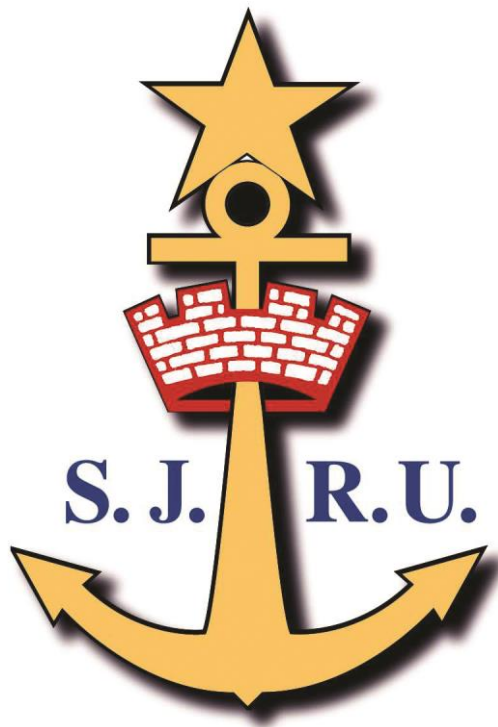


SYDNEY JUNIOR RUGBY UNION (SJRU)

2024 Operating Plan



Version 1.0

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Purpose

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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 (SJRU) in 2024. Once finalised this is the plan that SJRU will operate to in 2024. 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 2023 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 2024.

In particular, the Board and Administrators have considered several 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
- 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, for Season 2024 Competitions and Events

Date	Event	Competition(s)
21 Dec 23	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs, Girls 10s
21 Dec 23	Team 7s registration open for Club 7s Champs	Club 7s Champs
23 Jan 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues	Club 7s Champs
30 Jan 24	Club Contacts online form due	All
12 Feb 24	Team and host venue nominations due, and Clubs to set up Teams on Xplorer	Club 7s Champs
13 Feb 24	Applications to Host Gala Days 1 and 2 due	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
3 Feb 24	Club 7s Champs	Club 7s Champs
27 Feb 24	Team nominations, Requests and Ground Availability Online Forms due	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
01 Mar 24	Team Nominations due + EOI for Gala Host Venues	Minis
7 Mar 24	Confirmation of venues for Round Gala Day 1	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
13 Mar 24	Deadline for Clubs to set up Teams in Xplorer (based on SJRU naming conventions)	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
18 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 Draw published in Xplorer	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
21 Mar 24	Confirmation of venues for Gala Day 2	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
22 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)	Friday XVs
24 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)	Sunday XVs
3 Apr 24	Team nominations & Ground Availability Online Forms due	Girls 10s
2 Apr 24	Gala Day 2 Draw published via Xplorer	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs



Date	Event	Competition(s)
5 Apr 24	Round 1	Friday XVs
7 Apr 24	Gala Day 2 (central venues hosting specific age grades)	Sunday XVs
7 Apr 24	Girls Gala Grading	Girls 10s
9 Apr 24	Grading finalised	Sunday XVs
23 Apr 24	Venues Confirmed and Team Nominations Due	Minis Gala Day
23 Apr 24	Round 1-3 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XVs
23 Apr 24	Season Draw published in Xplorer	Friday XVs, Girls 10s
29 Apr 24	Round 1	Sunday XVs , Girls 10s
10 May 24	Round 4-8 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XVs
15 May 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Frosty 7s
19 Jun 24	Round 9-10 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XVs
22 Jun 24	Inter-District Minis Gala Day	Minis Gala Day
30 Jun 24	Finals round	Girls 10s
30 Jun 24	SJRU Spare Round (Wet Weather)	Sunday XVs
2 Jul 24	Team nominations due.	Frosty 7s
2 Jul 24	EOI for hosting Grand Finals	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
13-14 Jul 24	SJRU U12 Development Gala (Boys & Girls)	District XVs
24 Jul 24	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
28 Jul 24	Grand Final venues announced	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
29 Jul 24	Round 11-12 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XVs
1 Aug 24	Round 1	Frosty 7s
23 Aug 24	Elimination Finals	Friday XVs
25 Aug 24	Elimination Finals	Sunday XVs
21 Aug 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Spring 7s
30 Aug 24	Grand Finals	Friday XVs
1 Sep 24	Grand Finals	Sunday XVs
15 Sep 24	Finals	Frosty 7s
18 Sep 24	Team and host venue nominations due.	Spring 7s
20 Oct 24	Round 1 (Girls)	Spring 7s
27 Oct 24	Round 1 (Boys)	Spring 7s
17 Nov 24	Final Round (Girls)	Spring 7s
24 Nov 24	Final Round (Boys)	Spring 7s
29 Nov-1 Dec 24	Pasifika Youth Cup	Pasifika Youth Cup



2. COMPETITIONS

This section of the Operating Plan sets out the competitions that SJRU intends to run in 2024 and provides specifics about their operation.

2.1. SJRU CLUB 7s CHAMPS – GIRLS AND BOYS

The Pre-season window for 7s has seen Sizzling 7s own this space since 2021. Following surveys in 2022 and 2023 the feedback from clubs was that there was an appetite for a short 7s Gala Champs in early March and then to allow the clubs some 'clean air' for Pre-season preparations for the Boys XV's and Girls 10s which start at the end of March.

The plan for 2024 is to run a Gala SJRU Club 7s Championship on the first Sunday of March (3rd).

Games will be played in a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on either or both Saturday and Sunday, playing multiple games with Finals. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams.

For both competitions we will only accept Club teams or Club JVs. Clubs without sufficient 7s players are encouraged to form Joint Venture teams with other clubs in their district.

Subject to the number of teams entered making it viable, in 2024 we intend that these 7s Championships will operate across the below age groups if nominations allow.

Girls	Boys
Under 11	Under 10
Under 12	Under 11
Under 13/14	Under 12
Under 15	Under 13
Under 16	Under 14
Open (U17 & U18)	Under 15
	Under 16
	Open (U17 & U18)

All proposed age brackets are dependent on registration numbers. If we decide to modify age brackets based on team numbers, we will notify Clubs accordingly. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

The Under 10, Under 11 and Under 12 age groups will play half-field games. Under 13s and older will play full field if enough fields are available. Where we believe there is sufficient depth in age groups, we will also grade teams as appropriate.

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 SJRU Club 7s Championships (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
21 Dec 23	Club 7s Team registration open
23 Jan 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues
12 Feb 24	Team and host venue nominations due, and Clubs to set up Teams on Xplorer
2 Mar 24	Club 7s Champs



2 Mar 24	Club 7s Champs
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2.2. FRIDAY XVs

Friday XVs is a fifteen-aside (modified as required for Pathways) competition run on Friday nights and is open to all clubs to enter teams in U10, U11 and U12 competitions. This competition has traditionally not been graded but may be, subject to having sufficient team numbers. In 2023 the team numbers did not allow for grading of these competitions, and as such many of the games were one-sided with large differentials in scores. We did create a 4 team Division 2 in the Under 10s late in the season to alleviate such an issue.

To assist with any possible Grading opportunities all Friday Only teams will participate in a Grading Gala on Friday 22nd March - pending field availability.

Historically it has been mainly teams from the Randwick District, who have entered teams in this competition (along with a small number of other teams from elsewhere in the Southern Zone). Matches have generally been played at venues connected with the Randwick based clubs.

Subject to the number of teams entered in the competition for 2024, the SJRU can look at grading these age groups with sufficient depth to support the process. In addition, the SJRU will be working on initiatives with NSW Rugby and the relevant Referee Association which covers the Southern Zone, to expand the number of accredited referees and referee coaches, who will officiate in the Friday XVs competition.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. The Friday XVs competition is mixed, girls can play (and are encouraged to do so) in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility requirements.

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 XVs mirror those of the Sunday XVs competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
21 Dec 23	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
27 Feb 24	Team nominations, Requests and Ground Availability Online Forms due
13 Mar 24	Deadline for Clubs to set up Teams in Xplorer (based on SJRU naming conventions)
14 Mar 24	Confirmation of venues for Gala Day 1
18 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 Draw published in Xplorer
22 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)
5 Apr 24	Round 1
23 Apr 24	Season Draw published in Xplorer
2 Jul 24	EOI for hosting Grand Finals
24 Jul 24	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due
28 Jul 24	Grand Final venues announced
23 Aug 24	Elimination Finals
30 Aug 24	Grand Finals

2.3. FRIDAY-SUNDAY XVs

Sunday XVs is a fifteen-aside (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 we will again run an Opens Competition in 2024.

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

In 2022 SJRU modified the format of the Sunday XVs competition. Rounds 1 and 2 were run as gala days with a central venue (or venues) used to host each individual age group. Matches in these Rounds were played as shortened matches with no half time, with teams playing four matches across the gala day rounds. We used 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

We took on board from the learnings these galas in 2021-23 (including the level of planning and resourcing required), the feedback we received overall was very positive. In addition to the ability to grade teams and assess players, many participants thought it was a great way to kick off the season and it was also useful to see many other teams from the same age group gathered.

SJRU will again run the first two rounds as gala rounds again in 2024.

Once the gala days are complete and SJRU has completed its assessments, teams will be graded into competitions for the remainder of the season. SJRU plans to run graded competitions across all age groups, without limiting competitions to zones. There will be no re-grading unless SJRU is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances.

The gala day rounds to be staged at central venues will be set up as separate competition rounds in Xplorer.

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 the home and away competition rounds without some or all the eight Competition Point available.

After completion of the gala day rounds, the Sunday XVs competition is run in a Home and Away format with home clubs responsible for venue management. Note that we have changed the naming of the Sunday Competition Rounds in 2024 so that there are two Gala Days, followed by 12 Home and Away Rounds and then Finals.

SJRU will publish the home and away draws for Rounds 1 to 3 initially after the gala rounds are completed, then Rounds 4 to 8, and then the remaining rounds 9-12.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, record team lists and match scores, and maintain competition tables.

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

Date	Event
21 Dec 23	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
13 Feb 24	Applications to Host Gala Days 1 and 2 due
27 Feb 24	Team nominations, Requests and Ground Availability Online Forms due
7 Mar 24	Confirmation of venues for Round Gala Day 1
13 Mar 24	Deadline for Clubs to set up Teams in Xplorer (based on SJRU naming conventions)
18 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 Draw published in Xplorer
21 Mar 24	Confirmation of venues for Gala Day 2
24 Mar 24	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)
2 Apr 24	Gala Day 2 Draw published via Xplorer

Date	Event
7 Apr 24	Gala Day 2 (central venues hosting specific age grades)
9 Apr 24	Grading finalised
23 Apr 24	Round 1-3 Draw published via Xplorer
29 Apr 24	Round 1
10 May 24	Round 4-8 Draw published via Xplorer
19 Jun 24	Round 9-10 Draw published via Xplorer
30 Jun 24	SJR.U Spare Round (Wet Weather)
2 Jul 24	EOI for hosting Grand Finals
24 Jul 24	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due
28 Jul 24	Grand Final venues announced
25 Aug 24	Elimination Finals
1 Sep 24	Grand Finals

2.4. GIRLS 10s

SJR.U had somewhat results running our Girls XV's competition in 2022 and 2023, but in hindsight the player resources are not quite there for fields to regularly field a XV's team. Therefore, in consultation with the clubs SJR.U will run the Girls as a 10 players per side competition in 2024.

For 2024 we will continue to run these games on a Sunday in amongst the boys' games to foster a better 'club' feel for all involved.

For those players intending on playing in the State Championships, we believe this gives them better preparation and a suitable introduction to XV's rugby. Note the NSWJR.U State Champs will introduce a 'player eligibility criteria' (ie games played in SJR.U 10s) to be able to participate in the State Champs.

The Competition will be open to all clubs to enter teams or form JVs as necessary. It will be an 8 Round plus Finals competition run during April to July.

The Girls 10s competition will run-in two-year windows for even ages, ie Opens, U16s, U14s and U12s. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. Over time our aim is to grow the Girls 10s competition so that we have enough teams to play in single year age groups.

There will be a grading Gala on 7th Apr and then Round 1 will commence on Sunday Apr 28 and finish on Sunday June 30.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, record the team lists, scores of matches and (as applicable) maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Girls 10s Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
21 Dec 23	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
3 Apr 24	Team nominations & Ground Availability Online Forms due
7 Apr 24	Girls Gala Grading
23 Apr 24	Season Draw published in Xplorer
29 Apr 24	Round 1



Date	Event
30 Jun 24	Finals round

2.5. FROSTY 7s

Frosty 7s is a Tackle 7s Competition for girls. In 2024 it will run as a 6 Rounds + Final (7 week) competition across Term 3.

Games will be played in the same way as in previous years – ie a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on Sundays, playing multiple games per round. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams. We will only accept Club teams (not District teams) into Frosty 7s in 2024.

In 2024 all girls' competitions including Frosty 7s will operate in all age brackets if possible.

Round 1 will commence on Sunday Aug 4 running to Finals on Sunday Sep 15.

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

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

Date	Event
15 May 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
2 Jul 24	Team nominations due.
1 Aug 24	Round 1
15 Sep 24	Finals

2.6. SPRING 7s

Spring 7s is a Tackle 7s competition. SJRU first ran a Boys Spring 7s competition in 2019 but in 2020 offered both Boys and Girls Spring 7s, which we will do again in 2024. Spring 7s runs in Term 4 and is a series of standalone Boys and Girls 7s Gala events. All clubs are encouraged to enter teams. Starting on Oct 20 (Girls) and Oct 22 (Boys) these events will run each fortnight until Nov 24.

Spring 7s will operate in all age brackets. 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):

Date	Event
21 Aug 24	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
18 Sep 24	Team and host venue nominations due.
20 Oct 24	Round 1 (Girls)
27 Oct 24	Round 1 (Boys)
17 Nov 24	Final Round (Girls)
24 Nov 24	Final Round (Boys)



2.7. SCHOOLS COMPETITIONS

SJRU is always investigating options for running zone-based school competitions in 2024. These competitions will be targeted at schools not currently playing in other school competitions (eg CAS/GPS/ISA) or the Chloe Dalton Girls 7s and will be designed to:

- Give boys and girls the opportunity to play rugby
- Provide competitions with friendly rivalry between local schools
- Potentially provide play-offs between the top teams from different zones
- Allow clubs to be involved, eg with coaching support, to help create a path for more players to join club teams in other SJRU competitions.

2.8. OTHER COMPETITIONS

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

- The seven district-based Minis competitions who play on Saturday mornings across Sydney
- The SJRU Inter-District Minis Gala's (last Sunday of each month)
- The Minis gala days run by various clubs (Dufficy Cup, Turinui Cup, Harbord Harlequin Cup, King of the Hills, Chatswood Challenge Cup, Wahrronga Tiger Cup)

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



3. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

3.1. RESOURCING

In 2023 SJRU had three people working as competition administrators. All were employed by NSWRU but the funding for their roles varied. Plus, a couple of part time staff that were employed as required.

- Ben Gregory (General Manager), Full time, funded by NSWRU from community rugby levies
- John Glen (Comp Manager), full time, funded by NSWRU from community rugby levies
- Bippy Power (7s & Girls Comps), part-time, funded by SJRU
- Shane Williams (contractor), part-time, funded by SJRU
- Andrew Hutton, (contractor for draw facilitation), part-time, funded by SJRU

3.2. DRAWS

SJRU accepts that the timeliness of draws is important for clubs, volunteers, parents, and players to be able to plan with some confidence. Noting the above resources and an expectation that clubs will be reasonable with regrading and other scheduling requests, we are confident that we have the capability to produce draws in a timely manner.

In recent years SJRU has enhanced its ability to produce draws, including having our competition managers trained on draw management software and developing an improved ability to load draws into Xplorer. The single biggest challenge we face in producing draws is the constant requests for team changes from clubs.

3.3. GRADING AND REGRADING

The only competition in which grading has been a significant issue is the Sunday XVs competition. We remain committed (subject to team numbers) to a type of grading in the Friday XVs and Girls 7s competitions to make matches more competitive, but we note that in the Sunday XVs 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 (but unrealistic) 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 now days seem to want to have teams in A Division! Clearly the mathematics of this do not work – in every Division, from A to G, one team must come last just as one team has to come first, and that is a part of playing in a competitive sport.

In 2021 - 2023, the two gala rounds were very helpful for getting to grade as reliable as possible. In addition, SJRU also decided in some older age groups, where there were only a small number of teams willing or able to play A grade, to have those teams play up in a higher age group. With some modification during the season this generally worked well for all involved.

In 2024 we will adopt the same basic approach to grading as occurred in 2021 - 2023, with the caveat that all grading assessments depend on the circumstances and merits of the teams involved.

3.4. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

SJRU acknowledges that on many occasions' clubs raised issues with the Competition Manager, or issues arose during 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 and calls early in the week about various issues.

SJRU has improved our response time to such matters in 2023 and will continue to use the Rugby AU Code of Conduct framework to deal with such matters into 2024.

3.5. REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Rugby Xplorer will continue to be the registration and competition management system used in 2023. For all competition in 2024:

- 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 2024, for teams to be submitted to play a match, Xplorer to require that every team in every competition has nominated a Coach, Manager, Assistant Referee and a Ground Marshall for every match. Without their inclusion, team lists will not be able to be submitted and matches will not be able to start. The default position in this circumstance will be a forfeit to the team who has their officials and team lists properly loaded on the Match Day App.

Further, the SJRU is working with Rugby AU to ensure that Xplorer will have the functionality to check the accreditation of the team officials (e.g. ensuring that Coaches have minimum Smart Rugby accreditation, Assistant Referees are suitably qualified for the age group they are officiating).

3.6. JOINT VENTURES

Following extensive consultation and engagement with clubs over the last few years, SJRU has made its position very clear on the formation of teams:

1. Clubs are the foundation of junior rugby, and we will always support them in recruiting new players and retaining existing players, subject to the Import Rule. First and foremost, we want clubs to be able to form their own teams, including where players of mixed ability are playing together.
2. 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 has amended 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.
3. To encourage confidence about team formation, SJRU will commit to responding to all joint venture applications within 7 days of receiving a Joint Venture proposal.
4. 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).
5. 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.
6. SJRU will continue to recognise the formal approval that was provided by Clubs and Districts at prior AGMs for “District Clubs” such as Randwick Warriors, Easts Junior Beasties and Manly Savers.
7. SJRU will continue to approve certain former joint venture teams that were “grandfathered” at the end of 2023. This is limited to JV teams who existed as U13 or older teams in 2019.
8. The Import Rule will be always applied as outlined in the Competition Rules.
9. 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.



3.7. 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.

SJRU's position for 2024 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 7s competitions, ie players will be able to play outside of their regular XVs club in the interest of making teams. However, SJRU will not accept playing in a 7s teams is a basis for transferring clubs the following year for XVs rugby.



4. GIRLS

4.1. OVERVIEW

For an overview of the Girls' competitions SJRU intends to run in 2024 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 three different 7s formats and one 10s competition in 2024, with a paid administrator managing these competitions
- 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, subject to registrations, all Girls' competitions in 2024 will be played in the following age groups:

- 7s competitions will be played in all single-year age groups, but if forced to consolidate then will align with 7s representative pathways (U17s, U15s, U13s, etc).
- 10s competitions will be played in even age groups to align with XVs representative pathways (Opens, U16s, U14s, U12s).

SJRU align our Girls Age Groups with Rugby AU pathways. This is why 7s Rugby is focused on odd year age groups and XVs Rugby is focused on even year age groups.

- Rugby AU hold Under 17 Rugby7s nationals. At Under 18, representative/elite standard girls can play in the AON University 7s comp.
- Within XVs, Rugby AU is looking to develop a Super W U18s, although this landscape is constantly evolving.

Until such time as Rugby AU standardise the pathway age groups across the formats, SJRU (and NSW Rugby) will align with those pathways.

Our long-term aim for all girls' competitions is to grow them so we play all age groups in single year windows.

4.2. SCHOOLS

SJRU notes that there are now Girls School rugby competitions formed (Chloe Dalton). While this is generally a good thing, in previous years there were instances where the girls school competition clashed with SJRU's 7s competitions.

In 2024, SJRU will continue to play our games on Sundays and work with the school administrators to find ways that the school system and SJRU can engage more closely with each other.

4.3. PATHWAYS

SJRU supports girls playing representative rugby for District Representative Teams and higher teams. In 2024, SJRU will support for girls:

- Districts entering girls Opens, U16 and U14 teams at the NSWJRU XVs State Championships in June
- Sydney XVs teams in U18, U16 and U14 to play at NSWJRU Regionals in July, City v Country in August and against Brisbane
- Districts entering girls U17, U15 and U13 teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October, with further NSW 7s teams selected from there.
- SJRU U12 Development Gala in July. Played as 12 per side a 'Rep' entry level Gala for the Girls.
- SJRU/NSWRU Girls Only Rugby Camps – run during April School holidays there will be a series of 3 x 2 day camps to further develop the girls game. This will be particularly important development for the Girls U14 Rep teams where 'contested scrums' will be introduced in 2024 at the State Champs.



5. SEVENS

5.1. OVERVIEW

In addition to the three Girls 7s formats noted above (Club 7s Champs, Frosty 7s and Spring 7s) in 2024 SJRU will offer two Boys 7s competitions/galas – Club 7s Champs and Spring 7s.

5.2. PATHWAYS

SJRU supports representative rugby for District 7s Representative Teams. In 2023, SJRU will support Districts entering Boys and Girls 7s Representative Teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October.



6. REPRESENTATIVE RUGBY

6.1. OVERVIEW

SJR.U'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.

SJR.U 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 will continue to work with NSWJRU to provide guidance to Districts on the appropriate balance of club and representative rugby.

SJR.U also successfully added an U12 Development Gala to the mix in 2022, which will be replicated in July for both Boys and Girls..

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 (Boys - U14 Red & Blue, U15 Red, Blue and Barbarians, U16 Red & Blue. Girls – U14 Red & Blue, U16 Red & Blue, U18 Sydney) to play at the NSWJRU Regionals in July
- Sydney XVs teams in U14s to Opens to play at City v Country in August

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 were seven different Mini's competitions run in the Sydney area in 2023:

- 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

In 2024 SJRU will oversee the running and governance of these competitions in association with the Districts.

7.2. INTER-DISTRICT MINIS GALA DAY & CROSS DISTRICT GALA FORMAT

In 2024 SJRU will again run the Inter-District Minis Gala on Jun 22.

To add to the 'gameday' product and make our Minis competitions more varied and meaningful, SJRU will employ a dedicated Minis Competition Manager in 2024. This manager will organize the draws for all the Minis Districts and as part of this process will arrange for certain weekends to have a cross-over round between Districts to create a carnival atmosphere and add variety of teams. Teams will not be given any onerous travel requirements, but the draw will be optimized to give them the best gameday experience.

SJRU are also in discussions with Rugby AU to pilot a number of alternate minis pathway products to further enhance the gameday experience and aide clubs with recruitment.

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 SJRU. 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)
- Turinui Cup (U9 playing U10 rules, competitive, run by Clovelly)
- Chatswood Challenge Cup (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Chatswood)
- Tiger Cup (U6 and U7, non-competitive, run by Wahroonga)

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 NSW RU 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 2024:

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.

SJR.U continues to work 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
- Technology solutions
- 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 the SJRU has modified the Competition Rules for joint ventures so that District Presidents must be involved.

SJR.U will also undertake a review of District Constitutions (in accordance with the SJRU Constitution) in Season 2024 to support Districts having proper governance and procedures in place.



APPENDIX ONE – DRAFT NSWJRU 2024 CALENDAR

The 2024 NSWJRU calendar v4.3 on the next page is current at 10 November 2024. Further updates may be implemented.

Please check the NSWJRU website (www.nswjuniors.com.au) for updates. *Note the calendar option is unavailable on mobile App versions of the website.

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APPENDIX TWO – AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPETITIONS IN 2023

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 2023, he or she will be an Under 12.

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

ALL 7S COMPETITIONS

All 7s competitions will operate in the age brackets set out in Section 2.1 of this Plan. Where these are two-year age windows, players who turn an even age (eg 10) during 2023 will play up one year in the higher age group (eg Under 11s).

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 2012	31 December 2013	Under 11 (incl U10)
1 January 2011	31 December 2011	Under 12
1 January 2010	31 December 2010	Under 13
1 January 2008	31 December 2009	Under 15 (incl U14)
1 January 2006	31 December 2007	Under 17 (incl U16)
1 January 2005	31 December 2005	Under 18

FRIDAY XV'S AND SUNDAY XV'S

The Friday XV's competition in 2023 will operate for U10, U11 and U12 age groups.

The Sunday XV's competition in 2023 will operate all age groups from U10 to U16 and then Opens (U18s).

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 2013	31 December 2013	Under 10
1 January 2012	31 December 2012	Under 11
1 January 2011	31 December 2011	Under 12
1 January 2010	31 December 2010	Under 13
1 January 2009	31 December 2009	Under 14
1 January 2008	31 December 2008	Under 15
1 January 2007	31 December 2007	Under 16
1 January 2005	31 December 2006	Opens (Under 18)



GIRLS XVs

The Girls XVs competition in 2022 will operate for U12, U14, U16 and Open age groups, unless there is sufficient growth in numbers to offer competitions in single year age groups.

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 2011	31 December 2012	Under 12
1 January 2009	31 December 2010	Under 14
1 January 2007	31 December 2008	Under 16
1 January 2005	31 December 2006	Opens (Under 18)

MINIS

Although Minis competitions are run by Districts, the following table provides guidance on appropriate age brackets for Minis:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2017	31 December 2018	Under 6
1 January 2016	31 December 2017	Under 7
1 January 2015	31 December 2016	Under 8
1 January 2014	31 December 2015	Under 9