

Physical Maturity Assessment Information Sheet

Male Under-16 into Under-18 Rugby

Why is a physical maturity assessment necessary?

Medical research shows that 95% of boys have reached physical maturity by the age of 16. This means that a boy of 15 who plays Under-17 or Under-18 rugby will be mainly competing with physically mature young men when he may not yet be physically mature, and as a result is exposed to a greater risk of serious injury.

Scottish Rugby will only permit exceptional 15-year-old players who have reached physical maturity and have the appropriate level of playing experience and skill levels to play in a higher age band, if this is considered to be in the player's best interests by his coach and parents.

What does a physical maturity assessment consist of?

Physical maturity assessments are designed to assess the stage of development of the player's skeleton, a key factor in avoidance of serious injury.

The assessment consists of measuring the player's height and weight and assessing his hand grip strength (both hands) via a grip dynamometer. Research shows that this set of measurements can be correlated and considered against the parameters devised by the Scottish Committee of Orthopaedic and Trauma surgeons (SCOT group) to give a reliable indication of the stage of development of an individual's skeleton.

What are the parameters?

To ensure complete impartiality and to remove the chance of players/parents or coaches putting undue pressure on testers or players, the parameters which must be met are not known by those carrying out the tests or those being tested.

You cannot pass or fail a physical maturity assessment and it is not possible to affect the player's level of physical maturity through physical training techniques. It is important that a young player is not put under pressure to move up an age grade before they are physically mature enough to do so.

Can players be reassessed?

Players whose results indicate that they are close to physical maturity may apply to be re-tested after 3 months. No other players will be retested.

For further information on the male under-16 into under-18 policy, please visit the age banding page on the Scottish Rugby website at <https://www.scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/player-welfare/age-banding> or contact ayrtpr@sru.org.uk