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Sport

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## 'Great opportunity' for young players

By Stephen Wright

The next generation of Bermudian rugby players are preparing for international exposure when they head to England for their first overseas tournament at the end of this month.

A team of ten and 11-year-olds has been selected to travel to Surrey, London, to represent the Island at a youth rugby festival. It is the first time the nation has sent a squad of players of this age group on tour for around 30 years, and it is hoped it will pave the way for similar trips in the future. Team manager Brett Forgesson said it was a great opportunity for local players to be exposed at an early age to rugby at a higher level.

"The boys are very excited and are working hard so that they can do their best when we are in England," he said.

A squad of 16 was chosen from those players who turned out in the local mini rugby league last season. They will face Guildford RFC as well as compete in the Chobham Mini Rugby Festival. Graham Cooke, 11, of Warwick Academy, said: "I'm very proud to be chosen for the team and the training has been hard work but lots of fun. I'm thankful to the coaches and sponsors who have made the trip possible."

The popularity of mini rugby in Bermuda has been increasing dramatically over the past few years. Dave Worsfold, chairman of the Bermuda RFU, has been coordinating the programme for a number of years.

He said numbers have grown steadily from about 35 players five years ago: "Last year we would regularly see well over 150 children come down to participate in the



**Future stars:** Back row: Adam Nicol, Micah Perozzi, Evan Hughes, Rory Crofts, Ryan Robb, Grenville Lines, Giles Lorimer Turner, Daniel Nash. Front row: Matthew Blee, Cameron Turnbull, Samuel Cabot, Graham Cooke, Andrew Forgesson, Dillon Page, Callum Smith, Alex Price.

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rugby programme each week."

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The team will be carrying out fund raising activities involving a car wash and bake sale this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a Trash-a-thon on Sunday, September 23 at Warwick Academy. The team is also seeking corporate sponsorship to help fund the trip.

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