

RUGBY VICTORIA

Competition Rules

(including National Model Competition Rules)

2026



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1. Definitions

In these Rules, the following words have the corresponding meaning:

Affiliated Union means a body so named in, or admitted pursuant to, the Rugby Australia Constitution as being an affiliated union.

Association means an organisation that administers a group of clubs for the purposes of governance and regulatory requirements with respect to competitions, events, tournaments, and rugby programs.

Clearance means the requirement for a currently registered player wishing to register at another Club on the same registration type during the season.

Codes, Policies and Procedures means the codes, policies and procedures of Rugby Australia published and amended from time to time.

Game means rugby union.

Insurer means the insurance provider of the Rugby Australia National Risk Management and Insurance Program.

International Union means a Rugby Union, Rugby Club, or other body based in a foreign nation and affiliated with the National Rugby Union of that nation.

Competition means any match played as part of a structured competition, series, or sanctioned event including a trial match, friendly match, or representative match involving a Rugby Body.

Competition Manager means the person deemed responsible by the Union for the day-to-day operational management of the competition.

Event Organiser means an organisation authorised to conduct Rugby Union programs, events, tournaments, and/or matches in Australia, pursuant to the Rugby Australia *Event Sanctioning Guidelines*,

Judicial Committee means a tribunal convened under the Rugby Australia Disciplinary Rules.

Laws of the Game means the laws of the Game published and amended by World Rugby from time to time, including any variations authorised by World Rugby or Rugby Australia.

Management Committee means the committee appointed by the Union to oversee the management of the competition.

Member Union means an Australian State or Territory union in membership of Rugby Australia.

Participant means:

- (a) **Players** that are registered with or entitled to participate with a Relevant Organisation or in a rugby Activity;
- (b) **Coaches** appointed to train a Player or Team in a Relevant Organisation or in a rugby Activity;
- (c) **Administrators** that have a role in the administration or operation of a Relevant Organisation or in a rugby Activity, including owners, directors, committee members, employees or other persons;

- (d) **Officials** including referees, citing commissioners, television match officials, or other officials appointed by a Relevant Organisation, or any league, competition, series, Club or Team sanctioned by a Relevant Organisation;
- (e) **Support Personnel** that are appointed in a professional or voluntary capacity by a Relevant Organisation including, but not limited to, sports science / sport medicine personnel, Team managers, agents, selectors, and Team staff members; and
- (f) **Other individuals** that attend rugby Activities or facilities, including but not limited to, parents, guardians, spectators, and sponsors.

Player means an individual that plays the Game.

Registered means a Player and/or non-playing Participant who has completed effective registration and paid all applicable fees and levies.

Regulations means the regulations published and amended by World Rugby and Rugby Australia from time to time.

Rugby Australia or Rugby AU or RA means Rugby Australia Ltd (ACN 002 898 544).

Rugby Body means Rugby Australia, any Member Union or Affiliated Union of Rugby Australia, or any Rugby Union, Club, or other body in membership with or affiliated with Rugby Australia, a Member Union, or an Affiliated Union.

Rugby Club or Club means any club affiliated with a Member Union or an affiliated Rugby Body, that is a participant of the Competition.

Rugby Explorer means Rugby Australia's online registration and competition management system.

Rules means the National Model Competition Rules and the Competition Rules of the Specific Union.

Sanctioned Event means an event, tournament, and/or matches conducted by an authorised Event Organiser that has received formal approval.

Specific Union means the governing body of the competition.

WR means World Rugby.

2. Preamble

These Rules set out the minimum standards and procedures that apply to Competitions conducted under the jurisdiction of Rugby Australia and its Member Unions.

This Competition, as with all competitions played under the auspices of Rugby Victoria, are community competitions. All Participants in the Competition are to be made aware of the [WR Playing Charter](#); which includes the:

- (a) [Principles of the Game](#)
- (b) [Principles of the Laws](#)

All Participants are to be made aware that by virtue of the acceptance of a team into this competition the match organiser i.e. Rugby Victoria and their respective Participants subject themselves and agree to be bound by the Rules of the Competition.

3. Laws of the Game

All games will be played in terms of the [WR Laws of the Game](#), including any of the following variations:

3.1. Tackle Height Law Variation (as part of 2024/2025 World Rugby Global Law Trial)

Law 9.13 A player must not tackle an opponent early, late, or dangerous. Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling, or attempting to tackle an opponent **above the line of the sternum** even if the tackle starts below the line of the sternum.

3.2. [WR Under 19 Variations](#)

(a) [Rugby AU Under 19 Variations](#)

3.3. [WR Sevens \(7-a-side\) Variations](#)

3.4. [WR 10s \(10-a-side\) Variations](#)

3.5. [WR Game On Variations](#)

(a) see later section in this document Game On Variations applied in a specific Competition

3.6. [WR Leisure Modified Formats](#) including Cross-Field (RugbyX), Beach 5s etc.

(a) [Rugby AU Cross-Field 7s](#)

3.7. [Rugby AU Kids Pathway U6 to U12](#)

NOTE – Rugby Victoria will participate in Rugby Australia’s Junior Law Variations Pilot in 2026. Details of these new variations will be provided separately for clarity.

3.8. [Rugby AU Veterans Rugby Laws](#)

3.9. [Tri Tag Rugby Laws](#)

Competitions may submit a request to a specific law variation to the *Law Advisory Group* by filling in the [Rugby Australia Law Variation Submission Form](#)

4. Governance of the Competition

All matches in the Competition shall be played in accordance with the [WR Regulations of the Game](#) and Rugby Australia Regulations, Codes and Policies etc.

In addition, Rugby Australia publishes ‘[Game Management Guidelines](#)’ annually that have been prepared to assist Unions in the administration and playing of the game in domestic competitions within Australia.

5. Rugby AU Codes and Policies

The effective governance and administration of rugby requires adherence to a wide range of codes and policies around safety & welfare, integrity, inclusion, member protection & child safety and privacy etc. Therefore, all matches shall be played in accordance with all [Rugby AU Codes, Policies and Procedures](#):

5.1. [Safety & Welfare](#)

Rugby must be as safe, inclusive, and fair as possible. Rugby Australia has several policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring that rugby is safe to play and is enjoyable for all participants.

- (a) Concussion Management;
- (b) Serious Injuries;
- (c) Welfare Initiatives;
- (d) Player Dispensation;
- (e) Match Day Safety; and
- (f) First Aid medical.

5.2. [Child Safety](#)

Rugby Australia is committed to ensuring that rugby is a safe environment for children and young people.

- (a) Child and Young Person Safeguarding Policy;
- (b) Reporting;
- (c) Working with Children Checks.

5.3. [Integrity](#)

Rugby Australia's Codes, Policies and Procedures have been developed to provide a safe, fair, and inclusive sporting environment for all rugby participants in Australia. This includes the following:

- (a) *Rugby Australia Disciplinary Rules* - these have been developed to ensure a consistent approach to foul play, citing and judicial hearings;
- (b) *Anti-Doping Code* – all participants are bound by the Anti-Doping Code and must be aware of the requirements;
- (c) *Supplement Policy*;
- (d) *Code of Conduct* – provides a set of standards that everyone involved in rugby is required to comply with to ensure that the image and integrity of the sport is protected. The Code also outlines the procedures for reporting, complaint handling and investigations of any alleged breaches;
- (e) *Three Strike Policy* – provides greater onus on Clubs to ensure environments at their Club are safe and suitable for all participants;
- (f) *Medical Policy* – provides information on the use of medications, medical procedures and measures to protect the health and welfare for semi-professional and professional players;
- (g) *Member Protection Policy* – ensures that all Participants feel included and safe in rugby; and
- (h) *Anti-Corruption and Betting Policy* – applies to all Participants and they need to be aware of its requirements.

5.4. Additionally, the following documents are included as part of these Competition Rules:

- (a) Inclusion Policy;
- (b) Safety & Participation Policy;
- (c) Registration Regulations;
- (d) Registration Terms and Conditions; and
- (e) Smart Rugby Policy.

Any concerns that arise as a result of an alleged breach of any of the above provisions can be reported at [Reporting a Concern](#).

6. National Standard Competition Rules

6.1. Registration in Rugby Xplorer

- (a) All Players, Non-Playing Members and Match Officials are to be registered via Rugby Australia's [Rugby Xplorer System](#);
- (b) It is a requirement of Rugby Australia that the Rugby Xplorer Competition Management System is also use for all sub-Union Competition Matches, both Senior and Junior

6.2. Draw

- (a) The Competition will be conducted in accordance with a schedule of matches drawn up prior to the start of the playing season and varied as necessary from time to time.
- (b) Where possible, all matches in a "round" are to be played in an ascending order i.e. lowest grade to highest grade. Where this is not possible, no player who has started in a higher grade is permitted to participate (i.e. start / reserve) for a lower grade. The only exception being in junior age-grade rugby where a player may play within the same age-grade, or in different eligible age-grades.
- (c) In the event of matches in the same round being played on different days (e.g. rescheduled matches due to wet weather) the selection of players must be the same as if all matches in the same round were being played on the same day.

6.3. Match Team Lists, Scoring and Stats

- (a) In the Rugby Xplorer Match Day App, it is the responsibility of both teams to ensure that:
 - (a) All players and team officials (where required by the Competition) are selected in their respective team list for the match;
 - (b) All details of point scorers are recorded;
 - (c) All players who have been either temporarily suspended (yellow card), sent from the field of play (red card) or have a suspected concussion (blue card) must have all their details recorded; and
 - (d) All movements of players following an injury (blood or otherwise) or for tactical reasons shall be recorded (where required by the Competition).
- (b) The match day scoring, and stats can be entered by ONE team manager for BOTH teams, or EACH team manager for their OWN team. It is permissible to have an independently appointed ground manager that does the scoring for both teams.
- (c) The referee is to confirm the result of the match (including Red, Yellow and Blue Cards) by confirming this on the Match Day App in the presence of both teams.
- (d) All clubs must enter the team list, scoring and stats of all matches online via the Match Day App during the match, and end/close the match in Rugby Xplorer immediately after verifying the score and recorded cards with the opposite team and the referee.
- (e) Clubs/Teams failing to follow the procedures are liable to receive penalties per these Rules.

6.4. Postponed / Abandoned Matches

- (a) If the venue of a match or matches is unavailable for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the home club to advise the Competition Manager immediately that the ground is considered unplayable or doubtful of being playable. The Competition Manager, after consultation with the clubs involved, shall direct how the match will be dealt with.
- (b) Unless otherwise detailed in the Member Union Rules or Specific Competition Rules, in the event of a match having to be abandoned for any reason the following procedure shall apply:
 - (a) Where a match has been abandoned during the first half, the result will be declared a draw with 0 match points awarded to each team (regardless of if any points had been scored at the time) and Competition Points awarded for a Draw, or the match may be

replayed at a time and venue as determined by the Competition Manager in their absolute discretion.

- (b) Where a match has been abandoned during half time or during the second half, the result will be declared as the match score at the time of the abandonment and Competition Points awarded accordingly.
- (c) Any match abandonment action taken under these Rules shall not prevent (and may run in parallel with) other action that is deemed necessary under the Disciplinary Rules, Code of Conduct or other relevant WR or Rugby Australia regulations, codes, policies, or rules etc.

6.5. **Playing Field**

- (a) Clubs/Teams hosting matches shall be responsible for ensuring the [RA Medical and First Aid Requirements](#) are met.
- (b) With respect to medical requirements, both teams are responsible for ensuring that matches are not played if the all the requirements relating to medical care are not in place.
- (c) The host club shall be responsible for ensuring that the field of play is correctly marked in accordance with the WR Laws of the Game ([Law 1 – The Ground](#)).
- (d) The host club shall be responsible for ensuring the venue (including playing field) is free from hazards, and will complete the [Match Day Inspection Checklist](#) prior to matches.
- (e) All Goal posts within the playing enclosure must be sufficiently padded.

6.6. **Playing Enclosure**

- (a) Entry to the playing enclosure must be restricted by a fence, barricade, or rope at a minimum of five metres, where practicable, from the playing area perimeter.
- (b) Persons authorised to enter the Playing Enclosure (“authorised persons”) are as follows:
 - (a) The Players
 - (b) Appointed Match Officials
 - (c) Ground Marshals
 - (d) Medically Qualified Persons/Sports Trainer – maximum two per team
 - (e) Water carriers – maximum two per team
 - (f) Ball Persons
 - (g) Photographers/Media (where permitted by host club and clearly distinguishable)
- (c) All Authorised Persons permitted to enter the playing enclosure should have some distinguishing mark and/or bib.
- (d) Coaching Staff, Team Management and Reserve Players should be positioned outside of the playing enclosure where possible.
- (e) The Head Coach cannot also occupy a role within the playing enclosure (e.g. medical or water carrier)
- (f) Where there is no room for Reserve Players to warm up outside the playing enclosure, they are permitted to warm up in the opposition in-goal area provided no equipment is used (e.g. balls, hit shields) and players retreat from in-goal when play is in the closest 22m area.

6.7. **Technical Zones**

- (a) Two Technical Zones will be provided within the playing enclosure on the same side of the pitch, on either side of the halfway line and outside the field of play. Refer to [Law 1 – The Ground](#) for dimensions and position.
- (b) A Maximum of four persons (two medically qualified persons and two water carriers) are allowed in each respective technical zone.
- (c) Roles of personnel in the technical zones.
 - (i) Persons permitted in the technical zones may only communicate as required in their specific role. There must be no coaching or commentary to Match Officials or Players.
 - (ii) Medical Personnel must remain in the technical zone unless they

- enter the field of play in accordance with the Laws of the Game at any time a player is injured to tend to the injured player;
 - are roaming the sideline (maximum 1 per sideline), but must stay back from the touch line and clear of the Assistant Referee;
- (iii) Water Carriers must remain in the technical zone unless they
- are taking water to players during stoppages in play for injuries or when a try has been scored.
 - one of the water carriers provides a kicking tee and one water bottle to the kicker for a penalty kick at goal (no water can be taken on for other players during a penalty kick).
- (iv) Players may come to the touchline adjacent to the technical zone to receive water.
- (v) Water bottles must not be thrown on the field of play.

6.8. Disqualified, unqualified or suspended person(s)

- i. It shall be the responsibility of each club to ensure that no disqualified, unqualified or suspended person(s) take part in any match.

7. Law and Regulation Clarifications

For the avoidance of doubt, the following provides clarity on Community Competitions in Australia.

7.1. Uncontested Scrums (U13 age grades and above)

- i. It is recognised that on occasion and due to circumstances, such as unavailability of players starting the match, or that an injury or incident during a match may make contested scrums not possible. Therefore Laws 3.13 – 3.20 (inclusive) are applicable.
- ii. World Rugby allows Rugby Australia to implement, at its discretion, a mechanism to discourage uncontested scrums by having a team play short of players if they cause uncontested scrums. Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement this Law must use the approved language set out below in their Competition Rules:

There must be sufficient players to play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, and on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, or should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then the team concerned must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.

If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.

If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

7.2. Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement

i. International Clearance

- (a) A Player leaving their current Union to play in another Union shall not be registered or eligible to participate in competitions organised, recognised or sanctioned by that new Union until they have an endorsed International Clearance.
- (b) Players departing Australia to play within another International Union are required to complete the Rugby Australia [International Clearance Form](#).
- (c) Players coming in to Australia are to contact their Home Union to understand their International Clearance process and obtain, complete and return an International Clearance.

ii. Domestic Clearance

- (a) This relates to Club-to-Club player movements for currently registered players.
- (b) It is a requirement for a currently registered Player registering in the same season to another club for the same or different registration type.
- (c) The player cannot register unless clearance approval is granted by their 'from' Club and Association.
- (d) Players who do not have an active registration do not require clearance.

8. Rules Specific to Rugby Victoria Competitions

All Competitions

These are the Local Competition Rules applying to all Rugby Victoria Competitions

8.1. Competition Points

- (a) Teams in Competitive Grade competitions shall be awarded Competition points as follows:

Result	Points
Win	4
Draw	2 (for each team)
Bye	0
Forfeit Awarded	5 (4 points + 1 bonus point)

- (b) Bonus Points for all Competitive Grade competitions will be awarded as follows:

Result	Bonus Points
Four (4) tries or more scored	1
Loss by seven (7) pts. or less	1

- (c) Forfeit Penalties for all Competitive Grade competitions will be provided as follows:

Result	Penalty Points
Forfeit (RV Championship Clubs)	-4
Forfeit with notice (all other grades)	-2
Late forfeit (Seniors Only)	-4

8.2. Standings on the competition table shall be determined in the following order:

- (a) Competition points
- (b) For/against points (Total Points Difference)
- (c) Highest points For
- (d) Head-to-Head record (Points Difference between Teams on the same Competition Points)
- (e) Drawing of lots

8.3. Duration of Matches

- (a) Standard match duration times for each Grade are in the table below

- (b) Notwithstanding the listed match times, each match must finish five (5) minutes before the listed start time of any subsequent match scheduled on the same field.

Grade	Half Length	Additional Time for Stoppages
1 st Grade (Dewar Shield, Ward Shield, Lindroth Cup) 2 nd Grade (Dewar Shield, Ward Shield (Rounds 1-9 only)) Conference Cup	40 min	5 min max, within timeframe permissible.
2 nd Grade (Ward Shield (Rounds 10-15 and Finals only)) 3 rd Grade, Colts, U85kg, U18	35 min	
Lindroth Development, U16, U14	30 mins	
U12, U11	25 mins	No

8.4. Player Clothing

- (a) Player jerseys are to be numbered 1 to 23, plus additional numbers for bloodied or damaged jerseys.
- (b) Proposed changes to club jerseys (design or colour) shall first be approved by RV prior to orders for manufacture being authorised. RV shall retain the right to refuse permission to the use of any design or colour that reflects a similarity to the playing strip and colours of another participating club.
- (c) In the event of a jersey clash the onus is on the away team to wear a non-clash jersey.

8.5. Player Replacements

NOTE – all matches are to be played with a maximum of 23 players (15 on the field, plus 8 reserve players). The following illustrates the number of replacements or movements each grade is permitted to have within the maximum of 23 players.

- (a) The following number of replacements (movements) permitted for each Grade are as follows:

Grade	Movements
Dewar Shield (1 st and 2 nd Grade) Ward Shield (1 st and 2 nd Grade) Lindroth Cup	8
Colts Bendigo Bank Conference Cup	Rolling replacements to a maximum of 8 movements
3 rd Grade U85kg Lindroth Development U18 U16	Rolling replacements to a maximum of 12 movements
All other Junior Grades	Unlimited

- (b) Replacements due to blood injury, concussion, or injury due to foul play do not count in the designated number of movements.
- (c) Replacements will ordinarily be controlled through:
- Sideline Official (aka No 4 Match Official); or if no Sideline Official
 - Assistant Referee closest to the team benches; or if no accredited Assistant Referee
 - The Host Club Match Day Manager, in conjunction with the Team Managers.
- (d) For the avoidance of doubt, **HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT (HIA) DOES NOT APPLY AT ANY LEVEL OF THE COMMUNITY GAME.** Any concussion or suspected concussion injury must follow the

Recognise and Remove protocols and enter Rugby Australia's Concussion Management Procedure.

8.6. **Player Identification**

- (a) Rugby Victoria reserves the right to request proof of identity to the satisfaction of Rugby Victoria for the purposes of establishing player identity and eligible playing grades.
- (b) All players must have a photo attached to their person record on Rugby Xplorer. The photo must be recent and include only the player's headshot (i.e. similar to a passport photo).
- (c) Team managers are permitted to request the viewing of ID Cards in the RX Match Day App of the opposing team manager.
- (d) Should there be no photo attached to a player's ID card, the Team Manager is required to immediately provide another form of identification. An ID photo for that player must be uploaded before the next competition match

8.7. **Within Competition Clearances**

- (a) A player shall not receive a clearance from one Victorian Rugby club to another once they have played one (1) junior or senior competition match within the current season (excluding U85kg Competition). The Competition Manager shall only consider extenuating circumstances from the player to allow an exemption to this rule.
- (b) At the National Season Roll-over Date (usually mid-December annually) all registrations are automatically expired. Following the Season Roll-over Date, players do not require a clearance to register to a new club at the commencement of the new registration year. The onus is on the club to collect any outstanding fees/debts related to financial arrangements made between the player and the club.

8.8. **Forfeits**

A forfeit result will be awarded to the non-forfeiting team when:

- (a) One team has less than ten players to commence the match (Refer to the Game On Policy for rules on playing where one team has fewer than fifteen (15) players).
- (b) A team is not ready to commence a match fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled KO time.

Notice of forfeit

- (c) The forfeiting club is responsible for advising RV and the opposing team of the forfeit. This must be done by 12pm on the day preceding the forfeited match.
 - (a) Forfeit with notice – is a written communication from a Club President or Secretary, which is received by Rugby Victoria before 12pm on the day preceding the match.
 - (b) Late forfeit – any notice received after the above timeline (or not received at all). A late forfeit shall include a team not turning up or having insufficient playing numbers on the day.

Result of a forfeit

- (d) The result for a forfeit will be:
 - (a) Non-forfeiting team will receive a match score of 28 (equivalent to 4 tries and 4 conversions) plus the relevant competition points;
 - (b) The non-forfeiting team is still required to submit a team list in Rugby Xplorer
 - (c) Forfeiting team will receive 0 match points minus the relevant competition points.
 - (d) The forfeiting team will have any submitted players on a team list removed for the forfeited match.
- (e) For senior rugby teams in the same competition, a forfeit in a higher grade will result in an automatic forfeit in the lower grade(s) in the same round.

Miscellaneous matters

- (f) A forfeit in Dewar Shield 1st Grade shall be deemed a critical circumstance and will require the Club meeting with the Competition Manager to determine future matches.
- (g) A team or club which forfeits an “Away” game, at the discretion of the Competition Manager, may lost the right to host the next match against the same team at “Home”, including potentially across competition seasons.
- (h) A team which forfeits four competition matches in the same season shall be withdrawn from the competition, including finals, effective at the time of the fourth forfeit. The opposition of a withdrawn team will retain all For, Against and Competition points for match already played, and all future matches against the withdrawn team will be recorded as a forfeit, and competition points awarded, unless deemed otherwise by the Competition Manager.

Forfeit fines

- (i) In addition to a deduction of competition points, the following fines will be charged to the Club of a forfeiting team. Each forfeit amount is stand-alone (not accumulative).

SENIOR GRADES (including Colts)		
Forfeit Type	Forfeit Amount	Recipient of Forfeit Amount
First forfeit in a season	\$100	100% Opposition Club
Subsequent forfeit in a season	\$200	100% Opposition Club
Subsequent forfeit in a season against the same Team	\$400	25% Rugby Victoria 75% Opposition Club
Late Forfeit	\$400	25% Rugby Victoria 75% Opposition Club

JUNIOR GRADES (excluding non-competitive grades)		
Forfeit Type	Forfeit Amount	Recipient of Forfeit Amount
First forfeit in a season	\$50	100% Opposition Club
Subsequent forfeit in a season	\$100	100% Opposition Club
Subsequent forfeit in a season to the same Club	\$200	25% Rugby Victoria 75% Opposition Club
Late Forfeit	\$200	25% Rugby Victoria 75% Opposition Club

8.9. Citing Complaint Referral

The processes related to Citing are documented in the [Rugby Australia Disciplinary Rules](#). The following steps provides clarity on the local competition requirements with regards to a *Citing Complaint by a Rugby Body where no citing commissioner appointed to a match*.

- (a) A Citing Complaint Referral can be submitted by either of the two Clubs who participated in the match (U13 and above) subject to the Citing Complaint Referral incident;
- (b) A Citing Complaint Referral must be submitted:
 - (i) by an authorised representative of the club (e.g. Secretary or President);
 - (ii) on the approved Citing Complaint Referral Form;
 - (iii) before midday on the next business day after the match subject to the Citing Complaint Referral incident;
 - (iv) with a Citing Referral Fee of \$250 (\$200 refunded if Citing or Citing Commissioner Warning applied by Citing Commissioner).

8.10. Game On Rules

- (a) The specific Game On law variations (as permitted by World Rugby) selected for implementation in the Rugby Victoria Competitions are detailed separately in the Game On Rules procedure.

- (b) The Game On Rules apply for all competitions except for:
 - (i) Dewar Shield 1st Grade and 2nd Grade
 - (ii) Ward Shield 1st Grade
 - (iii) Lindroth Cup
- (c) Game On law variations DO NOT apply during any Finals Series.

Senior Competition Specific Rules

8.11. Standards of Competition

- (a) The standard for senior grades is prioritised as follows:
 - (a) Dewar Shield 1st Grade, Lindroth Cup
 - (b) Dewar Shield 2nd Grade, Colts, Ward Shield 1st Grade
 - (c) Lindroth Development, Premier 3rd Grade, Ward Shield 2nd Grade, Conference
 - (d) U85kg, Masters

8.12. Team Lists

- (a) Team lists for all Dewar Shield 1st Grade, Ward Shield 1st Grade and Lindroth Cup matches must be selected using the Match Day App by 9:00am on the day prior to the game.
- (b) Team lists for all other grades must be selected in the Match Day App no later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off time.

8.13. Squad Numbers – Front Row

- (a) It shall be mandatory for a minimum of six front players to be listed on a team sheet for each match in Dewar Shield 1st Grade and Ward Shield 1st Grade so that on the first occasion a replacement front row player is required in each position, the replacement front row player can allow contested scrums to continue.

Dewar Shield & Ward Shield Competition Specific Rules

8.14. Fresh Reserves

- (a) A maximum of three (3) fresh reserves are permitted in the Dewar Shield 1st Grade and Ward Shield 1st Grade teams during minor rounds. There is no cap on fresh reserves during finals series.
- (b) A fresh reserve is a player who has not played (or will not play) in any other match on that match day or round.
- (c) A non-fresh reserve is a player who has played at least 50% of game time in any other match on that match day or round.

8.15. Rugby Victoria Championship (2026 Season)

- (a) **Competition Structure**
 - (i) For the first 9 rounds of the Dewar Shield season (no Ward Shield until Round 10), all teams will compete in the Dewar Shield and will play each other once.
 - (ii) From Round 10 onwards the top 5 clubs, based on the Rugby Victoria Championship table, as per 8.15, will remain in Dewar Shield, with the remaining 5 clubs entering Ward Shield.
 - (iii) Clubs will then play the return fixtures against the clubs in their division.
 - (iv) A top 5 finals system may be used, with the format for the finals series to be communicated to all Clubs prior to the commencement of the regular season.
- (b) **Competition Points & Championship Table**
 - (i) For the first 9 rounds of the Dewar Shield season (no Ward Shield until Round 10), a Rugby Victoria Championship Points table will be kept, with accumulated competition

points, as per 8.1, across first and second grade. For the purposes of this table, first-grade competition and bonus points will be counted double.

- (ii) To provide clarity this means that competition points will be awarded in the Rugby Victoria Championship as follows:

Result	Points
Win (1 st Grade)	8
Win (2 nd Grade)	4
Draw (1 st Grade)	4 (for each team)
Draw (2 nd Grade)	2 (for each team)
Forfeit Awarded (1 st Grade)	10 (8 points + 2 bonus point)
Forfeit Awarded (2 nd Grade)	5 (4 points + 1 bonus point)
Bye	0

Result	Bonus Points
Four (4) tries or more scored (1 st Grade)	2
Loss by seven (7) pts. or less (1 st Grade)	2
Four (4) tries or more scored (2 nd Grade)	1
Loss by seven (7) pts. or less (2 nd Grade)	1

- (iii) During the Rugby Vic Championship (first 9 rounds of the Dewar Shield Season) For and Against scored will **NOT** be considered in a ladder tie-break.
- (iv) Should clubs finish equal on competition points, promotion to Dewar Shield will be decided on the head-to-head (match result) between the two clubs during the first 9 rounds.
- (v) Should a draw occur the results against the next highest ladder position will be utilised (e.g. If 4th and 5th are equal, results against 3rd place will be compared)

8.16. Player Registration:

- (a) Clubs wishing to enter the Rugby Victoria Championship must have a minimum of Forty (40) registered players by April 1st, 2026. This must be monthly and yearly registrations as weekly registrations will not be included in the overall tally.
- (i) Should a club fail to meet this baseline qualification, Rugby Victoria may choose to move the club into the Conference Cup for 2026.
- (b) **Player Registration Cut Off:**
- (i) Be registered on or before 8 June this year;
- (ii) Played their first match on or before 8 June this year;

Colts Competition Specific Rules

8.17. Age Limit

- (a) Rugby Victoria Colts grade is a limited age (Under 20) senior rugby competition
- (a) A player requiring a Senior Rugby Dispensation is eligible to participate in both their Actual Age Grade and in Senior Rugby
- (b) Colts teams are permitted up to three (3) U21 (players turning 21 in the calendar year) players to participate in their Colts team.
- (i) The U21 players shall be front row only (prop, hooker) and subject to approval from Rugby Victoria before their participation.
- (ii) Rugby Victoria reserves the right to review each U21 player's participation in Colts and may revoke the player's participation in Colts.

- (c) Each club is required to submit the names of up to three U21 players to RV before Round 1.
- (d) The nominated U21 players are not permitted to participate in 1st Grade (Dewar Shield, Ward Shield) in the same season.
- (e) In the event a player receives a long-term injury or is re-located interstate/overseas, the club may apply to remove that player from their nominated three U21 players and replace the player.

U85kg Competition Specific Rules

8.18. Weigh-in Process

- (a) As a Senior Competition, players must be 18 years or older or have an approved Senior Rugby Dispensation.
- (b) Weigh-in of players can occur in the presence of a representative from each team participating in the match using Rugby Victoria sanctioned scales, or other scales as agreed by both teams.
- (c) All players weighing-in are to use the same scales unless otherwise determined by the Competition Manager.
- (d) The timing of weigh-in may occur at any time as agreed by team representatives, typically 30 minutes before kick-off, but no later than kick-off of the match.
- (e) Players who are 85.0kgs or over at the time of weigh-in are ineligible to participate in the match. Players may re-weigh-in up to kick-off of the match.
- (f) If one team is unable to complete the weigh-in process with a minimum of 10 eligible players (per Game On Law Variations) who are less than 85.0kg, the referee will declare the match as a forfeit by the team unable to meet weigh-in requirements and Competition Points will be awarded accordingly.
- (g) If both teams are unable to complete the weigh-in process with a minimum of 10 eligible players (per Game On Law Variations) who are less than 85.0kg, the referee will declare the match as abandoned and Competition Points will be awarded accordingly.

Junior Competition Specific Rules

8.19. Two Teams in the Same Age Grade

- (a) Players registered to a club may participate in both teams should a club have two teams nominated in the same age grade.
- (b) Players will be deemed eligible for only ONE team in finals. This will be determined by the team in which the player played the most games. Where a player has played an equal number of matches across two teams, the Club may nominate which team the player is eligible for for the finals series.

8.20. Re-Grading

- (a) Re-grading of any Junior Competition grades (A and B grade) may take place at the discretion of the Competition Manager. Rugby Victoria reserves the right to re-grade throughout the season.
- (b) Re-grading shall take place once RV has investigated the team on the following criteria:
 - (a) On field performance (including quality of opposition, Win/Loss ratio & Points Differential).
 - (b) Any other such criteria as RV considers appropriate.
- (c) Teams that are re-graded may keep their competition points (including points differential), when moving up or down a grade at the discretion of the Competition Manager.

8.21. Mercy Rule

NOTE – Mercy Rule (Game Balance Law or similar title) may be captured as part of the Rugby Australia Junior Law Variation Pilot. Where a Mercy Rule is not implemented as part of the pilot, the following rules will be implemented.

- (a) If the difference in score between two sides competing in the Under 11s to Under 18s reaches 50 points, then the Referee shall stop the game and declare the match completed, irrespective of ordinary time remaining. This includes finalising the match in Rugby Xplorer.
- (b) If sufficient time remains before the commencement of the next fixture, both team coaches shall liaise with the Referee to arrange to continue playing a friendly game with a more even playing environment.

Rugby Victoria Finals Series

8.22. Format

- (a) The Format for the finals series will be communicated to all Clubs prior to the commencement of the regular season. Generally speaking, the finals format will be structured as follows:

Competition	Finals Format	
Junior Competition	Week 1	Semi Final 1 & 2 (1 v 4, 2 v 3)
	Week 2	Grand Final (WSF1 v WSF2)
Senior Competition (4-team)	Week 1	Semi Final 1 & 2 (1 v 2, 3 v 4)
	Week 2	Preliminary Final (LSF1 v WSF2)
	Week 3	Grand Final (WSF1 v WPF)
Senior Competition (5-team)	Week 1	Quarter Final 1 & 2 (2 v 3, 4 v 5)
	Week 2	Semi Final 1 & 2 (1 v QF1, LQF1 v WQF2)
	Week 3	Preliminary Final (LSF1 v WSF2)
	Week 4	Grand Final (WSF1 v WPF)

8.23. Draw in a Finals Series Match

- (a) Semi Final or Preliminary Final Draw in Dewar Shield 1st Grade, Ward Shield 1st Grade and Lindroth Cup
 - (a) In the event that scores are equal at the end of ordinary time in the Dewar Shield 1st Grade, Ward Shield 1st Grade and Lindroth Cup semi-final or preliminary final, a period of extra time (sudden death) will be played.
- (b) Semi Final or Preliminary Final Draw in all other Grades
 - (a) In the event that scores are equal at the end of ordinary time in any other grade, no extra time will be played.
 - (b) The team which finished the home and away rounds in the higher position on the competition table will be declared the winner.
- (c) Grand Final Draw
 - (a) In the event that scores are equal at the end of ordinary time in any grades' grand final, a period of extra time (sudden death) will be played.

8.24. Extra Time (sudden death) in a Finals Series Match

- (a) Sudden Death – during the period of extra time the first team to score wins the match and there is no further time played.

- (b) There will be a five (5) minute break between the end of ordinary time and the commencement of extra time.
- (c) During the five (5) minute break, a coin toss will occur to determine running direction and kicking team. The lower ranked team will call the toss.
- (d) Extra time will be comprised of a maximum time as outlined in the table below.

Finals Type	Grade	Extra Time Half Length	
Semi Final or Preliminary Final	Dewar Shield 1 st Grade Ward Shield 1 st Grade Lindroth Cup	10 min	
	Grand Final	All Senior Grades U18	10 min
		U16	7 min
U11-U14		5 min	

- (e) During the period of extra time, there will be a half time break of two (2) minutes followed by teams changing ends. The team which kicked off the period of extra time shall receive the kick off to start the second half of extra time.
- (f) No additional substitutions/player movements over and above what is normally permitted for the grade will be afforded during extra time.
- (g) In the event that scores remain equal at the end of extra time, the team which finished the home and away rounds in the higher position on the competition table shall be declared the winner.

8.25. Player Eligibility for Finals

- (a) To be considered for finals eligibility a player must have:
 - (i) Been registered on or before 30 June in the competition year;
 - (ii) Played their first match on or before 30 June in the competition year;
 - (iii) Participated as a starting player or substitute player in at least one third (33%) of all available rounds in the competition.
- (b) Rugby Xplorer will be used as the source of truth to determine the number of matches and grade(s) each player has participated in. The "Player and Team Official History Report" will be used outlining the following:
 - (v) Played (P): Started the match on the field
 - (vi) Substitute (S): Started the match as a reserve player and took the field (as recorded by the Team Manager player movements)
 - (vii) Reserve (R): Started the match as a reserve player and did not take the field (was not recorded by the Team Manager in the player movements)
- (c) The order of determining which grade is counted in each round for finals eligibility will be as follows:
 - (i) Players listed as "Played (P)" in one or more grades in the same round will have their finals eligibility counted for the highest grade they were listed as "Played (P)"; then
 - (ii) Players listed only as "Substitute (S)" in one or more grades in the same round will have their finals eligibility counted for the highest grade they were listed as "Substitute (S)"; and
 - (iii) Players listed as "Reserve (R)" will not have that grade included in determination for finals eligibility in that match.
- (d) Finals eligibility in a particular grade will be determined by calculating the highest grade where a player has played 50% or more of their matches. Lower grades will count towards the % for the next highest grade.
- (e) A player will only be eligible to participate in finals in the grade they have been determined eligible for, or in a grade(s) higher than their eligible finals grade.

- (i) Where one or more consecutive grades from the same club are playing finals matches on the same day, then a finals eligible player may play in the consecutive grade(s) lower than their eligible grade on that day only.
- (f) Contracted Super Rugby Pacific and Super W players are:
 - (i) Only eligible to participate in Dewar Shield 1st Grade or Lindroth Cup; and
 - (ii) Must be registered for and participated as a starting player or substitute player in at least four (4) rounds in the competition year, or one third (33%) of the available rounds, whichever is lower;
- (g) **Request for Finals Dispensation:**
 - (i) An authorised representative of a club (e.g. President or Secretary) may make a request for a specific player to receive dispensation to play in finals (or a particular grade in finals) using the prescribed format and timeline provided by the Competition Manager.
 - (ii) Any submission for Finals Dispensation must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. medical documentation in cases of long-term injury).
 - (iii) Dispensation to participate in finals will only be provided in exceptional circumstances and at the absolute discretion of the Competition Manager.

9. Protests and Penalties

9.1. Protests regarding these Competition Rules

- (a) Protests can be made by:
 - (i) Either of the two Clubs who participated in the match subject to the alleged breach;
 - (ii) The relevant Referee Association (where a qualified Match Official was appointed to the match subject to the alleged breach);
- (b) Protests must be made in writing and be signed and sent by the President or Secretary of the Relevant Organisation;
- (c) Protests must be received by the Competition Manager by midday on the next business day after the match subject to the alleged breach;
- (d) All protests must specify the particular Competition Rule(s) that has been allegedly breached;
- (e) The Competition Manager shall determine if a club has breached the competition rule(s) on the civil standard of proof (i.e. more likely than not). The Competition Manager will then impose a penalty subject to the Schedule of Penalties.
- (f) The decision following a protest shall be determined as soon as reasonably practicable and outcome advised to all relevant parties.
- (g) The Competition Manager reserves the right to review all circumstances of the competition where these rules apply and take action where serious breach of these rules has occurred.

9.2. Appeals to a decision of the Competition Manager (regarding a breach to the Competition Rules)

- (a) The club who has received an outcome related to a breach of the Competition Rules has the right to appeal to the Rugby Australia Competitions Manager.
- (b) An appeal may only be brought on one of the following grounds:
 - (i) The decision was wrong in fact or rule application, and there is compelling evidence that the civil standard of proof cannot be met; or
 - (ii) The sanction imposed was manifestly excessive (only where a discretionary sanction, in part or in whole, was imposed).
- (c) Protests must be made in writing and be signed and sent by the President or Secretary of the Relevant Organisation.
- (d) Appeals must be received by the Competition Manager by no later than 7 calendar days after the decision is advised to the relevant club and must be accompanied by a \$250 appeal fee.
- (e) The Rugby Australia Competitions Manager shall be entitled to consider whether or not a breach of the Rules has occurred and/or the appropriateness of the penalty, and shall have the

discretion to vary the decision as they see fit and/or impose any other penalty as set out in the Schedule of Penalties (including discretionary penalty).

- (f) The Rugby Australia Competitions Manager has the sole discretion as to how they will deal with any appeal.
- (g) There are no appeals to a decision of the Rugby Australia Competitions Manager.

9.3. Extension of time

- (a) Notwithstanding any of the time limits stated in these Rules, the Competition Manager may exercise their sole discretion to allow reasonable extensions of time before the original time period elapses if considered to be in the interests of justice to do so.

9.4. Power of Review

- (a) The Rugby Victoria CEO, or their nominee, shall have the power to review any decision where the Rugby Victoria CEO is of the view that there has been a failure on behalf of any Rugby Body resulting in serious error, injustice or unfairness.
- (b) Where the Rugby Victoria CEO finds that there has been a failure to properly determine the outcome of a breach of a Competition Rule(s) resulting in serious error, injustice or unfairness, they can take such action as they consider necessary to remedy the error, injustice or unfairness of the matter.

9.5. Schedule of Penalties

- (a) A breach of any of the Competition Rules may result in any of the following discretionary penalties (including as a discretionary penalty in addition to a penalties listed in the Breach Penalties table):
 - (i) Warning;
 - (ii) Loss of competition points;
 - (iii) Issue of a Show Cause Notice;
 - (iv) Monetary fine;
 - (v) Expulsion from the Competition;
- (b) Breach Penalties Table
The table provides the likely penalty to be imposed by the Competition Manger in certain breach conditions:

Breach	Description/Example	First	Subsequent
Playing an ineligible player	Applies to the following (but not limited to): - unregistered players - players without dispensation - players currently serving suspension - players deemed otherwise ineligible by competition rules or MU/RA codes and policies	During minor rounds: - 5 competition point deduction During finals: - Forfeit match	During minor rounds: - 8 competition point deduction - \$500 fine During finals: - Forfeit match
Breach of Playing Enclosure and/or Technical Zone	- Entry to Playing Enclosure and/or Technical Zone by a non-approved participant	- Warning to Club	- 2 match suspension for all rugby activity within the playing enclosure
Failure to provide visible Ground Marshal	Host clubs must provide one (1) Ground Marshal per field (minimum). Ground Marshal must be clearly identifiable in close proximity to the	- \$250 fine to the Club	- \$500 fine to the Club - Potential loss of future home matches until evidence

	field, and be reasonably able to fulfil their duties.		provided to rectify issue
Failure to record accurate match details	Failure to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - submit team list for a match, or team list submission is inaccurate (e.g. wrong jersey numbers) - accurately record scores - accurately record player movements - accurately record cards (red, yellow and blue) 	- Warning	- 2 nd occurrence = loss of 2 competition points - 3 rd or more occurrence = loss of 5 competition points
Lack of Player Identification	Player does not have suitable photo attached to their RX profile and/or Player unable to reasonably prove identity through other means	- Warning to Club - Requirement for player to upload suitable photo to RX profile before next participating match	- 2 competition point deduction (may be applied to future competition) - Suspension of player until ID able to be regularly provided.

Principles of penalties regarding competition rule breaches:

The Competition Manager will use the following guiding principles when determining appropriate investigation and application of penalties following a breach to the competition rules.

Tier One: Dewar Shield and Lindroth Cup Sides

- Focus is on sanctioning non-compliances
- Specific and general deterrence are paramount
- Warnings will only be issued in exceptional circumstances

Tier Two: All other Senior Competitions

- Focus is on sanctioning non-compliances
- Whilst specific and general deterrence is important, recognition will be given to the resourcing level of the clubs when determining sanctions.
- Warnings may be issued, however there must be significant mitigating factors for this to occur.

Tier Three: All Junior Competitions

- Focus is on educating clubs and driving compliance
- Deterrence is a consideration when determining sanctions, however the individual circumstances of the club and team should be prioritized.
- Warnings may be given, sanctions may be imposed where there are deliberate, cynical or repeated breaches of the rules.