



2026-27 USA Senior Club Rugby Open Division Competition Category Standards

An Open Division Event Is:

- A mixed-gender and co-ed event
- A recreational event
- A social event
- A division in a tournament or jamboree

An Open Division Event Is Not:

- A replacement or substitution for a Men's Division or a Women's Division
- An evaluation event for National Team pathway participation
- A league or coordinated series of competitions
- A qualifier or pathway to a National Championship

An Event meeting these criteria may be sanctioned as an Open Competition Event under the following standards:

Purpose:

USA Rugby established an Open Competition Division Category ("Open Division") in February 2026 when it adopted the [Competition Eligibility Policy](#). An Open Division event is intended to provide an inclusive and accessible rugby competition opportunity for athletes of all genders and identities while preserving the integrity of the Men's and Women's Divisions.

The Open Division is intended to increase opportunities for participation. The Open Division is a distinct category of play. It is not intended to replicate or to be substitute for either the Men's Division or Women's Division.¹

Competition Philosophy:

The Open Division is designed primarily to facilitate:

- Recreational rugby opportunities

¹ As set forth under the USA Club Rugby Eligibility Policy, Section 2.6.

- Social competition opportunities
- Mixed-gender and co-ed rugby opportunities

The Open Division is not designed to, nor shall it be utilized to be used to as a mechanism to circumvent the Executive Order 14201, USOPC's Athlete Safety Policy, or USA Rugby eligibility requirements.

Individual Eligibility:

An Open Division event is fully inclusive and is open to all participants regardless of sex assigned at birth, gender identity, or gender expression. No athlete shall have exclusive rights to participation within an Open Division event, and no otherwise eligible participant may be excluded from Open Division competition based solely upon gender identity or sex assigned at birth.

Any athlete who is registered with USA Rugby and otherwise eligible may participate in Open Division. The athlete need not be registered to a particular club to participate; Motley Teams are allowed.

USA Rugby requires, as a condition of sanctioning any Open Division event, that each participating athlete acknowledge in writing that they understand and voluntarily consent to participating in a mixed-gender or co-ed match or tournament.

Competition Formats:

Open Division formats may include:

Tournaments:

Event Organizers may offer Open Division brackets in sanctioned events and festivals, including sevens, tens, fifteens, touch, or non-contact rugby formats. Tournament regulations shall define roster size, substitution procedures, and other competition rules.

One-Off Fixtures and Exhibition Matches:

Clubs, teams, and organizers may schedule individual Open Division fixtures, exhibitions, and friendly matches subject to USA Rugby sanctioning requirements.

One-Off Stand-Alone Recreational and Social Events:

Local unions, clubs, and organizers are encouraged to provide Open Division opportunities emphasizing participation, inclusiveness, and enjoyment of the game.

Eligibility and Compliance:

All participants in an Open Division event shall be members of USA Rugby. Any team participating in an Open Division event shall comply with all other USA Rugby and USA Senior

Club eligibility rules. Any Club fielding a team in an Open Division event must otherwise be compliant. Any coach must be compliant. Any Motley Team participating in an Open Division event must follow the USA Rugby Motley Team rules.

National Championship Pathway:

World Rugby and the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) recognize high-performance and international competition pathways within the Men's and Women's Divisions. At present, neither World Rugby nor the USOPC recognizes an Open Division pathway for international competition, national team representation, or elite performance development. Toward that end, no Open Division event can ever be used as an Evaluation Event under the USA Rugby Athlete Selection Procedures.

Consistent with those structures, the USA Rugby Competition Eligibility Policy does not provide for an option for season-long Open Division league play or a National Championship pathway.

Competition Integrity:

The Open Competition Division is a co-ed category. Organizers, clubs, or participants may not restrict Open Competition participation in a manner inconsistent with the purpose of the category or establish eligibility criteria that effectively recreate another division under a different name.

USA Rugby reserves the authority to review and approve Open Division events and proposed competition structures to ensure compliance with USA Rugby policies and the intended purpose of the Open Competition Division.

Event Approval/Sanctioning:

An Open Division event must be approved will be sanctioned accordingly in compliance with USA Rugby policies and procedures. Open Competition is not sanctioned by default. USA Rugby reserves the right to review competition formats, event rules, and eligibility requirements to ensure athlete safety and consistency with the objectives of the Open Competition Division Category.

For questions, please email compliance@usa.rugby and eligibility@usaclub.rugby.