



# Are You Ready to Play Rugby Policy Summary 2013- 14



## INTRODUCTION

Any sport involving physical contact has inherent dangers and Scottish Rugby is committed to reducing the risks of serious injury through the implementation of its **Are You Ready to Play Rugby?** policies. By making yourself aware of rugby's safety policies you can play your part in making sure that our sport remains safe, fun and enjoyable for all.

*Leadership · Enjoyment · Achievement · Engagement · Respect*



## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COACHES, TEACHERS AND REFEREES

To ensure that best safe practice is being followed, as a minimum standard we require that all active coaches, teachers and referees within schools and clubs complete the online IRB RugbyReady self-check assessment on [www.IRB.RugbyReady.com](http://www.IRB.RugbyReady.com) and attend the free annual Rugby Ready Practical course.

Details of dates and venues in your local area can be found at [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready). The Rugby Ready Practical course is updated every season to reflect current safety issues and trends relevant to rugby in Scotland. Over 4000 coaches, teachers and referees attended the course in 2012-13.

## AGE GRADE LAW VARIATIONS

Age grade law variations assist coaches and referees in developing players through a safe, enjoyable and progressive environment.

All clubs and schools must follow the appropriate age grade law variations without exception so that youngsters are able to learn the game and enjoy rugby in a structured, consistent and safe manner. For example, the development of core skills such as handling, off-loading and tackling is more important than winning the match at mini or youth level.

The age grade law variations are reviewed every two years. They should not be viewed in isolation, but should always be used in conjunction with the full IRB laws of the game.

Further information, including an on-line self-check test is available at [www.irblaws.com](http://www.irblaws.com). All coaches should be aware of the full laws of the game as well as the law variations for the age group they are coaching. Age grade law variations can be accessed in the Pocket Guide to Mini and Youth Rugby, and can also be downloaded from [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready)

## AGE BANDING

**Player Dispensation** - Children and young people should be playing and training with other people of the same age and physical maturity. Mismatches in levels of physical maturity increase the likelihood of serious injury.

**Male under-16 players in under-18 rugby policy:** Medical research shows that 95% of boys have reached physical maturity by the age of 16. This means that a boy of 15 who plays U17 or U18 rugby will be mainly competing with physically mature young men when he may not yet be physically mature, and as a result are exposed to a greater risk of serious injury.

The age at which male players are permitted to participate in under-18 rugby shall be 16 years old. This policy must be followed unless the exception below is applicable.

Scottish Rugby will only permit exceptional 15 year old players who have reached physical maturity and have the appropriate level of playing experience and skill levels to play in a higher age band, if this is considered to be in the player's best interests by his coach and parents.

**Physical Maturity assessments for U16s in U18 Rugby** - Physical maturity assessment tests are designed to assess the stage of development of the player's skeleton, a key factor in avoidance of serious injury. They can be arranged for exceptional 15 year old players applying to move up an age grade. The assessments verify the height and weight information given on the application form and also measure hand grip strength. Research shows that this set of measurements can be correlated and considered against the parameters devised by the Scottish Committee of Orthopaedic and Trauma surgeons to give a reliable indication of the stage of development of an individual's skeleton.

To ensure complete impartiality and to remove the chance of players/parents or coaches putting undue pressure on testers or players, the parameters which must be met, are not known by those carrying out the tests or those being tested.

You can not pass or fail a physical maturity assessment and it is not possible to affect the player's level of physical maturity through physical training techniques. It is important that a young player is not put under pressure to move up an age grade before they are physically mature enough to do so.

Player's whose results indicate that they are close to physical maturity may apply to be re-tested after 3 months. No other players will be retested.

### **Under-18 players in adult rugby (male)**

Scottish Rugby while seeking to develop and foster the game at all levels in Scotland, also wishes to ensure that this is done safely and recognises that particular issues arise in relation to male players under the age of 18, who may wish to play in their clubs' games at adult level.

Scottish Rugby, through the Board, has adopted the policy set out below for players under the jurisdiction of SRU.

**Policy Statement** - With effect from the commencement of the 2013 - 2014 season, male players are only permitted to participate in adult rugby if they are at least 18 years old at the date of the game concerned, unless the exception below applies.

**Exception** - In exceptional cases, a player's physical development, skill level and experience may be such that the player may be allowed to participate in adult rugby at an age younger than 18.

Players younger than 18 are only permitted to participate in adult rugby if each of the following conditions has been satisfied before participation:

- 1) Where a player is 17 years old - i.e. no players under 17 years of age can play senior rugby; **AND**
- 2) Where the player and coach have completed the online IRB Rugby Ready course (see [www.irbrugbyready.com](http://www.irbrugbyready.com)) and the coach is qualified to a minimum standard of UKCC level 2 and has attended an SRU 'RugbyReady Practical Course' in the immediately preceding 18 months; **AND**
- 3) Where the coach undertakes the following physical and skill assessments on the player in accordance with SRU's Assessment Guidance, and the player successfully completes:
  - a. a squat and press-up assessment
  - b. a tackle assessment; **AND**
- 4) Where the coach gathers and presents information on the player's experience, injury history and indicates the level of rugby to be played; **AND**
- 5) For a prop or hooker aged 17 to be able to play adult rugby in the front row of the scrum the player would have to:
  - a. Provide information on the player's front row experience, ability and front row specific coaching received
  - b. Players who have satisfied a regional panel on the strength of the above information would then be invited to attend Murrayfield for an assessment of their neck strength; **AND**
- 6) Written approval is given on behalf of SRU.

**Failure to comply** - Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the club, coach and player involved (or any of them) in accordance with SRU's Disciplinary Procedures.

**Application Process 2013-14** - All 17 year old players must apply for dispensation to play adult rugby during the 2013-14 season, even if dispensation has been granted last season.

Any club (or school) who feels that they have a male player aged 17 whose physical maturity and development, skill level, experience and medical condition are sufficiently high that the player is

capable of competing safely with players in the proposed adult rugby competition must follow the steps highlighted in the full policy. This can be found by visiting [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready)

## Female Age Banding

### 1) Mini Rugby

- a) Females are permitted to play mini rugby during all Primary school age groups.
- b) Should a female aged 11 in secondary 1 wish to play Mini rugby (due to technical, tactical, physical or mental/psychological reasons), they must receive approval from Scottish Rugby before doing so.
  - i) Applications should be made Scottish Rugby using the application form at the bottom of this form. Applications should be made by the club or school coach, detailing the rationale behind the request. Applications should include details on the following:
  - ii) All application forms should be sent to [shona.stott@srugby.org.uk](mailto:shona.stott@srugby.org.uk) or sent to Shona Stott, AYRTPR Administrator, Murrayfield Stadium, EH12 5PJ.
- c) On turning 12 years old, females may elect to participate in U15 rugby and/or remain within U12 rugby.

#### Notes:

- Females aged 11 years in secondary 1 year group at school should play under-15 rugby (in any position out with the front 5 in the scrum).
- In most cases females of primary school age will play mini rugby; however some U12 female only festivals are now delivered. To be eligible for U12 Female rugby, players must be in Primary 5, 6 or 7 or 11 years of age on the 1st of September.

### 2) U15 Female Rugby

- 1) Female players are only permitted to participate in under-15 rugby if they meet the criteria below:
  - a. Are born on or after the 1st September OR;
  - b. Are in secondary 1, 2 or 3 age group at school.
- 2) On turning 15 years old, Females may elect to participate in under-18 rugby and/or remain within under-15 rugby.
- 3) Females aged 11 years in secondary 1 year group at school should play under-15 rugby (in any position out with the front 5 in the scrum).

### 3) U18 Female Rugby

- 1) Female players are only permitted to participate in under-18 rugby if they meet the criteria below:
  - a. Are born on or after the 1st September;
  - b. Are at least 15 years old at the date of the game concerned OR;
  - c. Are in secondary 4, 5 or 6 age group at school
- 2) On turning 18 years old, females may elect to participate in senior rugby and/or remain within under-18 rugby.
- 3) On turning 15 years old, females may elect to participate in under-18 rugby and/or remain within under-15 rugby.

#### 4) Female Adult Rugby

Female players are only permitted to participate in adult rugby if they are at least 18 years old at the date of the game concerned, unless the exception below applies.

**Exception** - In exceptional cases, a player's physical development, skill level and experience may be such that the player may be allowed to participate in adult rugby at an age younger than 18.

Players younger than 18 are only permitted to participate in adult rugby if each of the following conditions has been satisfied before participation:

- 1) Where a player is 17 years old - i.e. no players under 17 years of age can play senior rugby; **AND**
- 2) Where the player will not play any position within the front 5 of the scrum; **AND**
- 3) Where the player and coach have completed the online IRB Rugby Ready course (see [www.irbrugbyready.com](http://www.irbrugbyready.com)); **AND**
- 4) Where the coach is qualified to a minimum standard of UKCC level 2 and has attended an SRU 'RugbyReady Practical Course' in the immediately preceding 18 months; **AND**
- 5) Where the coach (minimum UKCC level 2) undertakes the following physical and skill assessments on the player in accordance with SRU's Assessment Guidance, and the player successfully completes:
  - a squat and press-up assessment
  - a tackle assessment; **AND**
- 6) Where the coach gathers and presents information on the player's experience, injury history and indicates the level of rugby to be played; **AND**
- 7) Written approval is given on behalf of SRU.

Failure to comply - Failure to comply with any of the above Policies may result in disciplinary action being taken against the club in accordance with SRU's Disciplinary Procedures.

For the full Female Age Bands and Dispensations 2012-13 Policy, please visit [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready)

#### Summary of Domestic Female Age Grades 2013-14

A player may apply for permission to play down an age grade when his or her safety may be compromised due to an existing or previous medical disability, physical or behavioural condition.

Details of how to apply for dispensations, along with all of the above policies and forms are available from [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready)

#### Age Grades

Age Grades in youth rugby begin at under 9s and end at Under 18s. For safety and to allow young players to develop in the best environment within clubs and schools young players should be training and competing with others of the same age and physical maturity.

Therefore, the youth game is divided up by the age of the players involved (age-grade rugby) with associated law variations. Regulations specify the age grades within which children should be grouped for training and playing. The grades are selected to minimise disparities in physical maturity and experience, while allowing meaningful player development to take place (see the Age Grade Law Variations booklet and/or [www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready](http://www.scottishrugby.org/areyouready)).

Domestic age grade is defined by either the school year or the player's age at the 1st September at the start of the current season. For example: A player aged 15 years of age on September 1st will be an

U16 player for the entirety of the season.

Girls and boys play together until S1 where they are separated and different age grades are applied due to differences in physical maturity rates, levels of experience and playing numbers.

### Summary of Domestic Girls' Age Grades 2013-14

	Mini				U15 Girls'			U18 Girls'			Adult Women's
School Year	P4	P5	P6	P7	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	-
Age during season	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	
Notes				12yr old players may remain in U12 rugby or move into U15 rugby			15yr old players may remain in U15 rugby or move into U18 rugby			18yr old players may remain in U18 rugby or move into senior rugby  Exceptional 17yr old player may apply for dispensation to move into senior rugby	

### Summary of Domestic Male Age grades 2013-14

	Mini							U15	U16	U17	U18	U20 & Adult Rugby
School Year	P4	P5	P6	P7	S1	S2	S3		S4	S5	S6	-
Age during season	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15		15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Notes	Maximum 2 school years combined. Lower age grade law variations adopted.								Dispensation required for exceptional 15yr olds to play U17/18 rugby	No 16 year olds can apply to play adult rugby.	Dispensation required for exceptional 17yr olds to play adult rugby	

## INJURY MANAGEMENT

### Injury Reporting

It is important that an injury report is filled out for any rugby injury that requires hospital treatment. This information will allow Scottish Rugby to record, monitor and evaluate injury trends and make informed changes to help further reduce the risk of injury.

Injuries requiring a hospital visit can now be recorded online by using the following details:

[www.rugbyregistration.co.uk](http://www.rugbyregistration.co.uk) | Username: INJURYREPORT | Password: SRinjury01

### Minimum Standards of Pitchside Care

The basic minimum standard of pitchside care across all levels of rugby is that a responsible adult be present, with the means to contact the emergency services. We also advise that there is someone present with a recognised basic first aid qualification. Any tournament or event organiser should consider the provision of formal first aiders and/or medical staff from a recognised provider.

## IRB PLAYER WELFARE

The International Rugby Board has a dedicated player welfare website, which contains useful information on coaching and medical issues. Visit [www.irbplayerwelfare.com](http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com) for further info.

Find out more at [scottishrugby.org](http://scottishrugby.org)

