

SYDNEY JUNIOR RUGBY UNION (SJRU)

2020 Operating Plan



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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. SUMMARY AND KEY DATES

1.1. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to set out the Operating Plan for Sydney Junior Rugby Union (SJR.U) in 2020. Once finalised this the plan that SJRU will operate to in 2020. The SJRU Board will monitor performance against this plan and provide updates to Clubs and Districts on progress or any appropriate modifications during the year.

This document has been prepared by the 2019 Board and Competition Administrators and reflects their desire to provide all participants in Sydney junior club rugby with greater awareness of how their game will be managed in 2020.

In particular the Board and Administrators have considered a number of issues and concerns raised by Clubs and other participants. This document provides SJRU's response to those concerns, including:

- Clarity of key dates
- Timely provision of draws
- Transparency and responsiveness when issues are raised
- District based teams and joint ventures
- Size for Age and General Age Dispensations
- Growth and development of the game

1.2. KEY DATES

Refer to Appendix One (Calendar) for all key dates.

Date	Event	Competition(s)
1 Oct 19	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up	Sizzling 7s, Friday XVs, Sunday XVs, Girls XVs, Saturday XVs – Wave 1
30 Nov 19	Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues	Sizzling 7s
30 Nov 19	EOI for Host Venues.	Minis Gala Day
3 Feb 20	Team and host venue nominations due.	Sizzling 7s
13 Feb 20	Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Sizzling 7s
15 Feb 20	Round 1	Sizzling 7s
16 Feb 20	Team nominations, Special Draw Requests and Ground Availability (including applications to host Sunday XVs Gala Rounds 1 and 2) due	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
13 Mar 20	Confirmation of venues for Rounds 1 and 2	Sunday XVs
20 Mar 20	Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Friday XVs
20 Mar 20	Round 1 Gala Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Sunday XVs
27 Mar 20	Round 1	Friday XVs
29 Mar 20	Round 1 Gala Day (central venue for each age group)	Sunday XVs
2 Apr 20	Round 2 Gala Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Sunday XVs
3 Apr 20	Round 2	Friday XVs
4 Apr 20	Finals	Sizzling 7s
5 Apr 20	Round 2 Gala Day (central venue for each age group)	Sunday XVs
5 Apr 20	Venues Confirmed	Minis Gala Day
17 Apr 20	Team nominations due.	Girls XVs, Saturday XVs - Wave 1
24 Apr 20	Grading finalised and R3-14 Draw published in Xplorer	Sunday XVs
27 Apr 20	Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Girls XVs, Saturday XVs - Wave 1



Date	Event	Competition(s)
1 May 20	Round 3 (No matches during school holidays, incl Easter and Anzac weekends)	Friday XV's
1 May 20	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
1 May 20	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
1 May 20	Team nominations due.	Minis Gala Day
2 May 20	Round 1	Girls XV's, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
3 May 20	Round 3 (No matches during school holidays, incl Easter and Anzac weekends)	Sunday XV's
25 May 20	Team nominations due.	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
30 May 20	Finals	Girls XV's, Saturday XV's - Wave 1
5 Jun 20	Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
5 Jun 20	Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Minis Gala Day
13 Jun 20	Round 1	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
20 Jun 20	Inter-District Minis Gala Day	Minis Gala Day
26 Jun 20	Round 10 (then break for holidays)	Friday XV's
27 Jun 20	Round 3 (then break for holidays)	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
28 Jun 20	Round 10 (then break for holidays)	Sunday XV's
24 Jul 20	Round 11	Friday XV's
25 Jul 20	Round 4	Frosty 7s, Saturday XV's - Wave 2
26 Jul 20	Round 11	Sunday XV's
9 Aug 20	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due	Friday XV's, Sunday XV's
21 Aug 20	Elimination Finals	Friday XV's
22 Aug 20	Finals	Frosty 7s
22 Aug 20	Elimination Finals	Saturday XV's - Wave 2
23 Aug 20	Elimination Finals	Sunday XV's
28 Aug 20	Grand Finals	Friday XV's
29 Aug 20	Grand Finals	Saturday XV's - Wave 2
30 Aug 20	Grand Finals	Sunday XV's
11 Sep 20	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Spring 7s
25 Sep 20	Team and host venue nominations due.	Spring 7s
1 Oct 20	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.	Spring 7s
14 Oct 20	Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer	Spring 7s
18 Oct 20	Round 1	Spring 7s
6 Dec 20	Finals	Spring 7s



2. COMPETITIONS

This section of the Operating Plan sets out the competitions that SJRU intends to run in 2020 and provides specifics about their operation.

2.1. SIZZLING 7s

Sizzling 7s is a Tackle 7s Competition for girls. In 2020 it will run as a 7 Rounds + Final (8 week) competition in Term 1. Games will be played in the same way as in 2019 – ie a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on Saturday afternoons and evenings, playing multiple games per round. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams.

In 2020 all girls' competitions including Sizzling 7s will operate in two year windows for U18s, U16s, U14s and U12s. This is a change from 2019 when odd ages were used but is designed to reflect the pathways available for girls, which in 2020 will all be even age groups. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

Round 1 will commence on Saturday 15th February running to Round 7 on Saturday 28th March and the Finals on Saturday 4th April.

SJRU anticipates that with the expected growth of the Sizzling 7s in 2020 it will split the competition into two (2) Zones.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Sizzling 7s Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 October 2019: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
- 30 November 2019: Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues
- 3 February: Team and host venue nominations due.
- 13 February: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 15 February: Round 1
- 4 April: Finals

2.2. FRIDAY XV's

Friday XV's is a fifteen-aside (modified as required for Pathways) competition run on Friday nights. This competition is traditionally not graded and is open to all clubs to enter teams in U10, U11 and U12 competitions. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. The Friday XV's competition is run for boys but girls can play (and are encouraged to do so) in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility requirements.

Historically it has been mainly teams in Southern Zone who have entered teams in this competition and matches have generally been played at venues connected to those clubs. SJRU may consider the option of hiring central venues but subject to that Clubs are responsible for venue management.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

The key dates for Friday XV's mirror those of the Sunday XV's competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 October 2019: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 16 February: Team nominations, Special Draw Requests and Ground Availability due
- 20 March: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 27 March: Round 1
- 3 April: Round 2
- 1 May: Round 3 (No matches during school holidays, incl Easter and Anzac weekends)
- 26 June: Round 10
- 24 July: Round 11 (No matches during school holidays)
- 9 August: Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due
- 21 August: Elimination Finals
- 28 August: Grand Final



During 2019 SJRU observed some issues with the Friday XV's competition and is currently undertaking a review of the operation of that competition. That review will inform how the 2020 Friday XV's competition is run. Key issues being considered as part of that review are:

- Ground setup arrangements
- Provision of Ground Marshalls
- Spectator behaviour
- Referee appointments

2.3. SUNDAY XV'S

Sunday XV's is a fifteen-a-side (modified as required for Pathways) competition run on Sundays or in some cases on Friday nights. This competition graded and is open to all clubs to enter teams in U10 through to Opens (U18) competitions. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

SJRU confirms that it will run an Opens Competition in 2020 and understands previous attempts to run alternative U18 competitions by Shute Shield clubs will not be repeated in 2020.

The Sunday XV's competition is run for boys but girls can play (and are encouraged to do so) in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility requirements.

In 2020 SJRU will modify the format of the Sunday XV's competition. Rounds 1 and 2 will be run differently to previous years – they will be run as gala days with a central venue (or venues) used to host each individual age group. All matches will be played as a 20 minute match with no half time. Teams will likely play at least three such matches on each day. SJRU will use these gala days to:

- Assess grading for each team
- Assess players in matches under Size for Age dispensation requirements
- Assess players in matches under General Age dispensation requirements

Once the gala days are complete and SJRU has completed its assessments, teams will be graded into competitions for the remainder of the season. There will be no re-grading unless SJRU is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances. SJRU will then publish the draw for the remaining Rounds 3-14.

To avoid the possibility of teams choosing not to participate in the two gala rounds, or to participate and not play to the extent of their ability in the hope of being graded into a lower division, SJRU will award all teams who participate to the extent of their ability four Competition Points for each gala round. Any team that does not compete in the gala rounds, or where SJRU is satisfied did compete but inappropriately, will be graded into a division deemed suitable by SJRU and will enter Round 3 without some or all of the eight Competition Point available.

An alternative approach would be to have each 20 minute game count for a competition point which has the advantage of making the games "count". One problem with this approach is that teams would be disadvantaged or advantaged while grading is being finalised with an impact on competition tables going forward.

From Round 3 this competition is run in a Home and Away format with home clubs responsible for venue management.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

The key dates for Sunday XV's are (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 October 2019: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 16 February: Team nominations, Special Draw Requests and Ground Availability (including applications to host Gala Rounds 1 and 2) due
- 13 March: Confirmation of venues for Rounds 1 and 2
- 20 March: Round 1 Gala Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 29 March: Round 1 Gala Day (central venue for each age group)
- 2 April: Round 2 Gala Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 5 April: Round 2 Gala Day (central venue for each age group)
- 24 April: Grading finalised and R3-14 Draw published in Xplorer
- 3 May: Round 3 (No matches during school holidays, incl Easter and Anzac weekends)
- 28 June: Round 10
- 26 July: Round 11 (No matches during school holidays)



- 9 August: Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due
- 23 August: Elimination Finals
- 30 August: Grand Final

2.4. GIRLS XV's

SJR.U has previously attempted to run a Girls XV's competition without success. In 2020 we intend to run a fifteen-aside competition (modified as required for Pathways) for Girls. The Competition will be open to all clubs to enter teams. It will be a 4 Round plus Finals competition run during May, ie after the finish of Sizzling 7s and prior to the NSW State Championships.

Like all girls' competitions in 2020, the Girls XV's competition will run in two year windows for even ages, ie Opens (U18s), U16s, U14s and provisionally U12s if there is sufficient interest. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

Depending on the level of interest from clubs to enter teams, SJRU may also allow schools to enter girls' teams in the Girls XV's competition so there is sufficient depth in the competition. This possibility is being considered in conjunction with the Saturday XV's competition – see below.

Provisionally SJRU intends to run the Girls XV's competition on Saturday afternoons, consistent with the timing of Sizzling 7s and Frosty 7s, so that girls can plan on regular Saturday afternoon rugby throughout the year. If school teams are invited to enter then it would also align with the Saturday XV's competition.

The format for this competition is intended to be a Home and Away format due to the nature of XV's rugby. SJRU acknowledges that this may cause complications with availability of grounds on Saturdays and will work closely with clubs to manage the best outcome overall. Home teams will be responsible for venue management.

Round 1 will commence on Saturday 2nd May running to Round 4 on Saturday 23rd May and the Finals on Saturday 30th May.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Girls XV's Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 October 2019: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 17 April: Team nominations due.
- 27 April: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 2 May: Round 1
- 30 May: Finals

2.5. SATURDAY XV's – WAVE 1

SJR.U is considering options for two Saturday XV's competitions in 2020 that would be open to both school and club teams.

We are likely to target older age groups, eg U14, U15 and U16 and possibly Opens. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

In part this is because we'd like to focus on options for high school students who are not already at rugby playing (private) schools, ie public and catholic systemic high schools. We also don't want to disrupt our existing Friday Night competition, plus it creates opportunities for players who have religious commitments on Sundays. With less age groups it also allows us to schedule matches on Saturday afternoons or even later under lights so we don't clash with other sporting commitments.

Having said that we are open to considering teams from existing school competitions (eg ISA, CAS, GPS) where there are surplus teams in an age group for existing competitions.

Wave 1 is designed to be an easy entry for schools and clubs to try out rugby, hopefully with a view to then playing Wave 2. The format of the proposed competitions is subject to further assessment but at this point our intention is that the Wave 1 Competition would be a 4 Round + Finals competition starting 2 May 2020 and finishing 30 May 2020, ie the same time frame as the Girls XV's competition.



The timing of this wave is identical to the Girls XVs comp we intend to run in 2020, which raises the possibility that we may also allow schools to put teams into the Girls XVs competition, giving options for boys and girls. This would also help add depth to the Girls comp. The timing is also at the end of the NRL Harold Matthews comp.

We are aware of a proposal from Penrith to play a Saturday night club U18 competition at Nepean Park. We have not yet discussed this with Penrith but it may be something that could run in parallel or as part of our proposed competition.

In the interest of getting this competition going, SJRU are willing to be flexible about the format, eg a Friday night competition or other scheduling arrangement may be preferable.

Issues we have identified for further assessment include:

- This is probably going to be a home/away format rather than gala format, but that depends on how many teams participate. We will have potential issues with access to grounds with Grade and Subbies also playing on Saturdays, but we are hoping to be able to work around that with timing and also accessing school grounds.
- Referee availability will also be something we'll need to factor in.
- Admin/operational support will need to be addressed. SJRU runs a number of competitions for boys and girls already but are currently at capacity for operational resources. See below for further discussion in Competition Management.
- If there is sufficient interest from girls teams at schools they could enter the Girls XVs competition.

Provisional key dates for the Saturday XVs Competition - Wave 1 are (please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 October 2019: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 17 April: Team nominations due.
- 27 April: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 2 May: Round 1
- 30 May: Finals

2.6. FROSTY 7s

Frosty 7s is a Tackle 7s Competition for girls. In 2020 it will run as a 7 Rounds + Final (8 week) competition across Terms 2 and 3. Games will be played in the same way as in 2019 – ie a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on Saturday afternoons and evenings, playing multiple games per round. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams.

In 2020 all girls' competitions including Frosty 7s will operate in two year windows for U18s, U16s, U14s and U12s. This is a change from 2019 when odd ages were used but is designed to reflect the pathways available for girls, which in 2020 will all be even age groups. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

Round 1 will commence on Saturday 13th June running to Round 7 on Saturday 15th August and the Finals on Saturday 22nd August. No games will be played during school holidays on July 4, 11 and 18.

SJRU anticipates that with the expected growth of the Frosty 7s in 2020 it will split the competition into two (2) Zones.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Frosty 7s Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 May: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 1 May: Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
- 25 May: Team nominations due.
- 5 June: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 13 June: Round 1
- 27 June: Round 3 (then break for holidays)
- 25 July: Round 4
- 22 August: Finals



2.7. SATURDAY XV'S – WAVE 2

Refer to Section 2.5 above regarding a general outline of SJRU's intentions in offering Saturday competitions and the issues being worked on.

The Saturday XV's Wave 2 Competition would be similar in many respects to Wave 1 (Saturday XV's open to club and school teams) with the key difference being that we intend it to be a 7 Round + Semis + Finals competition, rather than the shorter Wave 1 format. This is because Wave 1 is designed to be an introductory competition and then Wave 2 to have more depth.

SJRU's current thinking is that Wave 2 would start on 13 June with three rounds before schools break, resuming for R4 on 25 July. The last round R7 would be 15 August with Elimination Finals on 22 August and Grand Finals on 29 August. This more or less dovetails the Frosty 7s competition for the Girls, although that may finish one week earlier.

Provisional key dates for the Saturday XV's Competition - Wave 2 are (please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 1 May: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 1 May: Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
- 25 May: Team nominations due.
- 5 June: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 13 June: Round 1
- 27 June: Round 3 (then break for holidays)
- 25 July: Round 4
- 22 Aug: Elimination Finals
- 29 Aug: Finals

2.8. SPRING 7S

Spring 7s is a Tackle 7s competition primarily for boys but girls can (and are encouraged to) play in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility rules. Spring 7s runs in Term 4 and is a 7 Round + Finals format. It is run at a central venue(s) on Sunday afternoons. All clubs are encouraged to enter teams.

Spring 7s operates in two year windows. Boys 7s pathways align with odd age groups (U11, U13, U15 and Opens) so these will be the age groups for Spring 7s. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

Key dates for the Spring 7s Competition are (please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

- 11 September: Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
- 25 September: Team and host venue nominations due.
- 1 October: Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up.
- 14 October: Season Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 18 October: Round 1
- 6 December: Finals

2.9. OTHER COMPETITIONS

There are a range of other competitions run by Districts or Clubs affiliated with SJRU. SJRU does not run these competitions but provides support as appropriate. These competitions include:

- The seven district-based Minis competitions who play on Saturday mornings across Sydney
- The Girls U8/9 and U10/11 competition run by Warringah District at Terrey Hills on Saturdays
- The Minis gala days run by various clubs

Refer to Sections 4 and 7 for more details on these competitions.



3. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

3.1. RESOURCING

In 2019 SJRU had two administrative resources – the Competition Manager and a Competition Administrator. Both of these roles are funded by and employed by NSWRU. Although both personnel were experienced and capable rugby administrators it was clear that the workload they encountered was at least at the capacity they had. The combination of preparing the draw, dealing with Size for Age and General Age Dispensations, handling requests and issues from clubs and a range of other matters was a challenge and SJRU acknowledges that many clubs and participants were frustrated, especially with the slow release of the draw.

In contrast in 2018 SJRU had a far less experienced Competition Manager accompanied by an experienced Competition Administrator. In that year the Competition Manager did not prepare the draw – it was prepared by an external group of volunteers. Generally it seemed that clubs and participants were happier with the delivery of the draw under this method.

For 2020 SJRU has decided to use separate additional resources to prepare the Friday and Sunday XV's competition draws, freeing up the Competition Manager and Administrator to focus on other operational requirements.

The two administrators have focused primarily on the XV's competitions – Friday and Sunday. Where possible they have also supported the Girls 7s competitions (Sizzling 7s and Frosty 7s) but much of the management of those competitions was performed by others, including the SJRU Girls Director. Given that SJRU are responsible for venue management as well as competition management for these competitions, that was a significant task.

For the 2019 Spring 7s competition SJRU funded a third administrator, also employed by NSWRU. The costs of the Spring 7s competition (including the administrator) were funded by a combination of registration fees, a grant from The Rugby Club Foundation and SJRU reserves. Although the initial commitment for this role is only for the Spring 7s competition, SJRU are keen to convert this third administrator role into a permanent role to administer the Sizzling 7s, Girls XV's, Frosty 7s and Spring 7s competitions.

The proposed Saturday XV Competition will require additional administrative support. If schools are to be involved in this competition there will likely be extra resourcing requirements as they are unlikely to be familiar with junior rugby competitions.

Over all in 2020 SJRU is intending on having in place the following key resources:

1. Competition Manager, focused primarily on the Friday and Sunday XV's competitions but with oversight across all competitions
2. Competition Administrator focused primarily on the Friday and Sunday XV's competitions but assisting other competitions as required
3. Competition Administrator focused primarily on the Sizzling 7s, Girls XV's, Frosty 7s and Spring 7s but assisting other competitions as required.
4. Competition Administrator focused primarily on the Saturday XV's competitions but assisting other competitions as required
5. Draw Administrator to prepare the Draw for the Friday and Sunday XV's competitions.

The 3rd and 4th roles are not yet finalised. SJRU is currently in discussion with NSWRU about funding and providing these resources. SJRU is willing to fund the 5th role as needed.

SJRU is intent on building up the operational capability of its competition resources. With a suitable team of administrators in place, the team can support each other and provide backup as needed.

3.2. DRAWS

As noted, SJRU accepts that the timeliness of the draw was a source of frustration for many clubs and participants in 2019. There are specific changes that SJRU intends to implement in 2020 to address this:

1. Restructuring the Sunday XV's competition so that Rounds 1 and 2 are Gala Rounds, with grading determined by Round 3 and no further re-grading unless there are exceptional circumstances. The draws for Rounds 1 and 2 will be produced at least one week prior to each round. Over the school holidays SJRU will produce the draw for all remaining rounds.
2. Using a separate resource to prepare the draws for the Friday and Sunday XV's competitions, freeing up the Competition Manager to focus on managing other aspects of the competitions.



3. Introducing new Competition Administrators who will be responsible for preparing the draws for the Sizzling 7s, Girls XV's, Saturday XV's, Frosty 7s and Spring 7s competitions.

3.3. GRADING AND REGRADING

The only competition in which grading is an issue is the Sunday XV's competition. SJRU notes that in the Sunday XV's competition grading has been a major source of concern for clubs each year. Grading is, by its nature, an inexact science. While results from previous years are very relevant to which Division a team is best suited in the current year, there are other variables in play, including:

- Player departure and movements
- Club strength and support
- Number of teams and strength of different Divisions

Historically SJRU has made its best estimate of a suitable Division for each team to be initially graded based on its knowledge of the above factors and input from Clubs. In an ideal world grading would result in every team winning half their games by 5 points and losing half their games by 5 points, so all games are competitive at the level of the teams in that Division. The purpose of regrading is to address any major inconsistencies in the initial grading.

We acknowledge that in some cases this is difficult and there are instances when clubs genuinely request a team be graded or regraded differently because they are clearly in the wrong Division. However we are also aware that in many cases there is a strong desire from clubs to push teams down Divisions so their teams can enjoy winning many games and possibly even a championship in a lower division. Very few clubs want to have teams in A Division! Clearly the mathematics of this do not work – in every Division, from A to G, one team has to come last just as one team has to come first, and that is a part of playing in a competitive sport.

For 2020 SJRU will adopt a different approach to grading in the Sunday XV's competition. Rounds 1 and 2 will be used as Gala Rounds where we will attempt to have all the teams in an age group at a central venue (or venues depending on the size of the age group) playing a series of 20 minute matches in a gala format, likely three matches at each Round. SJRU will have observers at each venue monitoring the progress of matches and use this, along with the results from these matches, as input for final grading.

Once grading has been determined, SJRU does not intend that there will be any further regrading. If there are clearly exceptional circumstances where a team is obviously in the wrong Division, there may be grounds to make an adjustment. However SJRU's intention is that once teams have played six (short) matches in the first two Rounds, grading will be determined and will be finalised. There will be no general regrading after this.

To avoid there being any disincentive to play in the two gala rounds, each team who participates in every game at each gala round will receive four (4) competition points per round. If SJRU forms the view that a team participated but did not do so to the best of their ability (perhaps with the intention of influencing grading), they will not receive the four (4) competition points for that round and will still be graded according to SJRU's assessment of their ability. This could mean a team starts Round 3 on zero (0) points when all other teams are on eight (8) points.

3.4. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

SJRU acknowledges that on many occasions clubs raised issues with the Competition Manager, or issues arose during the course of the competition (game being postponed, etc) and a response was not immediately forthcoming from the Competition Manager. This was usually because the Competition Manager and Administrator were swamped with the combination of dealing with draws, dispensations, judiciary and all the other issues that take up their time and did not reflect a lack of intent to respond to clubs about issues.

However, SJRU agrees with the concerns raised by many clubs about the difficulty of not knowing the status of various issues. In practice the Competition Manager and Administrator receive a flood of emails every Monday about various issues. SJRU has decided that using email to manage and monitor all of the various issues that arise is not as effective as it should be.

Therefore for the 2020 season SJRU is investigating alternative systems for issue management. There are various online systems where issues or cases can be logged, managed and tracked. These systems could also give the Board better oversight of the status of these issues and the overall workload of the administrators, giving the Board a better ability to provide assistance as needed. SJRU is currently investigating these options with intent of choosing a suitable system for all 2020 competitions.



3.5. REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Rugby Xplorer will continue to be the registration and competition management system used in 2020. For all competition in 2020:

- Every player must be registered
- A separate registration is required for each competition in which a player participates
- Every volunteer must be registered (including club officials, coaches, managers, Assistant Referees and Ground Marshalls, noting there is zero cost to register as a volunteer)
- All draws will be published in Xplorer
- All matches will be scored in Xplorer
- All competitions will be managed in Xplorer

In 2020, for teams to be submitted to play a match, SJRU will adjust Xplorer to require that every team in every competition has nominated a suitably qualified Assistant Referee and a Ground Marshall for every match. Without their inclusion teams will not be able to submit and matches will not be able to start.

3.6. DISPENSATIONS - SIZE FOR AGE AND GENERAL AGE DISPENSATION

SJRU is required to follow the Rugby Australia policies on Size for Age and General Age dispensation.

For Size for Age, SJRU acknowledges the concerns raised by various clubs about the policy itself and its implementation. SJRU has prepared a separate paper outlining its approach to these issues in 2020, but in summary SJRU will:

- organise a survey of Clubs to provide feedback to Rugby Australia in their review of the Size for Age policy
- adopt a new approach to ensure the integrity of data that trigger Size for Age assessments, including requiring clubs to conduct their own height and weight checks and verify these to SJRU
- adopt a phased approach to height and weight assessments to ensure that all players who are required to be assessed are done so in a timely manner
- support the recruitment and training of more Independent Qualified Assessing Coaches to undertake assessments in an appropriate fashion
- use the gala rounds of the Sunday XV's competition (Rounds 1 and 2) to conduct in-game assessments for as many players as possible rather than rely on out-of-game assessments, and if needed use further games for assessment where possible
- amend the Competition Rules to give the Competition Manager a discretion to refer for assessment any player who triggers one of the height and weight criteria (rather than both) and where the Competition Manager is of the view that the player may have a dominant influence on matches

For General Age Dispensations, SJRU will maintain the existing policy arrangements in 2020. However where clubs are seeking to have four or more players dispensated to play down an age group so as to make up a team (eg there are not enough U15s to make a team so they apply to have them play in the U14s), SJRU will require that clubs demonstrate that they have exhausted options for the younger players to play up a year (in the same example having the U14s play up in the U15s in a lower Division) or form joint ventures.

Note there are also special requirements for Under 7s wishing to play Under 8s (tackle) rugby. Under Rugby Australia requirements they must be assessed by an Independent Qualified Assessing Coach and before they can be approved by a District Minis Coordinator, who must then forward the approval to the Competition Manager for recording in Xplorer. Any player in Minis age groups (including girls) who wish to play down an age group must also follow this process.

3.7. DISTRICT BASED TEAMS AND JOINT VENTURES

The question of District Based Teams was raised by a number of Clubs at the end of 2018. During 2019 SJRU undertook a detailed process of engaging with all Clubs and Districts to explore this issue. SJRU has prepared a separate paper outlining the position it has reached on formation of District Based Teams. This paper also clarifies SJRU's position on the formation of joint venture teams. Please refer to that paper for reasoning but the position SJRU has adopted is:

- SJRU will not proceed with the formation of formal District Based Teams.
- SJRU confirms its commitment to clubs as the foundation of junior rugby and continues to support them in recruiting and retaining players.



- SJRU also acknowledges that in some cases there may become less opportunity for players of all abilities to find suitable teams to play in because of limited playing numbers. This is more apparent in older age groups.
- Where this occurs, SJRU supports the formation of Joint Venture teams. SJRU will amend the Competition Rules so that all proposed joint ventures require the relevant District President(s) to apply to the SJRU Board for approval of the JV. No JV team will be permitted to play without Board approval.
- For ages U12 and below, SJRU expects that clubs will do all they can to retain their own players and play them in their existing club teams. SJRU will generally not permit joint ventures where more than two clubs are involved or where more than one JV team is proposed (eg an A and a D team).
- For ages U13 and above, other than as noted below, SJRU will not generally support the formation of joint ventures involving more than two clubs and involving the formation of more than one team. For any such proposed arrangements, the relevant District President(s) will have to make a compelling case for the Board to consider.
- SJRU will continue to recognise the formal approval that was provided by SJRU Clubs and Districts to the Randwick Warriors Club when they applied to become a club, noting that new clubs can only be formed by a vote in favour at the AGM.
- In the case of other established joint venture arrangements, subject to receiving satisfactory JV applications each year at team nomination time, SJRU will be inclined to “grandfather” the current age groups (U13 and older in 2019) that have been allowed to date to form joint ventures. However from 2020 SJRU’s expectation is that in all younger age groups (ie U13 in 2020 and thereafter) these district based arrangements will cease and the relevant clubs will enter their own teams in the competition, or have their District President apply to the SJRU Board for approval of a JV with one other club if needed.
- The Import Rule will be applied at all times as outlined in the Competition Rules.
- The Board reserves the right to apply its own discretion in these matters in whatever way it deems suitable for the overall benefit of junior rugby in Sydney.

3.8. IMPORTS

SJRU has had an Import Rule for many years. The purpose of it is to support clubs in retaining players and to prevent inappropriate behaviours, for example where coaches or other club officials try to poach players from other clubs to strengthen their own team.

In 2018 the Competition Rules were amended to create a meaningful sanction for breaches of the Import Rule. The Board reviewed those amendments at the end of 2018 and formed the view that the 2018 amendments did not create enough of the outcomes required. The Board provided a discussion paper to Clubs on its proposed approach in 2019 and after further consideration that approach was implemented in 2019. This approach required all Imports to be approved by the Competition Manager or the Transfer Panel, with players who change clubs not eligible to play unless they have received such approval.

Generally the revised approach was understood and accepted by most Clubs in 2019. There were some instances where Clubs tried to form teams in breach of the Import Rule. In one case a club appealed the decision of the Import Panel to the Judiciary but the Judiciary upheld the decision of the Import Panel. In another case as club continued to play players in breach of the Import Rule throughout the season. SJRU imposed a Competition Point penalty on the team that had the net effect of removing them from Finals.

SJRU’s position for 2020 is that the existing Import Rule is appropriate and will be enforced. All clubs should take note that the Import Rule is actively managed by SJRU and will continue to be actively managed. Any attempts to transfer any player from another club must result in the club applying for approval.

One variation to this position is that SJRU will allow some flexibility for clubs wishing to form teams in the Spring 7s competition, ie players will be able to play outside of their regular XV’s club in the interest of making teams. However SJRU will not accept playing in a Spring 7s teams is a basis for transferring clubs the following year for XV’s rugby.



3.9. REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND JUDICIAL GUIDELINES

SJRU is conducting a review of the Code of Conduct and Judicial processes as they apply to SJRU Competitions. This review will include (but not be limited to):

- Application of and sanctions under Rule 11 of the SJRU Competition Rules;
- Code of Conduct and SJRU Rule breaches reported by Referees/Referee Coaches;
- SJRU Judicial Process; and
- Updating SJRU Competition Rules to reflect the Rugby Au Disciplinary Rules 2019.

We intend that this review will be complete and any proposed changes communicated to Clubs before the commencement of the 2020 season.



4. GIRLS

4.1. OVERVIEW

For an overview of the Girls' competitions SJRU intends to run in 2020 please refer to Sections 2.1, 2.4 and 2.6 above.

Generally speaking SJRU is committed to growing the game of rugby for girls and providing them with meaningful options to play. This includes:

- offering two 7s competitions and one XVS competition in 2020, with the intent of having a paid administrator manage these competitions
- supporting the Warringah District girls competition
- supporting pathways for girls to play Representative Rugby for XVs and 7s
- supporting girls who wish to play mixed gender rugby in Minis and Junior Rugby in accordance with the Rugby Australia gender eligibility requirements.

As noted in the Competition outlines above, all Girls' competitions in 2020 will be played in two year even age groups, ie Open (U18), U16, U14 and U12.

4.2. SCHOOLS

SJRU notes that there are now Girls School rugby competitions forming. While this is generally a good thing, in 2019 there were instances where the girls school competition clashed with SJRU's Frosty 7s competition.

In 2020 SJRU will work with the school administrators to avoid such clashes and ideally find ways that the school system and SJRU can engage more closely with each other. For example, this could include schools entering teams in SJRU competitions.

4.3. PATHWAYS

SJRU supports girls playing representative rugby for District Representative Teams and higher teams. In 2020 SJRU will support for girls:

- Districts entering girls Opens (U18), U16 and U14 teams at the NSWJRU XVs State Championships in June
- Sydney XVs teams in Opens (U18), U16 and U14 to play at NSWJRU Regionals in July, City v Country in August and against Brisbane
- Districts entering girls Opens (U18), U16 and U14 teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October



5. SEVENS

5.1. OVERVIEW

Spring 7s is designed primarily for boys to play 7s rugby but girls are eligible to play in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility rules. The 2020 Spring 7s competition is discussed in more detail at Section 2.8 above.

5.2. PATHWAYS

SJR.U supports representative rugby for District 7s Representative Teams. In 2020 SJRU will support Districts entering 7s Representative Teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October.



6. REPRESENTATIVE RUGBY

6.1. OVERVIEW

SJRU's primary commitment is to provide all players within the Sydney basin with suitable opportunities for them to play rugby at a level that is appropriate for them, with clubs as the foundation of junior rugby. This includes giving all players the opportunity to play with their friends in their club teams which in many cases means playing in teams of mixed ability. This is one of the core elements of the values and culture of rugby and SJRU is committed to it.

SJRU does not support representative rugby being the primary focus for players or any other participants, nor does it support representative rugby being a distraction from club rugby. SJRU has concerns that there is a growing emphasis on representative rugby, at the expense of club rugby, and is considering ways to address this.

Beyond that primary commitment, SJRU will support the provision of higher pathways options for players of suitable ability. This includes support for:

- Districts entering representative teams at the NSWJRU XVs State Championships in June (U12-Opens) and July (U10-11)
- Sydney Regional Teams (U14 Possibles and Probables, U15 Northern, Southern, Western and Barbarians, U16 Sydney and Opens Sydney) to play at the NSWJRU Regionals in July
- Sydney XVs teams in U14s to Opens to play at City v Country in August

There are some issues still to be considered for players in the Saturday XVs competition who wish to also play Representative Rugby, especially those in school-based teams. In any case SJRU minimum game requirements will be applied but SJRU will also need to work with Districts to determine eligibility requirements for districts as well as each District's selection criteria. Once SJRU has confirmed the status of the Saturday XVs competitions we will provide more details on Rep eligibility requirements for Saturday XVs players.

For Girls' pathways teams please refer to Section 4.3. For 7s pathway teams please refer to Section 5.2.



7. MINIS

7.1. OVERVIEW

There are eight different Minis competitions run in the Sydney area:

- Northern Beaches Minis (Manly and Warringah)
- Gordon/Norths Minis
- Eastwood Minis
- Western Sydney Minis (Two Blues and Penrith)
- Inner West Minis (West Harbour, Uni)
- Southern Minis
- Randwick/Easts Minis
- Warringah Girls Minis and U10/11

SJR.U does not run these competitions – they are run by the respective districts (or as a standalone competition for Inner West Minis) with support as required by SJR.U.

7.2. INTER-DISTRICT MINIS GALA DAY

In 2018 SJR.U ran the first Inter-District Minis Gala Day and then ran it again in 2019. The Gala Day is a chance for all Minis teams to play in a gala format against clubs they do not normally play in their regular Minis competition. One or two clubs in each district act as a host venue so that other clubs from outside their regular competition travel to the host clubs and play in a gala format. The Gala Day is a non-competitive gala for all Minis age groups with the emphasis on fun and participation.

SJR.U runs the gala day in conjunction with District Minis Coordinators and host clubs. SJR.U manages the selection of host clubs, allocation of visiting teams and prepares the draw. SJR.U also provides funding support for fun activities such as jumping castles. With the support of The Rugby Club Foundation in 2019 SJR.U also paid for professional photography at a number of venues. In addition SJR.U arranges with NSWRU for Tah Man and Waratahs player appearances.

SJR.U intends running and supporting the Inter-District Minis Gala Day again in 2020.

Provisional key dates for the Inter-District Minis Gala Day (Refer Appendix One - Calendar):

- 30 November 2019: EOI for Host Venues.
- 5 April: Venues Confirmed
- 1 May: Team nominations due.
- 5 June: Draw published in Rugby Xplorer
- 20 June: Inter-District Minis Gala Day

7.3. OTHER MINIS GALA DAYS

Apart from the Inter-District Minis Gala Day there are other Minis Gala Days run in Sydney. These are generally run by a host club with some support as required by SJR.U. They include:

- King of the Hills (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Hills)
- Harbord Harlequins Cup (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Harbord)
- Dufficy Cup (U9 playing U10 rules, competitive, run by Hunters Hill)
- Chatswood Classic Cup (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Chatswood)
- Tiger Cup (U6 and U7, non-competitive, run by Wahroonga)

SJR.U will continue to support these and other Minis Gala Days in 2020.

Clubs should note that where they have teams that wish to travel to Minis Gala Days or tournaments outside Sydney, they need to confirm that the event has been sanctioned by NSWRU and that only registered players play.



8. SUPPORTING DISTRICTS AND CLUBS

SJR.U regards Clubs as the foundation of junior rugby and Districts as having an important role in helping administer rugby.

With that in mind SJRU proposes the following arrangements for 2020:

8.1. SUPPORT FOR CLUBS

Well run and well governed clubs make a significant difference to the success of rugby. SJRU acknowledges and appreciates the work and efforts of all the volunteers who help run clubs – without their support there would be no junior rugby!

There are varying degrees of strength amongst clubs in Sydney. Some are well-resourced with dozens of volunteers who actively support the club while others struggle with little in the way of resources and only a few people holding the club together.

For 2020 SJRU is working with NSWRU to provide a support structure for clubs and volunteers. Details are still be worked on but the areas we are looking at include:

- A set of documents that provide the framework for a well-run club, aka a “Club in a Box”. These could include a model constitution, role descriptions, commercial resources and fundraising/sponsorship resources.
- Funding development and support role(s) to assist clubs with administration and operations
- Recognition and appreciation of the work that volunteers do

8.2. SUPPORT FOR DISTRICTS

The role of Districts (and particularly District Presidents) is one that SJRU has noted can vary. SJRU regards Districts as more than just a representative team management function. Districts have an important role to play in coordinating and assisting clubs as well as helping resolve issues between clubs within the district.

SJR.U has begun to require District Presidents to become actively involved in resolving some issues. For example District Presidents must now be involved in dealing with Imports and in 2020 SJRU intends to modify the Competition Rules for joint ventures so that District Presidents must be involved.

SJR.U also intends to undertake a review of District Constitutions (in accordance with the SJRU Constitution) to support Districts having proper governance and procedures in place.



APPENDIX ONE – DRAFT NSWJRU 2020 CALENDAR

The draft NSWJRU calendar on the next page is current at 1 October 2019. Further updates may be implemented.



2020 NSW JUNIORS EVENTS SCHEDULE



KEY:	SJRU		CJRU		Juniors Reps		Schools		SJRU Meetings		Girls Events		Waratahs (Home)		Waratahs (Away)		Wallabies		Shute Shield		Private School Hols		Public Holidays		School Holidays		ASRU / Nat		JGC		Special Events		PSSA		Minis				
	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri		
JAN																																							
FEB																																							
MAR																																							
APR																																							
MAY																																							
JUN																																							
JUL																																							
AUG																																							
SEP																																							
OCT																																							
NOV																																							
DEC																																							



APPENDIX TWO – AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPETITIONS IN 2020

The general rule for all age groups is the age a player turns during the calendar year is the age group to which they belong. For example, if a player turns 12 at any time during 2020, he or she will be an Under 12.

Most SJRU competitions play in one year age windows. Some (Girls and Spring 7s) play in two year windows.

If for any reason a player in any competition wishes to play in a different age group than the one they naturally belong to, they must comply with the requirements of SJRU Competition Rule 3.14. Players may be required to play in a different age group under SJRU Rule 3.14.4.

The tables in this Appendix show the default age groups a player belongs to before any dispensation is applied.

SIZZLING 7s, GIRLS XV's AND FROSTY 7s

Sizzling 7s and Frosty 7s in 2020 will operate for U12, U14, U16 and Opens (U18) age groups. As these are two year age windows, players who turn an odd age (eg 11) during 2020 will play up one year in the higher age group (eg Under 12s).

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2008	31 December 2009	Under 12
1 January 2006	31 December 2007	Under 14
1 January 2004	31 December 2005	Under 16
1 January 2002	31 December 2003	Opens (Under 18)

FRIDAY XV's, SUNDAY XV's AND SATURDAY XV's

The Friday XV's competition in 2020 will operate for U10, U11 and U12 age groups.

The Sunday XV's competition in 2020 will operate all age groups from U10 to U16 and then Opens (U18s).

The two Saturday XV's competitions in 2020 will operate for age groups to be confirmed, but intended at the time of writing to be U14, U15, U16 and possibly Opens (U18).

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2010	31 December 2010	Under 10
1 January 2009	31 December 2009	Under 11
1 January 2008	31 December 2008	Under 12
1 January 2007	31 December 2007	Under 13
1 January 2006	31 December 2006	Under 14
1 January 2005	31 December 2005	Under 15
1 January 2004	31 December 2004	Under 16
1 January 2002	31 December 2003	Opens (Under 18)



SPRING 7s

Spring 7s in 2020 will operate for U11, U13, U15 and Opens (U18) age groups. As these are two year age windows, players who turn an even age (eg 12) during 2020 will play up one year in the higher age group (eg Under 13s).

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2009	31 December 2010	Under 11
1 January 2007	31 December 2008	Under 13
1 January 2005	31 December 2006	Under 15
1 January 2002	31 December 2004	Opens (Under 18)