Under-16 Players in Under-18 Rugby Policy (Male)

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UNDER-16 PLAYERS IN UNDER-18 RUGBY (male players)

Introduction
Scottish Rugby’s Under-16 Players in Under-18 Rugby policy is a fundamental part of the organisation’s Are You Ready to Play Rugby? campaign, which was launched in February 2009 following extensive consultation with all stakeholders. This policy has been drafted as a result of that campaign and will come into effect from the start of the season 2009/10.

Medical studies support the view that there is increased risk of injury when physically immature males play contact sports against physically mature males. The vast majority of boys (more than 95%) reach physical maturity by the time they turn 16 years of age. As such, boys who have not yet turned 16 should not play with or against players who are aged 16 and over as, in doing so, they will be exposed to an increased risk of injury. Medical studies also support that there is amplified risk for players playing in the front row (prop or hooker).

The purpose of this policy is to:

• Eliminate the occasions where physically mature males are playing against physically immature males;

• Protect the safety and welfare of players participating in under-18 rugby at an age younger than sixteen years, by ensuring that players participating in under-18 rugby competition/games have comparable physical maturity, skill levels and playing experience with the participants they are playing with and against; and

• Ensure that all involved in the decision to permit a player to participate in an under-18 rugby game/competition at an age younger than sixteen years understand that rugby is a contact sport and, like all contact sports, players are exposed to the risk of injury and that this risk may be heightened where a player participates in an under-18 rugby game/competition at an age younger than sixteen years of age.

Scope
This policy applies to all male players, coaches/teachers and administrators involved in rugby in Scotland, in member clubs and affiliated schools* of Scottish Rugby, and to all rugby competitions/matches played in accordance with the Laws of the Game in Scotland.

* Under World Rugby regulations, all clubs and schools who wish to play rugby union are required to be affiliated to their national union. The Scottish Rugby insurance policy covers all member clubs and affiliated schools.

Definitions
For the purpose of this policy:

• Under-16 defines a player who has not yet turned 16 years of age

• Under-18 rugby defines all games of under-18 rugby played by clubs and schools in Scotland
Policy

The age at which male players are permitted to participate in under-18 rugby shall be sixteen years old.

This policy must be followed unless the exception below is applicable.

Exception: In exceptional cases, a player’s physical maturity, skill level and experience may be such that he may be allowed to participate in under-18 rugby at the age of fifteen years old.

Players are only permitted to participate in under-18 rugby at fifteen years of age under the following circumstances:

1. Where the player will not play under-18 rugby in the front row (prop or hooker) until they turn 16.
2. Where the player and coach have completed the online World Rugby Rugby Ready course (see http://rugbyready.worldrugby.org).
3. Where the club or school complies with the procedure detailed below and completes the Under-16 in Under-18 application form.
4. Where the player attends a medical assessment on his physical maturity arranged by Scottish Rugby.
5. Where the player and his parents agree that he becomes part of an ongoing study on rugby injuries.
6. Written approval from Scottish Rugby must be received before any fifteen year old player participates in under-18 rugby.

Obligations of Employees

- Scottish Rugby employees are required to be aware of and comply with this policy
- Scottish Rugby employees are required to communicate this policy to Scottish Rugby member clubs and affiliated schools

Enforcement and Application

The general principle adopted by Scottish Rugby is to ensure the safety of players and to minimise the risks involved in the playing of the sport. It is the responsibility of all staff, member clubs and affiliated schools to enforce this policy. Exceptions to this policy will be given on a case by case basis on completion of the relevant paper work.

Support for Clubs and Schools

Scottish Rugby is committed to providing appropriate help, support and advice to its member clubs and affiliated schools, to ensure that this policy is adhered to. More information can be found in the Are You Ready to Play Rugby? section of Scottish Rugby’s website.
**Process**

Any club or school which feels they have a player aged 15 who meets the exception criteria needs to follow the steps detailed below:

1. The player completes World Rugby online Rugby Ready course and a copy of the certificate needs to be attached to the application form.

2. Coach/teacher completes an application form with signatures from the player and player’s parent/guardian.

3. Application form is emailed to ayrtpr@srur.org.uk prior to the test date.

4. On receipt of the application form, Scottish Rugby will check that the form is complete and complies with the Under-16 Player in Under-18 Rugby policy and acknowledge receipt, via email, with the coach/teacher.

5. Incomplete forms or forms that don’t comply with policy will be returned to the club/school.

6. Approved forms to be counter-signed by Are You Ready to Play Rugby? project manager.

7. Details of players forwarded to relevant Scottish Rugby assessment centre.

8. Date and time of assessment communicated to school/club.

9. Player attends physical maturity assessment. Only players who have submitted an application form will be assessed.

10. Medical practitioner informs Scottish Rugby of results of physical maturity assessment.

11. Scottish Rugby will process results, and inform the club/school in writing of the outcome of the physical maturity assessment and whether the player may or may not play under-18 rugby.

12. **APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM WEDNESDAY 1ST AUGUST 2018**