



**RUGBY**  
UNION SA

# 2026 RugbySA Participation Recruitment and Retention



# PLAYER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGIES



## INCLUDE AN BRIEF STATEMENT RELATING TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FOR YOUR CLUB

We believe in long-term player development and invest in coaching, support, and facilities to help every member reach their full potential. Our recruitment and retention plan centers on creating a positive club culture, emphasizing teamwork, respect, and community engagement, both on and off the field.



## KEY OUTCOMES THE CLUB WISHES TO FOCUS ON

- Environment e.g. demonstration of behaviour that reflects club values, creation of an inclusive environment
- Education e.g. promotion of support and education to players wanting to strengthen their skills, provide educational resources to members in order for them to further develop their knowledge of the game
- Promotion e.g. promotion of club profile within the clubs local community



## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

- Development of Female Director of Rugby role within the club committee
- Improvement and promotion of clear and defined player pathway opportunities within the club
- Develop relationship with local schools and work with Member Union/Association to deliver activations to students



## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A RETENTION STRATEGY

- Development of a player satisfaction survey, use feedback gathered to enhance player experience at club
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive club member register and keep in contact with these players throughout the off season
- Creation of a club Mental Health Program

# PLAYER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGIES



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER PARTICIPATION

- Which age groups represent our strongest participation opportunities?
- Where are we experiencing the greatest player loss or retention challenges?
- How can we improve the experience for existing players and volunteers?
- What opportunities exist to recruit new participants from schools and the local community?
- What resources or support do we need to achieve our participation goals?



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER CLUB CULTURE

- What makes our club different from others?
- Why do people choose to join our club?
- Why do people stay?
- Would our current players recommend our club to a friend?
- Are we providing a welcoming environment for new members and families?
- Are families enjoying their experience at the club?
- What feedback have we received from members this year?
- Are we engaging with members during the off-season?

# ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES



## RECRUITMENT STRATEGY: DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

1. Identify club representative who has a preestablished connection with local schools to take on 'Schools Coordinator' role within the committee
2. Promotion of club programs within school newsletters or bulletin boards
3. Schools Coordinator to reach out to State Union or relevant Association to get their school engagement calendar. Schools Coordinator to develop a club school engagement calendar in alignment with this



## RETENTION STRATEGY: DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYER SATISFACTION SURVEY

1. Determine survey questions with club committee that align with clubs overarching strategic plan and recruitment & retention strategy
2. Send to all players within the club register
3. Review and collate data from survey results
4. Create club strategies, actions, policies and events based on survey data

*strategy > action plan > nominate individuals responsible  
> resources required > budget > timeline*

# JUNIOR PARTICIPATION TRENDS



Participation by age group showing key strengths, gaps, and retention trends across the junior competition.

|      | 4   | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 12    | 13    | 14    | 15    | 16    | 17    | 18    |
|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2024 | 60  | 1,081 | 2,182 | 2,632 | 3,212 | 3,559 | 4,092 | 4,435 | 4,729 | 4,763 | 4,766 | 4,312 | 3,792 | 2,376 | 1,507 |
| 2025 | 970 | 1,478 | 2,289 | 2,689 | 2,971 | 3,580 | 3,991 | 4,337 | 4,811 | 4,646 | 4,783 | 4,435 | 3,768 | 2,448 | 1,415 |
| 2026 | 806 | 1,767 | 2,051 | 2,638 | 2,920 | 3,190 | 3,797 | 3,836 | 3,909 | 3,808 | 3,791 | 3,502 | 2,917 | 1,871 | 1,089 |

|      | BOYS   | GIRLS |
|------|--------|-------|
| 2024 | 41,260 | 8,087 |
| 2025 | 40,872 | 7,939 |
| 2026 | 36,725 | 5,545 |

| % GROWTH | BOYS   | GIRLS  |
|----------|--------|--------|
| 2024     | -0.9%  | -1.6%  |
| 2025     | -0.9%  | -1.8%  |
| 2026     | -10.1% | -30.1% |

| % GROWTH | BOYS  | GIRLS  |
|----------|-------|--------|
| 2024     | -3.7% | -3.0%  |
| 2025     | -0.3% | 10.9%  |
| 2026     | -3.6% | -30.4% |

2026 PARTICIPATION DATA AS AT 05 MAY

# SENIOR PARTICIPATION TRENDS



Showcasing the senior competition, including the volunteer workforce that exists within South Australian Rugby

| PLAYERS | MALE   | FEMALE | TOTAL  |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2024    | 32,246 | 8,411  | 40,657 |
| 2025    | 33,155 | 8,636  | 41,791 |
| 2026    | 25,540 | 5,742  | 31,282 |

| COACH | MALE  | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2024  | 7,094 | 583    | 7,677 |
| 2025  | 8,208 | 831    | 9,039 |
| 2026  | 6,985 | 629    | 7,614 |

| MATCH OFFICIAL | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|----------------|------|--------|-------|
| 2024           | 2618 | 366    | 2984  |
| 2025           | 3164 | 525    | 3689  |
| 2026           | 2664 | 345    | 3009  |

| VOLUN. | MALE   | FEMALE | TOTAL  |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2024   | 14,500 | 6,635  | 21,135 |
| 2025   | 16,774 | 7,371  | 24,145 |
| 2026   | 14,368 | 5,885  | 20,253 |

WEEKLY REGISTRATIONS NEED A MINIMUM OF 4 TEAMSHEET ENTRIES TO COUNT TOWARDS FIGURES

2026 PARTICIPATION DATA AS AT 05 MAY

# JUNIOR PARTICIPATION TRENDS



Participation by age group showing key strengths, gaps, and retention trends across the junior competition.

|      | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12  | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 2024 | 0  | 14 | 38 | 63 | 62 | 79 | 93 | 79 | 75  | 86 | 81 | 88 | 83 | 62 | 62 |
| 2025 | 12 | 15 | 34 | 43 | 64 | 69 | 80 | 90 | 82  | 77 | 95 | 87 | 80 | 70 | 64 |
| 2026 | 9  | 27 | 39 | 43 | 49 | 66 | 76 | 86 | 101 | 81 | 71 | 83 | 69 | 67 | 60 |

|      | BOYS | GIRLS |
|------|------|-------|
| 2024 | 965  | 193   |
| 2025 | 962  | 214   |
| 2026 | 927  | 149   |

| % GROWTH | BOYS  | GIRLS  |
|----------|-------|--------|
| 2024     | -3.7% | -3.0%  |
| 2025     | -0.3% | 10.9%  |
| 2026     | -3.6% | -30.4% |

| CLUB TEAMS | XVs |
|------------|-----|
| 2024       | 60  |
| 2025       | 62  |
| 2026       | 61  |

2026 PARTICIPATION DATA AS AT 05 MAY

# SENIOR PARTICIPATION TRENDS



Showcasing the senior competition, including the volunteer workforce that exists within South Australian Rugby

| PLAYERS | MALE  | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|---------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2024    | 1,021 | 221    | 1,242 |
| 2025    | 995   | 244    | 1,239 |
| 2026    | 806   | 180    | 986   |

| COACH | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|-------|------|--------|-------|
| 2024  | 185  | 21     | 208   |
| 2025  | 173  | 28     | 204   |
| 2026  | 184  | 19     | 205   |

| MATCH OFFICIAL | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|----------------|------|--------|-------|
| 2024           | 43   | 14     | 57    |
| 2025           | 49   | 17     | 66    |
| 2026           | 50   | 11     | 61    |

| VOLUN. | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|--------|------|--------|-------|
| 2024   | 220  | 154    | 374   |
| 2025   | 250  | 194    | 444   |
| 2026   | 218  | 214    | 432   |

2026 PARTICIPATION DATA AS AT 05 MAY

WEEKLY REGISTRATIONS NEED A MINIMUM OF 4 TEAMSHEET ENTRIES TO COUNT TOWARDS FIGURES