



SYDNEY JUNIOR RUGBY UNION

Age Dispensation Policy/Procedure March 2023



Dispensation Policy & Procedure



- ❖ Rugby Au has a number of dispensation policies, covering age dispensation, size for age, mixed gender, senior rugby dispensation, U7s playing U8s, disability and gender identity dispensation
- ❖ Details on all policies are contained on the Rugby Au website as follows:
<https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies/safety-and-welfare/player-dispensation>

- ❖ At the core of all these policies is Safety:

Rugby should be safe, inclusive and fair. Every effort must be made for Rugby participants with broadly compatible physical development in conjunction with ability and/or experience to play with and against each other.

- ❖ Importantly in mid 2022, Rugby Au added to the age dispensation policy the following:

Age Grade dispensation will not be considered for the following:

- *A player who wants to play with friends in a different age grade;*
- *The Club does not have a team, or the State Union or Affiliate does not offer a competition for the eligible age grade(s) of that player.*

Prior to this change, across nearly all member unions, there was widespread applications for age dispensation (**almost entirely dispensation down**), driven by participation goals i.e. Clubs wanting to form teams.

Are any clubs/players blocked from seeking dispensation? NO!



- ❖ Players/parents/clubs can still seek dispensations for players – whether or not the Club has teams in every age group, **however they cannot seek dispensation because they do not have a team in DOB age group of the player concerned.**
- ❖ If this player is deemed safe to play in their DOB age grade (and thus this is their eligible age grade, which includes the one above), and there is no team within their Club for them to play in – then alternative playing arrangements need to be sought for that player.
- ❖ Sourcing the most independent/capable assessing coach you can from within your Club and District, or outside these, is a significant step towards adding rigour to the dispensation process.
- ❖ The SJRU will run two sessions this season (dates and registration forms for these will be distributed in the next two days), for players who are not able to get properly assessed within their own Districts. Our goal for Season 2024 is to expand these sessions in number and scope, with a panel of independent Assessing coaches involved.
- ❖ All assessing coaches are instructed to deliver their assessing reports and feedback directly to the SJRU, or complete them online through the RX portal
- ❖ The SJRU will determine the need for any further playing assessments, this will be advised to the player through their Club.
- ❖ Dispensation outcomes will not be given to the players/parents/Clubs at the time of assessment, they will be completed afterwards by the Competition Managers (in line with policy), and players will be informed through their Clubs

Dispensation Policy & Procedure – Ineligible Players



- Playing ineligible players due to a lack of proper dispensation is treated the same as using any other ineligible player
- So if you are playing over-age players who are not fully dispensated on RX, over or under size players for which SFA assessment has not been completed or dispensation have not been sought, where parental permissions have not been received or any other type of ineligible players – then the default position is:
 - a) **Any Match(es)** played with any ineligible player(s) are forfeited (retrospectively for as long as the breach existed)
 - b) **No players** from any of these matches will be credited with a game for either finals eligibility or Rep eligibility



SYDNEY JUNIOR RUGBY UNION

Coach, Managers & Officials Meeting March 2023



1. Key Documentation



❖ Meeting background

1. Match Day Manual (“MDM”) (a short document, very recommended reading);
2. Competition Rules (70+ pages, not such recommended reading unless you have insomnia);

A copy of the latest Comp rules (a new version will be posted this week) and the MDM should be on hand at all venues hosting games. All Managers should have a copy of the Match Day Manual.

It should be noted that in the event of a rules dispute, the view of the “Home” Manager will prevail, and the dispute is then referred to SJRU for determination

Game Management Guidelines are put together to reflect the latest laws of Rugby, and their interpretation. The registration link for the SJRU GMG Presentation at 7 pm on 20th March is:

https://nsw-rugby.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEqdOCsrzwiH9cmxRI0ihMKISM_mRJOOpP8H

Attendance at a GMG Presentation is compulsory for every Club and District

2. SJRU Support and Coaching App



- ❖ **Communication Protocol with SJRU** – Should you have queries/issues once the Season proper is underway, these should be communicated through your President or Vice President Juniors (or equivalent role in your club) to the SJRU.
- ❖ If your queries are administrative or involve issues with the MatchDay App for example, Clubs can email the Comp Management team or support@sjru.rugby, emails to this address go to the Competition Management team and are also monitored by volunteer club officials.
- ❖ The NSW Positive Rugby Foundation has combined with 6 Degrees Sport to produce an online Coaching App which in its free form will be made available to all registered coaches. The links for the updated version of the App will be sent to all registered coaches on RX

3. Volunteers & Officials must be registered



We need every volunteer to be registered:

- ❖ So they are insured
- ❖ So their accreditations can be verified by Xplorer Reports (*Accreditation Reports can be run by all Clubs*)
- ❖ So they can be assigned their respective roles. Note participants can , if they haven't already registered as Coaches, Team Managers etc
- ❖ By registering, volunteers agree to adhere to RugbyAu and affiliate unions Codes of Conduct, the Member Protection Policy and other conditions of registration.

4. Code of Conduct/MPP & Other policies



- ❖ A detailed review by RugbyAu, developed in line with Sport Integrity Australia's new National Integrity Framework has led to an updated Member Protection Policy (MPP) and also how this works together with our Code of Conduct, Child Protection, Child Safe Framework and Safeguarding Guidelines.
- ❖ Child Protection will now be dealt with entirely under the Rugby AU Child Safe Framework and Safeguarding Guidelines rather than the MPP. The MPP covers conduct that constitutes:
 - Abuse, Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Unlawful discrimination, Victimisation, Vilification
- ❖ All other conduct will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct. All complaints and alleged breaches of the MPP will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct
- ❖ There are 2 short online courses on Code of Conduct and Member Protection & Inclusion
- ❖ <https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies>

5. What officials do you need to have?



- ❖ **Every team must have:** Coach (Smart Rugby Accredited as a minimum), Manager, Assistant Referee (must be Accredited to the level required by the age group), Ground Marshal (Accredited) and Trainer

You must load Officials on Xplorer Match Day App

- ❖ Each role of **Coach, Manager, AR & GM** must be filled to be able to load your Team.
- ❖ You can only fill the position from registered volunteers
- ❖ SJRU will run player and official history reports during the season, so use of duplicate officials will be picked up
- ❖ If you can't load your team the default position will be that the game is forfeit. Teams can be loaded in the days leading up to the game, so there is no excuse to not have a squad loaded. If you are prevented from fine tuning your squad by internet access or technology problems (e.g. removing non-attending players, adding players), then contact SJRU on the Monday, and we will assist with these adjustments

6. Set up of teams and Gala Days (26/3 & 2/4)



Club Admins need to:

- ❖ Set up teams following the SJRU Naming Convention
- ❖ Set up all your Team Squads & add in the Team Officials
- ❖ Make sure that have given all their Managers Team Admin rights for the Team(s) they manage!! If this is not done prior to Gala Day 1, Team Managers will not be able to use the MatchDay App!!

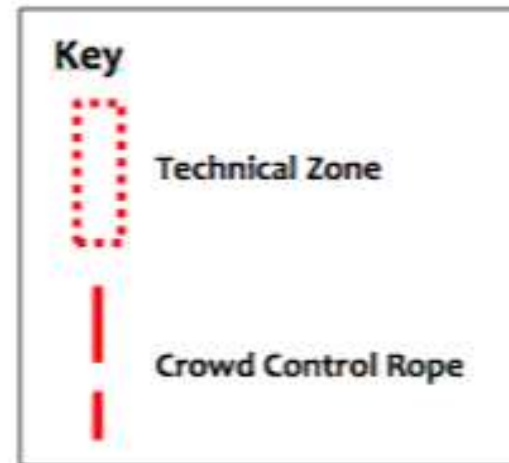
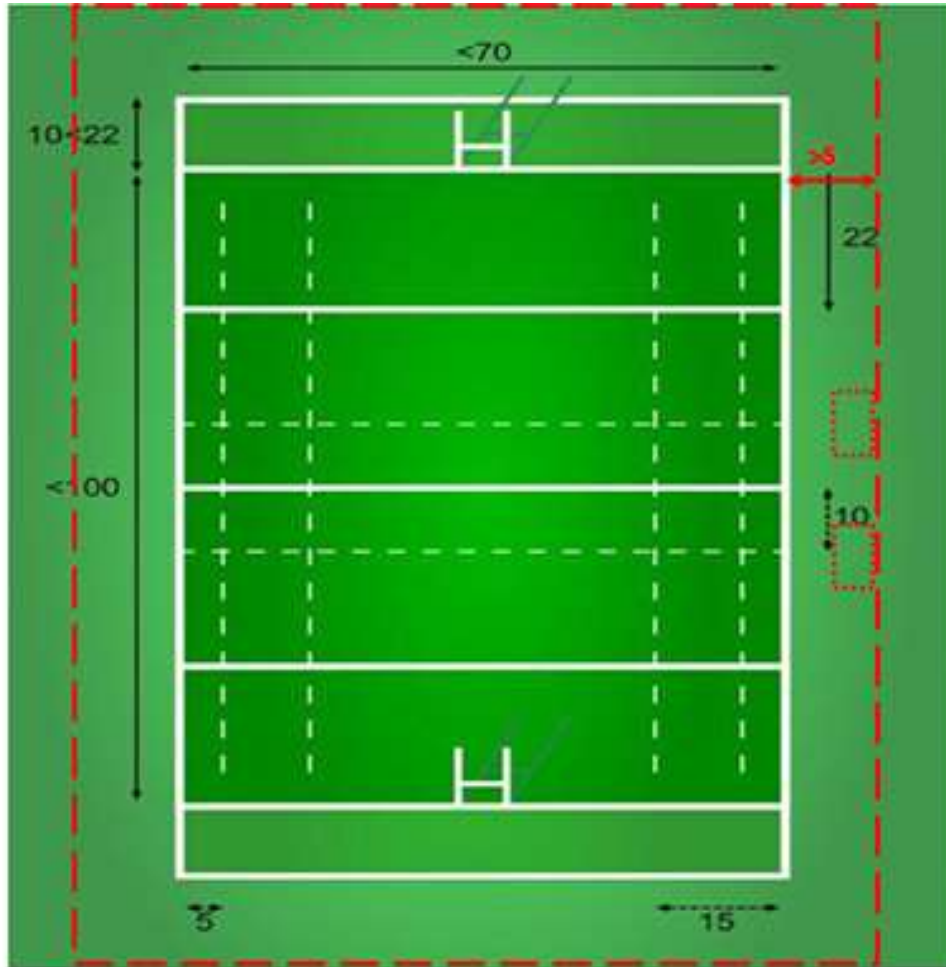
SJRU will :

- ❖ Load teams into Competitions (by age and grade) and complete draws by COB Tuesday prior to the Gala Days
- ❖ Draws will be loaded into Xplorer so Clubs can see their teams fixtures (as will parents if they have downloaded the App, and added their kids team on the App)
- ❖ All teams in the Gala Day rounds will be credited with 4 pts on the ladder for participating, if they provide GM's and AR's to each of their Gala Day games (if no GM and AR, you will receive only 3 points)

Team Admins will:

- ❖ Load their teams and officials in full prior to the Gala Days
- ❖ Use the MatchDay App to record scores, cards (yellow, red & blue – the latter only applicable to U13s and up) and all other required movements, and prior to closing off each game, will confirm scores with the opposition manager, and that all cards have been recorded to the Referees satisfaction
- ❖ There will be leeway granted on accredited ARs and GMs only in the Gala Days on 26/3 and 2/4. Once the home and away rounds commence on the weekend of 28/4-30/4 – if your Match Officials are not accredited, you will not be able to load your teams which means the default position is a forfeit by your team.

7. Ground Set-up is key for all Clubs



- Under 10s will often have to set up grounds as they are scheduled first
- Set-up has to accommodate older age groups later in the day
- Fields need to be roped at least 5 m from side lines, not where the U10/U11 sidelines are
- Set up should include a scoring/control table for the Managers

8. Ground Marshal (Match Official not a Team Official)



- ❖ You must wear a Vest, and **you must not coach or barrack from the sidelines**
- ❖ You should ensure that the ground set-up is correct
- ❖ You should introduce yourself to the referee, the other team's Ground Marshal and their Team Officials
- ❖ You should assist in case of serious injury, incidents, where Team officials need help
- ❖ You should ensure that the referee is left alone or with his/her ref coach – there should be no approaches to the referee or the AR's from team officials, spectators or players. Only the team Captains may speak with the referee
- ❖ Spectator Behaviour – basically everyone should Chill Out, there is zero tolerance for abuse of Referee, Assistant Referees, Players or other Spectators. The **Do's and Don'ts summary from the SJRU** is a good guide to what is appropriate conduct from all those in attendance or involved in a Rugby game.
- ❖ Other matters to be aware of are: Field of Play, Team Zone, Half Time (no parents) & Surveillance
- ❖ We will send a role description to Clubs, however there is a course on the Learning Centre for Ground Marshals. The Course is much more a practical how to guide for managing situations that arise, it is not onerous, and is an easy complete for any prospective Ground Marshal

9. Assistant Referee (Match Official not a Team Official)



- ❖ You must wear a Vest, **and you must not coach or barrack from the sidelines,** and have a flag (*SJRU has AR flags in sufficient quantities for every U10 and up team, please contact SJRU if your club is short of AR flags*)
- ❖ Introduce yourself to the Ref and the other AR. As noted above,
- ❖ If you are not accredited ask the Ref what he wants you to do
- ❖ We encourage volunteers to do the RKR course (which qualifies you to referee U8s-U12s, as well as be an AR) – this is particularly useful if a ref has not been appointed to your game. An RKR qualified person can step into referee.
- ❖ If you are accredited, then you should follow the roles and processes from your course
- ❖ We also have a role description for ARs as well which will be shared with Clubs

10. Coaches



- ❖ Smart Rugby is the minimum (from U13s and up, Level 1 is recommended)
- ❖ Introduce yourself to the other teams officials
- ❖ Stay inside the Technical Zone, except for half time
- ❖ Follow all Code of Conduct behaviour requirements
- ❖ **Players, spectators, assistant coaches, trainers all take their lead from the coaching box, if you are criticising the ref or AR's, and the opposition, everyone thinks it is OK to do so. You must set a good example. Junior players cannot learn to be accountable for what happens on the field, if their coach is blaming a referee for example for the result of a game.**
- ❖ Encourage but do not specifically coach from the box
- ❖ Do not approach the referee at half time or full time or at all! – if you have an issue with refereeing, discuss it with your President, and if necessary lodge a Referee feedback form, do the same thing if you think the referee was good as well
- ❖ This one goes for everyone – do not criticise or abuse the Match Officials in any way!

11. Team Managers



- ❖ Introduce yourself to the other Team Manager
- ❖ Make sure your Team is loaded properly on the Match Day App
- ❖ Share your device with the other Manager, so you can both check respective player numbers, and details
- ❖ Make sure you record scores, reportable incidents such as Blue Cards, Yellow Cards, Red Cards but subs do not need to be recorded
- ❖ Make sure you agree the scores with the opposition Manager before finalising the game on the Match Day App, and ensure you have the Cards recorded
- ❖ If there is a disagreement over rules, eligibility of players, etc – the Home Managers view is to be accepted, play the game out and then document the issue(s) to the SJRU after the game, then we will adjudicate as necessary. **THE REFEREE DOES NOT INTERPRET THE COMP RULES – DO NOT BOTHER HIM OR HER WITH QUERIES OR REQUESTS TO ADJUDICATE**
- ❖ Team Managers should also monitor times for temporary suspensions, and agree when players can return to the field. They can seek assistance from the Ground Marshals in doing this

12. Trainers



- ❖ Introduce yourself to the other team officials
- ❖ Wear a trainers vest
- ❖ You are the first responder when a player is injured followed by first aid as needed. Parents or the Team Coach do not enter the field if there is an injury, unless they are invited to do so by the referee
- ❖ The ref determines whether play needs to stop at an injury (**do not call out the ref to stop play, the referee will determine if play needs to be stopped**)
- ❖ Do not speak to referee or question any of their decisions
- ❖ Water can be run when a try is scored or at an extended break in play for an injury, not at a scrum or lineout for example
- ❖ Trainers must stay in the technical coaching box unless fulfilling their duties
- ❖ If listed as the Coach for a team – you cannot be trainer as well

13. Referees & Assistant referee accreditation



Referee Ready Program 2023 (Face to Face or Online) (Season Ready if you are a returning ref)

- ☐ Introductory program for those wanting to become a referee of contact Rugby.
- ☐ You must complete Smart Rugby as well as Ref Ready before you referee. Enrol for the online or face-to-face Smart Rugby course through the [quick link menu in the Learning Centre](#).
- ☐ After completing Ref Ready, you will be enrolled into a format specific program depending on what you want to referee, including Refereeing Kids Rugby - for refereeing U8-12 Pathway Rugby.

Refereeing Kids Rugby U8-U12 Program 2023

- ☐ Tests your understanding of Kids Pathway law in preparation for refereeing U8-12 matches. Referee Ready is assumed knowledge.
- ☐ Completion of the Refereeing Kids Rugby U8-12 Program, Referee Ready and SmartRugby grants you the Refereeing Kids Rugby U8-12 Accreditation.

Assistant Referee Kids Rugby U8-U12

- ☐ Condensed version of the Level 1 Assistant Referee course and contains only the information required to effectively act as an Assistant Referee for Pathways (U8-12) games in Australia (45 minutes online)

Assistant Referee Level 1 Program U13 and up

- ☐ Designed to provide the foundation knowledge required to assistant referee any level of junior or senior rugby.
- ☐ **Accreditation Pathway:** Requires completion of: Assistant Refereeing Level 1 Online Learning Course, Level 1 Assistant Referee Law Exam (online), Code of Conduct (online course) & Member Protection (online course)

Smart Rugby is needed as the pre-cursor for pretty much everything!

14. Non Transferables and Transferables



- ❑ All Clubs with 2 or more teams in an Age Group must identify their Non-Transferable (NT) players.
- ❑ A Non-Transferable player cannot play in a lower Graded Team in their nominated Age Group. The Non-Transferable Player may play in a higher Graded Team in their Age Group or in a Team up an Age Group whose Grade is no more than one Grade below their nominated Grade in their Age Group.
- ❑ A Non-Transferable Representative Player is permitted to play up in the Age Group above in the same or higher graded team than the one in which he is registered. Each Representative Player is only allowed to play up an Age Group twice during Regular Season Matches and Finals Series Matches and if they play up an Age Group in a third match then they will be deemed to have moved up an Age Group permanently and is no longer eligible to play in the lower Age Group.
- ❑ A Transferable Player is one who is permitted to play in a lower Graded Team in their nominated Age Group or in a Team up an Age Group whose Grade is no more than one Grade below their nominated Grade in their Age Group.
- ❑ Each Under 10 and Under 11 Team has eight (8) Non-Transferable Players.
- ❑ Each Under 12 to Opens Team has twelve (12) Non-Transferable Players.

15. Replacements and Subs



- Replacements and / or Substitutions can be made when the ball is dead. That is at a scrum, lineout or after a try has been scored.
- Replacements and / or substitutions can NOT be made when a penalty kick or free kick has been awarded.
- Substitutions are unlimited and can be made when the ball is dead.
- We have adopted the World Rugby recommendations that everyone has half a game, including in the finals
- Temporary replacements for blood bin are permitted.
- Please refer to the Rugby Australia Medical Guidelines in Appendix C for the treatment of players suffering from concussion or other serious injury.

16. Cards of different colours



Yellow Cards (temporary suspensions)

- ❑ Players issued with yellow cards (temporary suspension) must leave the field immediately for 5 minutes or 10 minutes depending on the age group.
- ❑ U10-U12 it is 5 mins of elapsed time (and the carded player can be replaced), U13-U14 it is 5 mins of game time, and U15 and up it is 10 mins of game time (no replacements)

Red Cards (send-off)

- ❑ Players issued with red cards must leave the field immediately and take no further part in the game.
- ❑ U10-U12 the sent-off player may be replaced, not in U13s and up. An important message for Coaches/Managers/Team Officials/Parents etc – **CARDS DO NOT GET LITIGATED OR ARGUED WITH THE REFEREE AT THE GAME, THE JUDICIAL PROCESS WILL BE FOLLOWED. IF ANYONE ARGUES WITH THE REF ABOUT THE CARD, THEY WILL BE JOINING THE PLAYER AT THE JUDICIARY ON THEIR OWN CHARGE(S)**

Blue Cards (*relevant only to U13s and up*)

- ❑ (<https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies/safety-and-welfare/concussion-management>) In matches of U13 and older, when a player leaves the field due to signs and symptoms of concussion or suspected concussion, the referee will show the player a Blue Card. This card is a visual cue for team support staff, it must be recorded by team officials, and triggers an off-field medical process to begin. The player will be referred for medical assessment in accordance with Rugby Au's Concussion Management Protocols
- ❑ Again Coach/Managers/Parents etc don't get to debate whether or not a concussion occurred. The blue card must be noted on the Match Day App, and the player is automatically stood down.

17. Other stuff to discuss



- Uncontested scrums #Gala day exception
- Eligibility for finals
- Mercy rule
- Numbers of players:

Age Group	Minimum No. of Players on the Field	Maximum No. of Players on the Field	Maximum No. of Players that can Sign-on	Number of Non-Transferable Players (3.6)
Under 10 and Under 11	9 Players	12 Players	18 Players	8 Players
Under 12 to Opens	11 Players	15 Players	23 Players	12 Players

For the Under 10, Under 11 and Under 12 Age Groups the opposition **MUST** share players so that the Match can proceed with each Team having an equal number of players on each Team.

For the Under 13 to Opens Age Groups the Team which is short of players may ask the opposition to share players and also match numbers. Opposition teams are not compelled to share players, however they must match numbers if requested too do so – unless it is finals. Failure to match numbers will lead to a forfeit.

- Length of matches:
- Scrum binding & Lineout lifting

Under 10 / Under 11	12 a side	Size 4 ball	20 minute halves
Under 12	15 a side	Size 4 ball	25 minute halves
Under 13 / Under 14	15 a side	Size 5 ball	25 minute halves
Under 15 / Under 16	15 a side	Size 5 ball	30 minute halves
Under 17 / Opens	15 a side	Size 5 ball	35 minute halves

18. Working with Children Numbers



- ❖ All Club volunteers who have or could potentially have one on one interface with Junior players **must get a volunteer Working With Children number**. This includes Coaches, Managers, Age Coordinators and Committee Members. It does not include Match Officials (Referees), and also other Match Officials like Assistant Referees or Ground Marshals.
- ❖ The number should be included in your registration profile - it is free and can be sourced online, and then issued with a visit to Service NSW
- ❖ Your clubs have a further legal requirement to audit the WWC numbers of their volunteers, and in addition will receive notification from the Office of Guardian NSW if any WWC number is flagged by police or other state based regulators

19. Courses & Content



A. Administration

- ☐ Rugby Xplorer Club Admin Program (Learning Centre course under Admin)
- ☐ Rugby Xplorer Team Manager Program (Learning Centre course under Admin)
- ☐ <https://help.australia.rugby/s/> - RugbyAu RX help desk
- ☐ <https://australia.rugby/participate/rugby-administration/club-administration/education-and-training>
- ☐ <https://australia.rugby/participate/rugby-administration/club-administration/resource-library>

B. Coaches

- ☐ <https://australia.rugby/participate/coach/coaching-resources>
- ☐ Rugby Learning Centre and Digital Coaching hub via login
- ☐ <https://australia.rugby/participate/get-into-rugby/club-resources> - videos and webinars
- ☐ <https://australia.rugby/participate/coach/coaching-resources/coaching-manuals> - coaching manuals (kids and youth rugby)
- ☐ Positive Rugby Foundation online coaching App will also be made available to all registered coaches