RUGBY AUSTRALIA JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS

U11 & U12

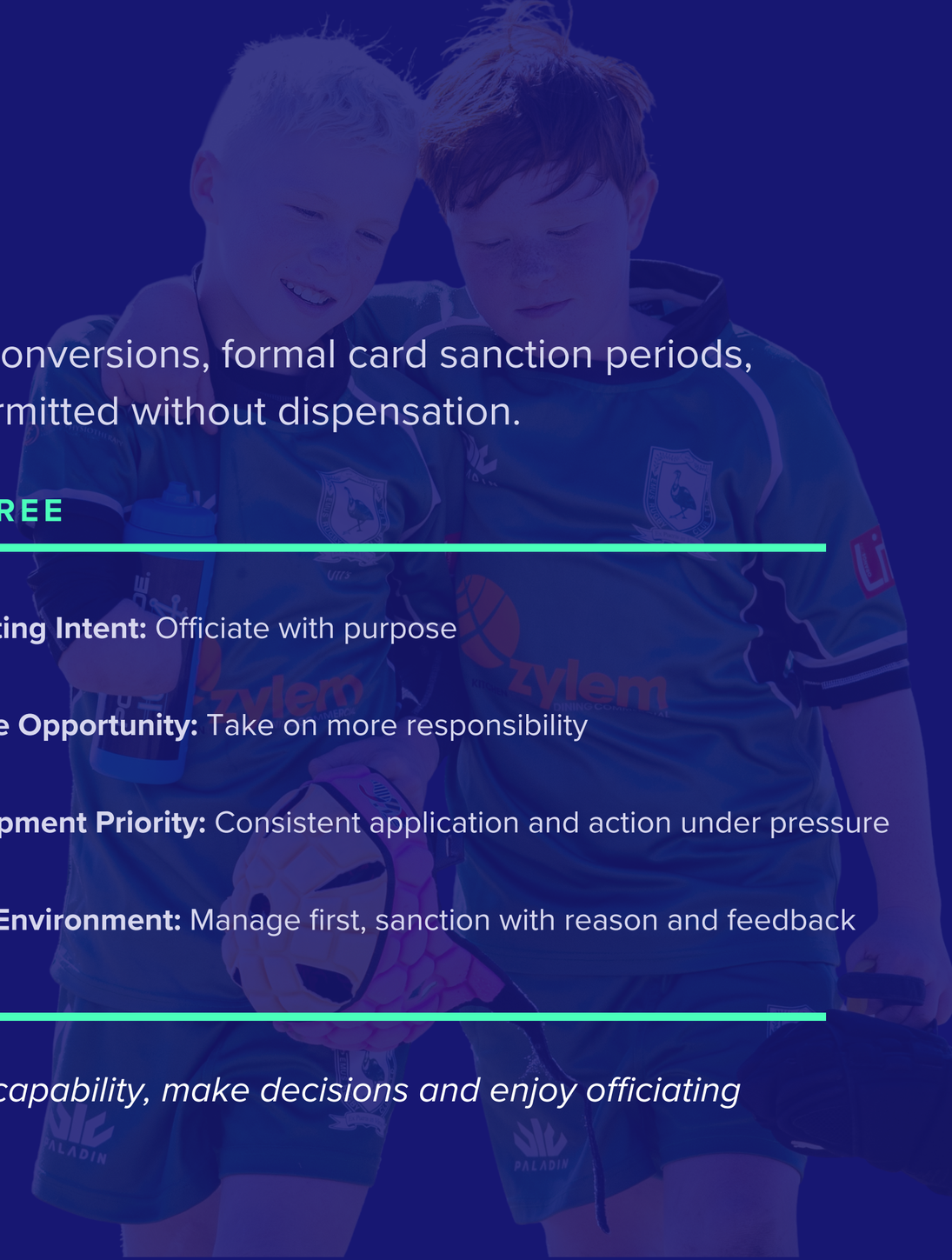
Laws and Game Management

RUGBY AU

JUNIOR · BAND 3 OF 6

U11 & U12

The transition band. Contested scrum and lineout, kicking and conversions, formal card sanction periods, and no on-field coach. The last band where mixed gender is permitted without dispensation.



COACH

Game Intent: Play with purpose

Player Opportunity: Take on more responsibility

Development Priority: Execution, support play and basics under pressure

Coaching Environment: Provide challenge, feedback and opportunities

Challenge thinking, develop decision makers

REFEREE

Officiating Intent: Officiate with purpose

Referee Opportunity: Take on more responsibility

Development Priority: Consistent application and action under pressure

Match Environment: Manage first, sanction with reason and feedback

Grow capability, make decisions and enjoy officiating

U11 & U12 JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS

Law Set

What the law is, how it can be broken, the sanction, and how play restarts.

RUGBY AU

U11 & U12 Sanctionable Laws

CONTACT AND OPEN PLAY

Tackle	PK
Fend or palm	PK
Tackle and ruck, WR offences	PK
Maul, general play only	PK
Offside	PK
Kicking, 50:22 or drop goal	FK

SCRUM

Engagement	FK
Push, 1.5m max	FK
Binds	PK
Ball use	PK
Use it call, 5 seconds	FK
Crooked feed	FK
Offside line, 5m	PK

LINEOUT

Safety	PK
Skill execution	FK
Ball use	FK
Offside line, 5m	PK

Penalty Kick Restart: Any option except kick at goal. Defenders retreat 10m
Free Kick Restart: Tap only. Scrum option not available.

U11 & U12 Contact and Open Play, 1 of 2

KEY LAW **Tackle height is below the base of the sternum at every age group, U8 to U18.**

Tackle

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 14, 9.13

Below the base of the sternum. No sling tackle. No squeeze ball.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Tackle contact made at or above the base line of the sternum (chest, shoulder, neck or head).
- **Sling tackle:** the tackler grabs the ball carrier and rotates or swings them, creating a dangerous spinning motion.
- **Squeeze ball:** the tackled player squeezes the ball back between their legs, or lays the egg, putting their body in a dangerous position.

Fend / Palm

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 9.24

A fend must not be made to the face or neck of the defending player.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A fend or palm directed at the face or neck of the opponent.
- A fend or palm delivered with excessive or disproportionate force, more than is necessary to hand off the approaching defender.

Tackle and ruck: World Rugby offences

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 15 AND 16

Sanctioned as they are in World Rugby Law.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The tackler fails to release the ball carrier or fails to roll away.
- A player enters the contest other than through the gate, that is, not from behind the hindmost point of their own players.
- A player in the contest is not on their feet, lying on the ground at or over the ball.
- The ball is played with the hand or hands after a ruck has formed.
- A player intentionally falls on or over the ball, or deliberately collapses the ruck.
- A player attempts to kick the ball out of the ruck.

U11 & U12 Contact and Open Play, 2 of 2

Maul

WR

WORLD RUGBY LAW 16

Players abide by World Rugby Law and the Game Management Guidelines focus areas. A Maul can only occur in general play.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Deliberately collapsing a maul.
- Joining a maul other than through the gate.
- A player on the ground in or around the maul while the ball is being used.
- The tap and pass is not taken at the mark where the maul formed
- Obstruction: preventing opponents from reaching the maul without binding.
- Pulling an opponent into the maul who is not already in contact.
- Failure to use the ball within 5 seconds after the referee calls “use it”.
- A team takes the ball into a maul and the ball does not emerge.

Offside

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 14.10, 15.4, 16.4, 18.30

The offside line at the tackle contest is the hindmost point of the players in the ruck or tackle. In general play, the defending team may advance once the ball is played.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- In general play, a defending player advances before the ball leaves the tackle contest.
- From a scrum, a defending player advances before the halfback or No. 8 plays the ball.
- From a lineout, a defending player advances before the ball leaves the lineout.
- Defending players who are not part of the tackle contest and who are in front of the ball are offside and must not participate in play.

Kicking in general play

FK

NO WORLD RUGBY EQUIVALENT

Kicking is permitted in general play. 50/22 does not apply.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A player attempts to kick a drop goal.

RESTART MECHANICS

Penalty Kick. Non-offending team may choose any penalty option **other than a kick at goal.**
Defenders retreat 10m.

Free Kick. Free kick to the non-offending team.
Defenders retreat 10m.

U11 & U12 Scrum Laws, 1 of 2

Scrum: Binds

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.7

Crutch binding is allowed in all junior and youth age groups. Any team may choose to waist bind, but the opposition may continue to crutch bind.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Bind other than by an approved crutch bind or waist bind on the prop immediately in front of them.
- Players within the same team do not use the same bind.
- A player drops or releases their bind before the ball leaves the scrum.
- Elbows are not maintained in an upward position during the bind.
- A player binds with only one arm rather than a full two arm bind.

Scrum: Engagement

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19

World Rugby Law engagement sequence: crouch, bind, set. Hookers must have a 'brake' foot position to help stability and to avoid axial loading.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A prop does not crouch, bind and set correctly before engagement.
- A team engages early
- The scrum is not stable at engagement.

Scrum: Feed

N/A

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.15

The ball must be fed from the left hand side of the scrum, and fed so that it can be hooked back by the hooker.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The halfback throws the ball not straight, directing it towards their own hooker's side rather than down the centre of the tunnel.
- The ball fails to touch the ground first in the middle of the tunnel before the hooker plays it.
- The ball is not hooked by the attacking hooker.

U11 & U12 Scrum Laws, 2 of 2

Scrum: Push

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19, 19.19

Maximum 1.5m push. Both teams must stop driving once 1.5m has been reached. The scrum must not be wheeled through more than 45 degrees.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The scrum is pushed or driven forward more than 1.5m.
- A team does not push straight.
- The scrum is unintentionally wheeled through more than 45 degrees.

Scrum: Offside Line

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.27

The offside line is 5m from the last feet of the scrum. The defending team must wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball from the scrum.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A defending player advances beyond the 5m offside line before the halfback plays the ball or the No.8 runs.
- A defending back row forward breaks from the scrum before the ball is out.
- The defending halfback does not start at the mid point of the scrum.

Scrum: Ball Use

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.36

From the back of the scrum the halfback may pass, run or kick, or the No.8 may pass, run or kick. No other player may lift the ball from the base of the scrum.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A player other than the halfback or the No.8 picks up the ball from the back of the scrum.

U11 & U12 Lineout Laws, 1 of 2

Lineout: Safety

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18.19

Only the attacking team may jump. Lifting is by the legs or shorts. The defending team must not compete for the ball. Any action by the offending team that makes a player unsafe is a Penalty Kick.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A defending player jumps, rises or attempts to compete for the ball.
- A defending player contacts or interferes with an attacking jumper or their lifters.
- Lifting occurs other than by the legs or shorts, for example by the body, jersey, arms above the shorts or thigh area, or from below the waist on the trunk.
- A lifted player is not brought safely back to the ground after the ball has been played.

Lineout: Skill Execution

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18, 18.23

The attacking team must make an attempt to complete the lineout skill of throw, jump and lift a player, and then either release the ball off the top or bring it down and pop.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The attacking team makes no effort to jump and lift a player in the lineout.
- The lineout is not completed, that is, the throw, jump and lift are not attempted.
- The ball is thrown over the lineout.
- Either team does not have the correct number of players in the lineout.

where the ball is not taken cleanly and goes forward, this is a knock on and the restart is a scrum, not a Free Kick.

Lineout: Ball Use

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18

The receiver (halfback) must pass the ball to the first receiver. Any player in the backline may be the first receiver.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The receiver fails to pass to the first receiver.
- The receiver runs with the ball rather than passing. A player may take a step to generate the power needed to pass.

U11 & U12 Lineout Laws, 2 of 2

Lineout: Offside Line

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18.30

Defenders and attackers each stand 5m back from the line of touch. The defending team may advance once the ball is in the hands of the first receiver.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A defending or attacking player advances beyond the 5m line from the line of touch before the ball is in the hands of the first receiver.
- A lineout participant steps forward across the line of touch before the ball has been thrown in.

U11/12 JUNIOR RUGBY

Game Management

How the game is set up, run and managed on match day.

RUGBY AU

Team and squad numbers

ON THE FIELD

12

Players per side. Teams match numbers and share players, except where a team is observing a yellow or red card sanction.

Law 3.1–3.2. Senior maximum is 15; a match organiser may authorise fewer.

SQUAD SIZE

17

Suggested maximum match day squad.

Not a World Rugby Law. A participation guideline, not set by the Laws of the Game.

REPLACEMENTS

Unlimited

Movements at any stoppage, excluding a free kick or penalty.

Law 3.4–3.5. Under World Rugby Law, replacements are made when the ball is dead.

MINIMUM TO PLAY · AND THE SCRUM THAT FOLLOWS

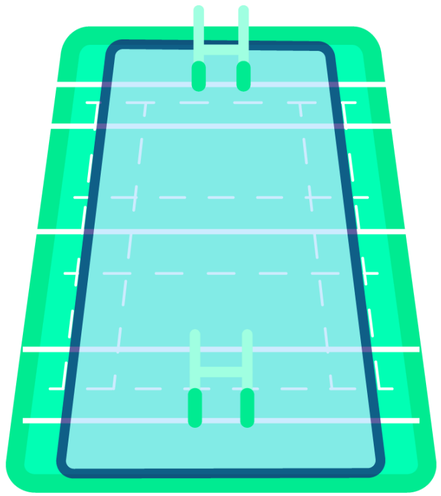
Minimum numbers for a game is 7 players per team.

7 players 3 person scrum	**8** players 3 person scrum	**9** players 5 person scrum	**10** players 5 person scrum	**11** players 5 person scrum

A five person scrum is front row plus second row. Minimum 10 players to start a game at U11/12.

Match set up

PLAYING AREA · FULL FIELD LESS 10M



All field markings are used and referred to as painted.

Law 1.3. Senior field is a maximum 100m x 70m; 1.3(b) allows approved variations.

BALL SIZE
Size 4

Male and female.

Law 2.3–2.4. Smaller balls permitted for young players.

PLAYING TIME
50 min

Two 25 minute halves.

Law 5.1–5.3. The organiser may reduce match length.

WARM-UP
25 min

Maximum warm-up time.

Not a World Rugby Law. Match day logistics.

INJURY TIME
None

None is played. Applies U8 to U18.

Law 5.5(a). Senior: up to one minute.

SCORING
Try and conversion

Conversion by drop kick or place kick. No penalty goals or field goals. A try outside the 15m line is converted from the 15m line.

Law 8.1 sets senior points values.

Scrum set up

SET-UP AND NUMBERS **CONTESTED**

6 players per team, at all times



2 props

1 hooker

2 second rowers

1 No.8

Push is capped at 1.5m. No.8 moves are allowed.

Law 19.5–19.6 (8 players in the senior game, reduced to a minimum of 5).

UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

Only where a team cannot field a suitably trained front row, or through injury

Six players per team in the scrum. There is no sanction where a team plays uncontested scrums — this is a participation provision, and a team is not penalised where it cannot contest.

Law 3.15–3.20 (uncontested scrums following a card or injury).

PLAYERS REMOVED FOR A CARD

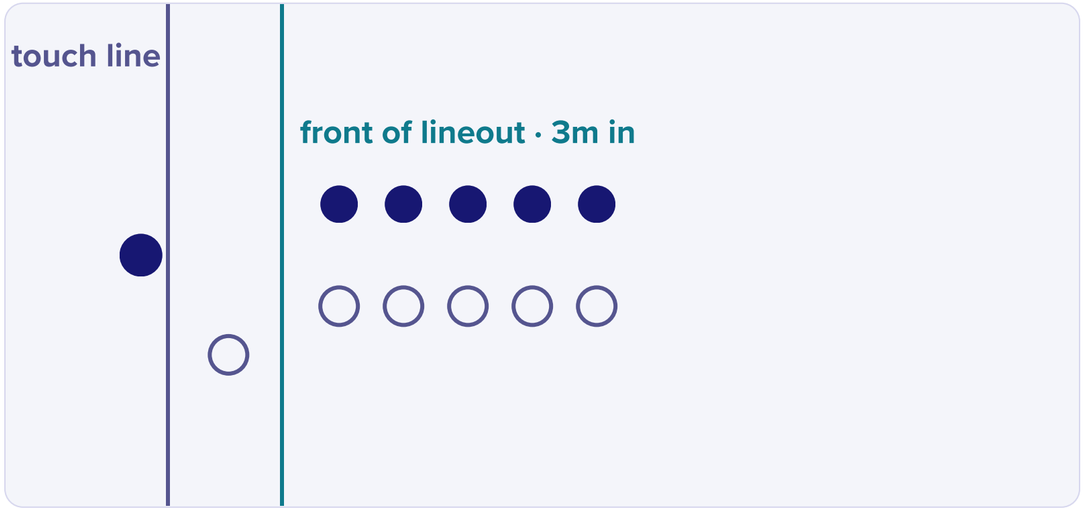
Teams must still have 6 players in the scrum at all times.

Lineout set up

SET-UP AND NUMBERS

6 players per team, plus a receiver

The halfback receiver is additional to the six. Numbers must be matched.



Attacking: 1 thrower and 5 participants. Defending: 1 hooker in the channel and 5 participants. The lineout cannot be closer than 5m from the goal line.

Law 18.3–18.16 (quick throw mechanics and forming a lineout).

LIFTING

Only the attacking team may jump

Lifting is by the legs or shorts. The defending team must not compete for the ball. The attacking team must make an effort to jump and lift a player.

Law 18.19 and 18.29(c) (lifting or supporting a jumper).

PLAYERS REMOVED FOR A CARD

Both teams match the reduced number

Teams match lineout numbers at all times to create space on the field. The lineout stays contested with equal numbers, and the card takes effect in the backline, where the non-offending team has one additional player.

Law 18.13–18.14. The non-throwing team cannot have more players in the lineout than the throwing team.

Coaching and field support

No on-field coach

This is where on-field coaching stops. It is present at U8 to U10, and not from U11 onward.

It is recommended that the coach stands behind the player's bench, inside the field enclosure.

Not a World Rugby Law. On-field coaching is a junior development and participation provision, outside the Laws of the Game.

COACHING ACCREDITATION · REQUIRED

- **Smart Rugby**
- **Season Ready**

COACHING ACCREDITATION · RECOMMENDED

- **Junior and Youth Coach Course**
- **Continual Personal Development (CPD)**

Not a World Rugby Law. A coaching accreditation and workforce matter, not set by the Laws of the Game.

Cards and concussion

Yellow card

5 minutes

Actual game time. The player cannot be replaced. The player, or a replacement, may take the field once the 5 minutes expires.

All yellow cards must be recorded in Rugby Xplorer.

Law 9.29. Senior sin bin is 10 minutes.

Red card

Suspended until a judicial hearing

The red carded player cannot return. A replacement may take the field after 10 minutes of actual game time.

All red cards must be recorded in Rugby Xplorer.

Law 9.30.

Blue card

No blue card is shown at U11/12.

Managed by the referee with the team coach from the sideline and the medic, first aid officer or trainer. There is no on-field coach at this age group. The referee blue card applies from U13 and older.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed under WR Concussion Guidance and the RA CMP.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL · RA CMP

Applies to all rugby, at all ages.

Regulation 10, Law 3.11 and the RA Concussion Management Procedure.

Any player with signs or symptoms of suspected concussion must leave the field immediately.

The player can be replaced.

No person — medic, first aid officer, trainer, coach or doctor — can override this.

Graduated return to play: minimum 21 days for players aged 18 and under.

Game Balance Law

MAXIMUM POINTS DIFFERENCE

60

Once the threshold is reached, the coach of the losing team chooses one of three options.

Not a World Rugby Law. An RA specific mechanic with no World Rugby equivalent. The score must be known on the field at every age group so this law can operate.

OPTION 1

Mix the teams

Teams are mixed and players are shared.

OPTION 2

Play on

Play continues. No changes to teams.

OPTION 3

End the game

The game is ended.

The referee's authority to stop play for safety reasons is unaffected and exists independently of this law.

MOUTHGUARDS

Strongly recommended

Not mandatory under national junior law, but all contact players should wear a properly fitted mouthguard. Some competitions make them compulsory — check local rules.

Law 4.3(f). A mouthguard is a permitted item of clothing; the senior Law does not mandate it.

Kick off, penalty and free kick

KICK OFF AND AFTER A TRY CONTESTED



Drop kick by the try-scoring team, and a contest for possession from the kick off or restart is permitted.

An incorrect kick off allows a second attempt at the referee's discretion. Where the second kick is also incorrect, or the ball goes dead or over the sideline, play restarts on halfway.

PENALTY KICK

Any penalty option other than a penalty goal or field goal attempt. Defenders back 10m.

FREE KICK · TAP ONLY

The scrum option is not available at a free kick. Defenders back 10m. An incorrect tap is brought back and retaken.

Law 20.3–20.4, 20.8, 20.12.

ADVANTAGE

Not played for any foul play under Law 9 — except in the act of scoring a try, where a penalty try is awarded.

Where foul play occurs, stop play immediately and award the penalty kick. Advantage is played in all other circumstances, including knock-ons and forward passes.

Restarting the game

IN-GOAL RESTART · WHO PUT THE BALL IN DECIDES

The attacking team puts the ball in goal, and it is grounded or made dead by the defending team, or the attacking team is held up

Tap to the defending team on the 22m line

The defending team puts the ball in goal and then grounds it in their own in-goal

5m scrum to the attacking team

The 2027 World Rugby goal line drop out is not adopted at U11/12. It applies from U13 upward.

Law 12.11–12.13 (22 metre and try line drop outs).

KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS

Scrum, thrown in by the team not in possession at the time. Set at the mark under World Rugby Law.

Law 11.1–11.2; Law 19.1.

RESTART POSITIONING

Not applicable. The scrum mark is 5m from the touch line and 5m from the goal line under World Rugby Law.

Law 19.2–19.4.

50M / 22M KICK

Not permitted

Kicking is permitted at U11/12, but there is no 50:22.

Law 18.8(a).

Age and dispensation

AGE GROUP WINDOW

Best practice

Play within a one year age window.

Acceptable practice U11 & U12

Play within a two year age window.

Exceptional practice

Three year window, following specific criteria in union policy, including consent and assessment.

World Rugby Player Welfare Guidelines, Age Differential Playing Guideline. Rugby Australia's Size for Age guidelines also apply.

U11 **Players turning 10 or 11 in the calendar year can participate. Acceptable practice, eligible age grades.**

U12 **Players turning 11 or 12 in the calendar year can participate. Acceptable practice, eligible age grades.**

AGE GRADE DISPENSATION

Two grades up, or one grade down, needs approval

Size for Age guidelines apply, including mandatory assessment where required.

SCHEDULE B

Front row assessment

Any player intending to play two single age grades up in a front row position requires Schedule B assessment and approval.

Gender participation

Mixed gender

Boys and girls may be selected in the same team and play with and against each other. Eligibility runs to the end of the calendar year in which a player turns 12.

This is the last age band in which mixed gender is the starting position.

MIXED GENDER DISPENSATION

Not applicable at U11/12

Mixed gender participation is the starting position at this age group, so no dispensation is required.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed by the RA Mixed Gender Dispensation Procedure.

GENDER IDENTITY

Play in the gender you identify with

Where the age group is played as mixed gender, dispensation is generally not engaged. Where a single gender competition is offered, the Gender Identity Dispensation Procedure applies.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed by the RA Gender Identity Dispensation Procedure.

RUGBY AUSTRALIA JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS

U11/12 JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS SET