

Victorian Junior Rugby Championship

2026 Tournament Manual

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1. Introduction

The Victoria Junior Regional Championship (the **Tournament**) is a regional-based XV-a-side & 7-a-side competition for Youth Boys and Girls.

Participating regions: - **Wooroor (North)** - **Waring (South)** - **Treang (East)** - **Beek (West)**

The Tournament is conducted under Rugby Victoria Junior Competition Laws unless otherwise stated in this manual.

1.1 Use of the Tournament Manual

This manual outlines all rules, regulations, and operational requirements for planning, preparation, and participation.

All participating regions are responsible for ensuring compliance by players, coaches, managers, officials, and supporters.

Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action by Rugby Victoria.

2. Contact, Dates & Tournament Standards

2.1 Tournament Staff

Position	Name	Email
Tournament Director	Lachlan Buttenshaw	Lachlan.Buttenshaw@vic.rugby
Rugby Xplorer		RunningRugby@rugby.com.au

3. Participation Requirements

3.1 Team Management Declaration

Each grade must look to appoint:

- 1 × Head Coach (Smart Rugby + minimum Level 1 Coaching Accreditation)
- 1 × Assistant Coach (Smart Rugby + minimum Level 1 Coaching Accreditation)
- 1 × Team Manager (Accredited)
- 1 × Qualified First Aider (may be one of the above)

All personnel must hold **Staff Integrity Level 1** clearance.

3.2 Media & Photography

Participation in the Victorian Junior Rugby Championship grants consent for:

- Official Rugby Victoria photography
- Video recording for promotional and pathway purposes
- Use of images across Rugby Victoria digital platforms

No unauthorized livestreaming, broadcasting, or commercial photography is permitted without prior written approval from Rugby Victoria.

Tournament officials reserve the right to request cessation of unauthorized recording.

4. Regional Requirements

4.1 Regional Descriptions

Wooroor (North)

As we move further north, we move away from the artificial lighting of major towns and cities, which result in a clearer sky and provides our people with a greater ability to navigate around the country

Waring (South)

Towards the south, we head towards the ocean and sea. it is here where our people dwell along the coastal fringes and hold ceremonies which celebrate both the waterways and oceans

Treang (East)

In the east, there are greater mountain ranges and farming lands which are covered by an endless array of Trees and native bush lands which provide our people with bush medicines. This foliage allows our people protection from the elements and helps us build strong foundations for living

Beek (West)

In the west of the state, we recognize the continuing connection to country and larger geographical areas for numerous clans and people. It is on this ground that our people conduct ceremonies and still recognize sacred sites

4.2 Regional Responsibilities

Regions must:

1. Manage selection and training schedules within Rugby Victoria timelines
2. Act as the primary communication point for players and parents
3. Ensure all operational requirements are met, including:
 - Squad eligibility and Rugby Xplorer registration

5. Tournament Details

5.1 Tournament Dates

Elite Development Session Dates	Age Group
Sunday 15 th March	ALL
Sunday 22 nd March	ALL
Sunday 29 th March	ALL
Saturday 4 th April	ALL

Game Dates	Age Group
Wednesday 8 th April	U18 Boys
Sunday 12 th April	ALL
Wednesday 15 th April	U15/18 Boys
Sunday 19 th April	ALL

*Game schedule & times will be released in attached document

5.2 Tournament Format

Unless otherwise advised by the Tournament Director, match durations will be as follows:

U15 Boys (XV-a-side) (will play 1 full length game per week = 3 games)

- 2 × 30-minute halves

U18 Boys (XV-a-side) (will play 1 full length game per week = 4 games)

- 2 × 35-minute halves

U16 & U18 Girls (7-a-side)

- 2 × 7-minute halves

- Half-time duration will be 5 minutes (XV-a-side)
- Half-time duration will be 2 minutes (7-a-side)
- Teams must be ready to recommence play immediately at the referee's direction

The Tournament Director reserves the right to amend match length due to weather, heat, scheduling constraints, or player welfare considerations.

If a finals match is drawn at full time:

- No extra time will be played.
- The match will be awarded to the higher-ranked team from pool standings.

5.3 Substitutions

XV-a-side (U15 & U18 Boys):

- Rolling substitutions are permitted.
- All players must play at least one half in accordance with Section 5.4.

7-a-side (Girls):

- Rolling substitutions are permitted.

5.4 Playing Squad Limits

- **U15/U18 Boys:** Up to 25 players registered
 - Maximum of 23 named per match
- **U16/U18 Girls:** Up to 14 players registered
 - Maximum of 12 named per match

5.5 Squad Registration

All players and staff must be registered in **Rugby Xplorer** by 7th April 2026.

Elite Development Phase - U15, U16 & U18 Girls: \$145, U18 Boys: \$195 (excl. GST)

Selection Phase - \$95 (excl. GST)

5.6 Player Eligibility

U15 Boys – Born 2011, 2012

U16 Girls – Born 2010, 2011, 2012

U18 Boys – Born 2008, 2009, 2010

U18 Girls – Born 2008, 2009

All players must be registered to a Rugby Victoria club (primary region) or school (secondary region).

5.7 Gilbert Apparel

All regional apparel must be ordered through Rugby Victoria's official supplier.

- Each participant will receive a tee that will be numbered for the development trials
- All other merchandise must be purchased
- At the conclusion of the championship, players may keep their jerseys

Game Day Details

5.8. Technical Zone & Bench Management

A maximum of four (4) team staff are permitted within the Technical Zone:

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Team Manager
- Qualified First Aider / Trainer

All personnel must remain within the designated Technical Zone unless entering the field with referee permission.

5.8.1 Reserves & Bench Area

- All reserve players must remain seated in the designated bench area.
- Only approved substitutes may enter the field of play.
- Warmups to be held at end of each in-goal

5.8.2 Entry to the Field of Play

Only the following may enter the field of play:

- Players participating in the match
- Match officials
- Approved medical personnel
- Water carriers at 'time off' or after a try is scored

Coaches and non-medical staff are not permitted to enter the field under any circumstances.

5.9 Front Row and Scrum Regulations

For XV-a-side matches:

- Teams must nominate suitably trained and accredited front row players prior to kick-off.
- Each team must have a minimum of three (3) trained front row players to start the match.
- Teams must have sufficient front row replacements to safely continue contested scrums on the first occasion a replacement is required in each front row position.

Failure to meet front row requirements may result in uncontested scrums.

Uncontested Scrum Procedure

If a team cannot provide a suitably trained front row player due to injury or sanction:

- Scrums will become uncontested.
- The team responsible for uncontested scrums may be required to play with one player fewer than is otherwise allowed.
- The referee's decision regarding scrum safety is final.

Player safety takes precedence over competitive outcomes.

5.10 Code of Conduct

The Rugby Australia Code of Conduct applies.

Zero tolerance for abuse of match officials. Breaches may result in increased sanctions.

5.11 Tournament Venue

La Trobe University –

Home of Rugby Victoria

Kingsbury Drive, Bundoora

5.12 Yellow & Red Cards

Age Group	Sin Bin	Replacement
U15 Boys	5 minutes	No
U18 Boys	10 minutes	No
U16 Girls	2 minutes	No
U18 Girls	2 minutes	No

A player who receives **two (2) yellow cards in the same match** will automatically be issued a **Red Card**.

Upon receiving a second yellow card:

- The player will take no further part in the match.
- The player is not permitted to participate in any further matches on that day.
- No replacement will be permitted unless otherwise specified under competition rules.

The referee's decision is final.

Further disciplinary review may be conducted at the discretion of the Tournament Director or Judiciary Committee in line with Rugby Australia regulations.

6. Medical & Insurance

6.1 Match Day Medical

Qualified match-day medical personnel will be appointed for all fixtures throughout the tournament. These may include sports trainers, first aid officers, paramedics, or physiotherapists as determined by the tournament organizers.

Medical personnel will:

- Conduct injury assessments during matches
- Manage on-field medical incidents
- Determine a player's suitability to continue participation
- Coordinate emergency procedures where required

The decision of the appointed match-day medic regarding a player's fitness to continue is final and must be respected by coaches, players, and team officials.

Each team is encouraged to have their own team trainer present; however, ultimate medical authority on match day rests with the appointed tournament medical personnel.

6.2 Concussion Protocol & Blue Card

All concussion management will be conducted in accordance with **Rugby Australia Concussion Guidelines**.

The tournament operates under a strict **Recognise and Remove** policy.

Recognise and Remove

If a player:

- Displays signs or symptoms of concussion
- Is suspected of having sustained a concussion
- Has been involved in a high-risk head impact event

They must be immediately removed from play.

If a Blue Card is issued:

- The player must take no further part in the match
- The player must not return to play for the remainder of that day
- The player must follow Rugby Australia's graduated return-to-play protocol
- Medical clearance is required prior to returning to training or competition

No Sideline HIA

There will be **no sideline Head Injury Assessments (HIA)** conducted during matches.

If there is any doubt regarding a player's condition, the player will not return to play. Player welfare takes precedence over competition outcomes.