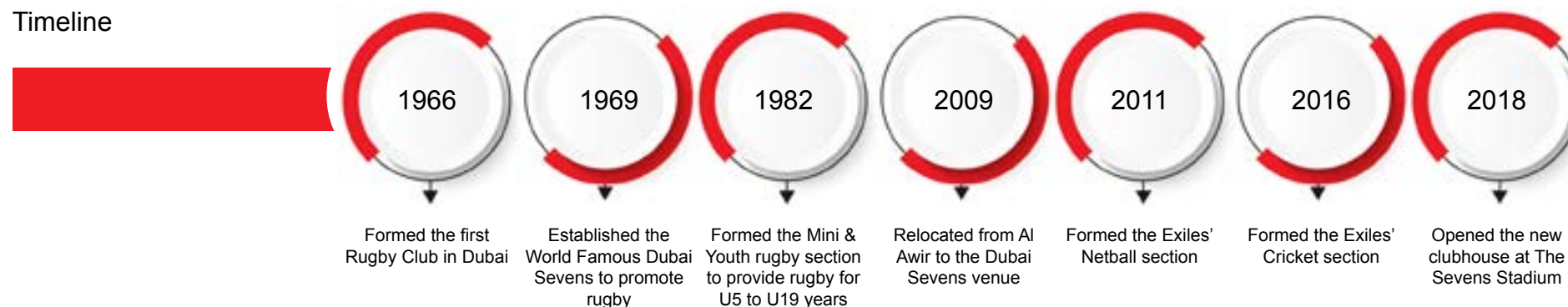
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The club continued to grow exponentially throughout the 1980s, while the 1990s saw more infrastructure being added in the form of more sand pitches, a clubhouse and even a concrete stand with 7 changing rooms. 1996 saw the first grass pitches installed in preparation for the pre-qualifying round of the World Cup 7s, which that season was being held during the annual Dubai tournament.

The Exiles are immensely proud to have been heavily involved in the promotion of Rugby 7s at the highest level. In 1999 the club, along with our patron, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the Arabian Gulf Rugby Football Union (AGRFU) were honoured to host the first ever games to be played in the IRB World Sevens Series. This is a privilege that had been repeated annually to this day.

Over the years, clubs both amateur and professional, as well as individual stars of the game and visiting schools have come from all over the world to visit us and enjoy traditional Exiles' hospitality both on the field and in the Exiles' clubhouse. The stream of visitors has always included personnel from various navies patrolling the Arabian Gulf seeking to stretch their legs on land during their visits to Dubai. This is a tradition that continues to this day.

Timeline





A very happy Under 5 rugby player!





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Mini Rugby - Under 5 to Under 8

Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club has been a place where youngsters from the local and wider Dubai community can take their first steps into rugby since 1982.

The Exiles follow the Player Pathways of the world's leading rugby playing nations to create a safe and enjoyable environment for these fledgling rugby players to revel in the game.

Many of the volunteer coaches involved in creating the environment for our mini rugby players are primary school teachers along with volunteer senior players and even international players.



A young Emirati girl being introduced to a rugby ball by coach Allison, an 'early years' school teacher.





Dubai College PE Teacher and UAE International, Epeli Davetawalu, coaching the Under 6s



Midi & Youth Rugby - Under 9 to Under 19

Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club is a multi-cultural club that is grounded in team sports. The club's Midi & Youth rugby section is made up of over 400 players from 42 different countries. Not just the traditional 'tier 1' rugby playing nations such as England, South Africa, New Zealand and France, but also from non traditional rugby playing nations such as Egypt, Germany, Turkey, Brazil, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan. Rugby is truly a game for everyone.

The 2019-20 season was the most successful season that Dubai Exiles Youth rugby had ever enjoyed. <https://dubaixiles.com/best-club-rugby-season-ever/>

Rugby promotes a sense of healthy competition and teaches young players about winning and losing as well as the tools and skills needed to cope with both. A team sport such as rugby increases confidence, self-respect, and an awareness and respect for those around you.

It is exactly those benefits that equipped 20 of the club's Under 19 players to represent the senior men's rugby teams in both the UAE Premiership and the UAE Division 1 during the 2021-22 rugby season. The Exiles' Under 19 squad currently has seven 'home grown' players that represent the UAE on the international stage.

“The links between good physical health and mental health are well recognised. Physical activities such as playing rugby can be beneficial for mental health and well-being as well as bringing physical benefits”.

England Rugby



An Exiles' Under 19 scores against the Dragons in UAE Division 1



Girls' Rugby - Under 12, Under 15, Under 19, & Women

The Ladies' and Girls' rugby section of Dubai Exiles RFC is the longest established female rugby section in the United Arab Emirates.

Our Under 19 Girls are the current [Emirates Dubai Sevens Champions](#) and have won the prestigious, globally recognised, tournament on six of the last seven occasions.

For the first time ever the Emirates Dubai 7s Gulf Under 19 Girls final was played on the international showcase Pitch 1 at the tournament, enabling both sides to experience playing in front of a large crowd. Over 14,000 watched the [U19 Girls final](#).

Our Under 12 and Under 15 girls play 'tag rugby' which is a non-contact form of rugby whereas the Under 19 girls and senior sides play full contact rugby.



Exiles Ladies get ready for another Gulf Women's 7s Series match



Exiles Under 19 Girls play in front of 14,000 at the 2021 Dubai 7s (top). Exiles U19 Girls after winning the HSBC (bottom)





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HSBC Mini & Youth Rugby Festival

The HSBC Mini & Youth Rugby Festival is the largest Mini & Youth rugby festival in the Gulf region. Over 3,500 young rugby players take part in a competition that takes place over two days at The Emirates Dubai Sevens grounds and involves over 240 teams from across the United Arab Emirates and further afield such as Muscat, Bahrain, Kuwait and even the Ukraine.

The festival has been secured until January 2023 with a recent new contract between the festival title sponsor, HSBC, and Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club.

Over the two days, more than 10,000 people attend the festival. A sponsor's village is available to club sponsors to populate and engage with visitors to the event. Coupled with a strong social media following, the HSBC Mini & Youth Rugby Festival is a spectacular event and opportunity for the Dubai Exiles and their sponsors.

The Exiles' clubhouse is also available to Exiles sponsors throughout the weekend should they wish to utilise the opportunity to represent their products, services or place any point of sale or promotional materials in what is an extremely busy 'hub' throughout the festival weekend.

- The largest Mini & Youth rugby festival in the Middle East
- Over 10,000 visitors across two days
- Free Sponsors' Village space available to Dubai Exiles sponsors
- Free Exiles' clubhouse space for product / service promotion



HSBC brand ambassador, Bryan Habana, talks with the U19 Girls



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Senior Men's Rugby & Emirates Dubai 7s

West Asia Premiership and UAE Premiership rugby is played to an extremely high standard in what is a ferociously competitive competition. The UAE Premiership currently consists of six UAE based teams playing a home and away league format, the West Asia Premiership encompasses the UAE Premiership competition but with the addition of Bahrain RFC and Doha RFC.

In recent years the Dubai Exiles won the 2019-20 and 2020-21 UAE Premiership, narrowly missing out on the opportunity to play against Bahrain RFC in Bahrain in the final of the 2020-21 West Asia Premiership due to the unfortunate Covid-19 global pandemic. The 2021-22 season saw the senior men go undefeated in the league fixtures and narrowly miss out in the UAE Premiership final.

The club also competes annually in the world-famous, Emirates Dubai Sevens, an event that is the opening round of the HSBC World Sevens Series. The Dubai Exiles founded the Dubai Sevens tournament in 1969 and it was held at the Exiles' old grounds in Al Awir until 2008 when both the Exiles and the Emirates Dubai Sevens moved to their current home. The Exiles won December's [2021 Emirates Dubai 7s](#) title and are the reigning [Gulf Men's Champions](#).

As you would expect, by competing in the Gulf regions' premier rugby competitions and also the Emirates Dubai Sevens, the Dubai Exiles regularly feature in leading domestic publications both in print and online.

- West Asia Premiership Rugby (1st XV)
- UAE Premiership Rugby (1st XV)
- UAE Division 1 Rugby (2nd XV)
- Emirates Dubai Sevens Tournament (Senior men, Under 19 Boys, Under 19 Girls, Women and Men's Veterans)



Pieter Kilian on the charge in the UAE Premiership Final (top)



Touch & Veterans' Rugby

Touch Rugby is a minimal contact, six-a-side, form of the game which is fast and fun for both men and women as well as girls and boys.

The Dubai Exiles Touch Rugby teams compete in the 'Super 6s' Community League every week.

Touch Rugby is a game for everyone, all shapes, all sizes, rugby beginners or more experienced players who just want to enjoy themselves on a rugby pitch without collisions of the traditional game.

The Touch Rugby section also encompasses the Exiles Veterans team which annually competes alongside our Premiership and Under 19 teams in the world-famous Emirates Dubai Sevens competition.

If you want to play some enjoyable and social rugby in Dubai, our veteran players and our touch rugby players are a very welcoming, extremely social, and fun loving group!



Exiles' Touch Rugby is for all ages



Game face on (top)



Almost through the gap



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Dubai Exiles Cricket Club

Dubai Exiles Cricket Club was established in 2016 after a small group of like-minded' friends wanted to enjoy their love of cricket in Dubai. What started off as one senior cricket side has grown to a current membership of over 70 cricketers, five senior cricket sides playing in different competitions.

Exiles' cricketers now play in the highest leagues in the UAE, the Dubai Super League, the Dubai Cricket Council's League of Mammoths, the Victoria Champions Cup and the Friday T20 Bash in Sharjah, as well as tournaments in Ajman.

Dubai Exiles Cricket Club entered the 2020-21 season having never made it to the final of a competition, that season the club made three finals, the DCC Ramadan League, the Victoria Weekdays Champions Cup, as well as the T20 Big Bash Final. The also narrowly missed out on reaching the Dubai Super League final.



14 year old, Sami Khan, scores 51 in the DCC League of Mammoths



'Harry' in the final of the Dubai Cricket Council Ramadan League



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Dubai Exiles Netball Club

Netball was a popular addition to the club from October 2011. It's open to girls from the age of 5 through to adult ladies. Our junior teams play in the various netball leagues in Dubai on a Friday morning and our senior ladies sides play in the Dubai Netball Leagues on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening.

Like the rugby and cricket sections of the club, the netball players at the Dubai Exiles are truly multi-cultural, 30 different countries are represented by the 143 strong membership.

As well as playing in the senior Dubai netball leagues on a Tuesday and Wednesday evening, our netball players represented the Dubai Exiles at the Emirates Dubai Sevens netball tournament when it returned along with the Sevens Rugby competition in December 2021.





St Martins School from Caerphilly, Wales played several 'tour matches' against the Exiles in the 2021-22 season (bottom right)



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The Exiles' Clubhouse

The Dubai Exiles' Clubhouse, located on the top floor of the Players' Club at the world-famous 'Sevens Stadium', on Al Ain Road (E66), opened in 2018.

The Clubhouse has proved a popular addition for members, offering panoramic views of the Dubai Exiles 'home' rugby pitch as well as the other rugby pitches at the venue along with the four netball courts.

The clubhouse is fitted with six Windsor doors which open to allow access to the galleries overlooking the pitches. It's a wonderful vantage point to enjoy the highest level of rugby offered in Dubai and the Gulf region.

As a sponsor of the Dubai Exiles there are numerous opportunities for point of sale and promotional materials in what is an incredibly busy 'space' and well used space, especially during club training mornings and evenings and especially on match days.



An hour before kick off, the clubhouse gallery begins to fill





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Exiles' membership

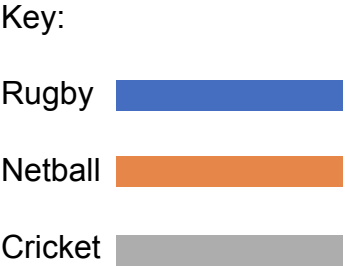
Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club had over 1,200 registered members in the 2021-22 season (1,234), 670 of whom are playing membership and regularly participate in the sports of rugby, netball, or cricket offered at the club.

In 2020-21, despite the global Covid pandemic, playing membership increased over the previous season with the addition of 88 members over the 2019-20 season. The 2021-22 season saw playing membership increase again by 23%.

The Membership of Dubai Exiles is very diverse and multi-cultural. People from all walks of life and different corners of the globe choose to enjoy their chosen sport with us at the Dubai Exiles.

The Dubai Exiles membership is made up men and women, boys and girls from 48 different countries. The United Kingdom, South Africa and India are the three largest nationalities in the club.

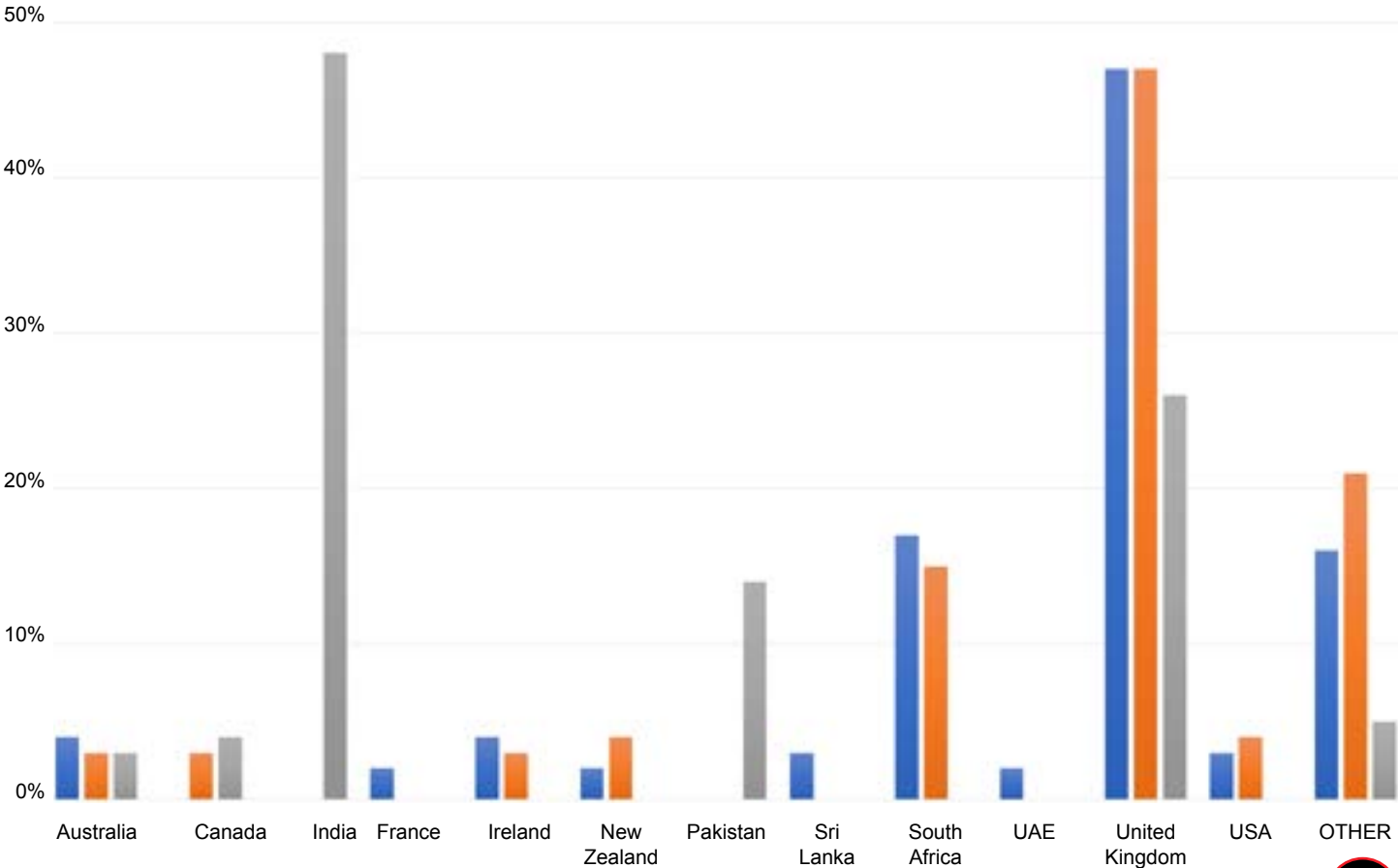
Exiles' playing membership by nationality



Male / Female members:

Male 76%

Female 24%





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The Exiles' digital footprint - dubaixiles.com

The club's website, <https://dubaixiles.com>, was revamped in early 2019 and went live on May 9th 2019. We were thrilled with the analytics that were produced during the 2021-22 season between September 1st 2021 and March 24th 2022, especially for an amateur, not-for-profit, sports club.

Between September 1st 2021 and April 24th 2022 the website entertained 75,183 unique visitors, had 251,322 page views with a dwell time of 2 minutes and 48 seconds and a 'bounce rate' of 54%.

We have a very busy '[Latest News](#)' section on the website with many of the posts receiving over 1,000 visitors when we connect the stories across our social media pages.

- **Unique visitors - 75,183.** An increase of 45,989 (157%) over season 2020-21
- **Page views - 251,322.** An increase of 133,594 (113%) over season 2020-21
- Dwell time - 2 minutes 48 seconds
- Bounce rate - 54%

There are endless branding and sponsorship opportunities throughout the DubaiExiles.com website. Logos, links, stories, and even individual landing pages can be created to promote a sponsors' business, or a sponsors' CSR project in making sport available to youngsters from the local and the wider community.



dubaixiles.com has proved extremely popular in 2020-21



The Exiles' digital footprint - Social Media

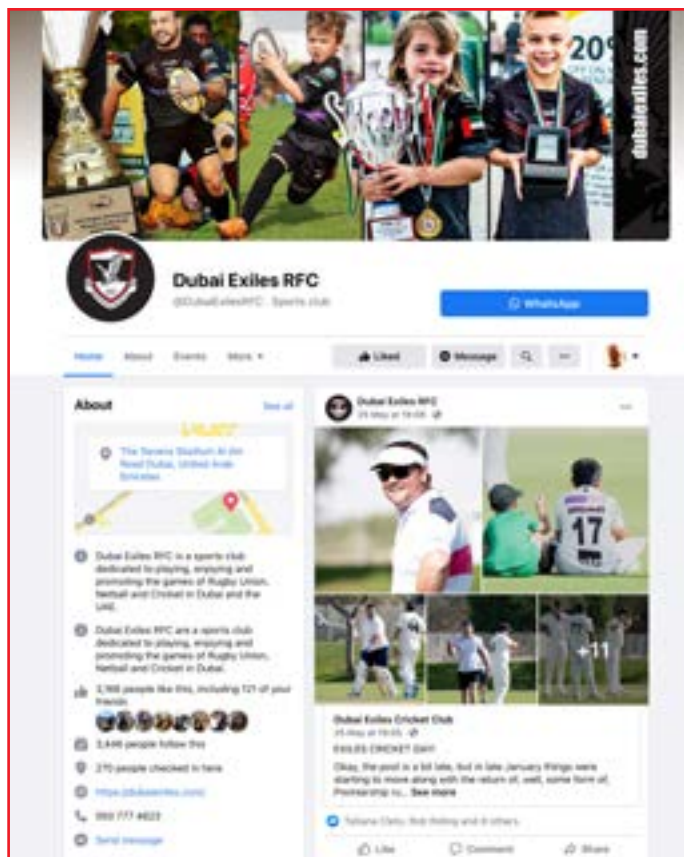
The social media channels of Dubai Exiles RFC are well subscribed and vibrant. [Facebook](#) remains the most engaged with social media platform for the club, with 4,934 followers as of 18th May 2022. An increase of 714 (17%) over May 18th 2021.

With such a large under 19 contingent at the club, across all sports, it is no surprise that Facebook is the leading platform for our social media engagement, it is, at least for the moment, the primary choice of platform for parents with children at the club.

The club's Instagram pages have grown to 2,990 followers across rugby, netball and cricket, an increase of 799 (36%) over last season.

Premiership, Division 1 and Mini & Youth rugby matches are streamed live on Facebook wherever possible. Typically, over 1,000 people worldwide tune in to watch Exiles' matches live. Despite the 2020-21 ten man format of the game having to be played because of the global pandemic, 1200 people still tuned in to watch the Dubai Exiles defeat the Hurricanes by 19 - 39 against on the 15th April 2021.

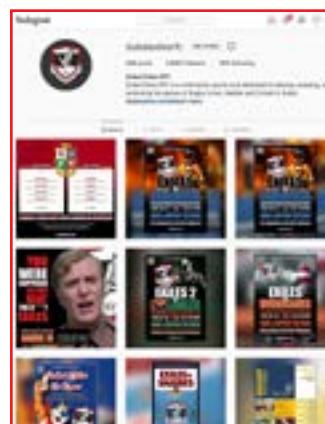
In February 2020, over 2,000 people visited the club's Facebook page to watch a live stream of the Exiles' Under 12 side play against touring side Trinity School from London UK.



Facebook



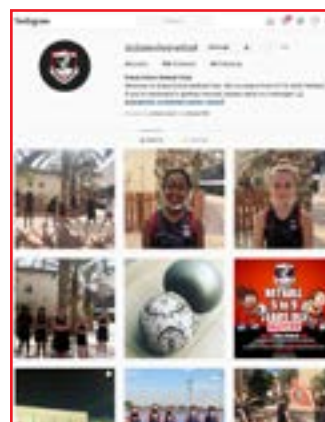
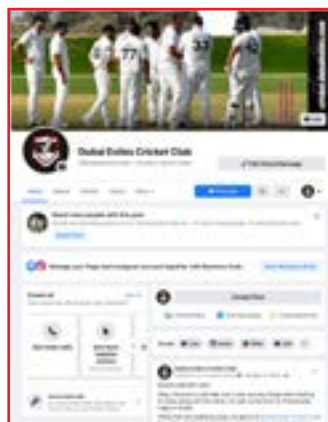
Cricket Facebook



Instagram



Facebook Live





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We need your help!

Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club is a fully licensed, licensed by the Community Development Authority (CDA), and legally compliant 'not-for-profit' community sports club that offers Rugby, Netball, and Cricket to its members.

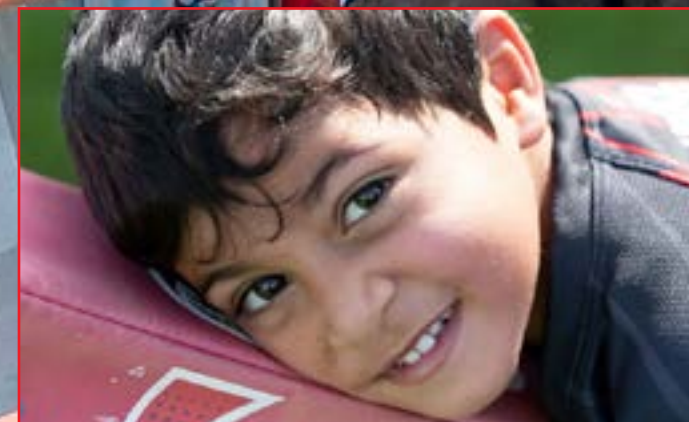
As is common with many not-for-profit organisations, Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club is heavily dependent on the generosity of business and individuals to be able to deliver its sports programmes of rugby, netball, and cricket to the local and the wider community.

72% of the club's playing membership are children and youths under the age of 18, 30% are under the age of 11. The club not only facilitates sport, it also functions as a perennial gateway for many young children to take their first steps into a beneficial world of sport that teaches team-work, respect, communication, integrity, sportsmanship, and self-discipline along with the very well documented health and well-being benefits.

Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2016. With your help - the club can remain a pillar in the local, national, and international sporting community for many years to come.

We have many different sponsorship opportunities at the Dubai Exiles, from sponsoring individual West Asia Premiership and UAE Premiership rugby players, Dubai Super League Cricketers, to full platinum, gold and silver packages that give visibility across the entire club and all of its audiences, both on-field and online.

If you'd like to get involved with helping to facilitating well coached and accessible sport to the local and wider community, please email us at sponsorship@dubaixiles.com or call +971 (0) 50 7774623. We'd love to hear from you.





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web: dubaixiles.com email: hello@dubaixiles.com telephone: +971 (0) 50 777 4623

