

## SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY UNION

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# SARU REGULATIONS FOR UNDER-AGED RUGBY: *SCHOOL RUGBY AGE-BANDING*

SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY UNION (an incorporated association of persons)

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# ADDENDUM 1 of 2012: SARU REGULATIONS FOR UNDER-AGED RUGBY:

## **SCHOOL RUGBY AGE-BANDING**

The following document is an Addendum to the SARU Regulations for Under-aged Rugby currently applicable to Adult rugby and are additional Regulations that apply to all School-level Rugby played under the auspices of the South African Rugby Union, the South African Schools Rugby Executive, and the affiliated fourteen (14) Provincial Rugby Unions.

### **A - Definitions:**

**“Primary School Rugby”** – Refers to the Age-grades or Divisions for Rugby played at a Primary School Level or Age-grades U13 and below, applicable to the South African Rugby Union (SARU), the South African Schools Rugby Executive, the relevant Provincial Rugby Union or Affiliated Rugby Body

**“Secondary School Rugby”** – Refers to the Age-grades or Divisions for Rugby played at a Secondary or High School Level or Age-grades U14 to U19, applicable to the South African Rugby Union (SARU), the South African Schools Rugby Executive, the relevant Provincial Rugby Union or Affiliated Rugby Body

**Potential School Age-grades:** (these are determined by the age that you turn during the specific year in question):

*Under 6 (U6) = Players aged 4, 5, or 6, with these players turning 5, 6, and having turned 6 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 7 (U7) = Players aged 5, 6, or 7, with these players turning 6, 7, and having turned 7 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 8 (U8) = Players aged 6, 7, or 8, with these players turning 7, 8, and having turned 8 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 9 (U9) = Players aged 7, 8, or 9, with these players turning 8, 9, and having turned 9 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 10 (U10) = Players aged 8, 9, or 10, with these players turning 9, 10, and having turned 10 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 11 (U11) = Players aged 9, 10, or 11, with these players turning 10, 11, and having turned 11 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 12 (U12) = Players aged 10, 11, or 12, with these players turning 11, 12, and having turned 12 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 13 (U13) = Players aged 11, 12, or 13, with these players turning 12, 13, and having turned 13 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 14 (U14) = Players aged 12, 13, or 14, with these players turning 13, 14, and having turned 14 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 15 (U15) = Players aged 13, 14, or 15, with these players turning 14, 15, and having turned 15 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 16 (U16) = Players aged 14, 15, or 16, with these players turning 15, 16, and having turned 16 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 17 (U17) = Players aged 15, 16, or 17, with these players turning 16, 17, and having turned 17 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 18 (U18) = Players aged 16, 17, or 18, with these players turning 17, 18, and having turned 18 respectively during the year in question*

*Under 19 (U19) = Players aged 16, 17, 18, or 19, with these players turning 17, 18, 19, and having turned 19 respectively during the year in question*

**Age-grade:** An Age-grade is determined by the maximum age, as determined on 31<sup>st</sup> December of that specific year, of a player allowed to participate within the prescribed Age-grade. For example, the oldest player in the U13 Age-grade, would still be 13 years old on 31<sup>st</sup> December of the specific year in question

**Minimum Age:** The minimum age allowed in an Age-grade is determined by the age that you turn during the specific year in question. For example, if the minimum age is 11 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, then on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of the same year, you would have to be 12 years old, having turned 12 years old during the specific year in question. You cannot have turned 11 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, as you would still be 11 by midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of the same year.

### **B - Regulations:**

*In School Rugby in South Africa, schools may set their own Age-grade divisions, but the following stipulations have to be implemented:*

1. In “Primary School Rugby”, no player, who on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in any given year, as defined under *Minimum Age*, is more than two (2) years younger, than the prescribed maximum stipulated age within an Age-grade category, may participate within that Age-grade during the year in question.
  - a. For example, if you turn 11 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January or are younger than 11 (e.g. 10) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, you cannot be allowed to play in the U13 division within that year, as the oldest player in the U13 Age-grade, as defined above, would be 13 years of age, and having turned 13 during the year in question.

- b. The player may not be older than the stipulated Age-grade e.g. in the U13 division, a player may not be 14 years old or be turning 14 years old during the year in question
2. In “*Secondary School Rugby*”, subject to Clauses 3 and 6, no player, who on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in any given year, as defined under *Minimum Age*, is more than two (2) years younger, than the prescribed maximum stipulated age within an Age-grade category, may participate within that Age-grade during the year in question.
  - a. For example, subject to Clause 3, if you turn 16 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January or are younger than 16 (e.g. 15) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, you cannot be allowed to play in the U18 division within that year, as the oldest player in the U18 Age-grade, as defined above, would be 18 years of age, and having turned 18 during the year in question.
  - b. The player may not be older than the stipulated Age-grade e.g. in the U18 division, a player may not be 19 years old or be turning 19 years old during the year in question
3. In “*Secondary School Rugby*”, with the exception of Clause 6, the age band could be extended for a specific player(s) to a maximum three (3) year age-band, but only in keeping strictly within the following very important stipulations, aimed primarily at limiting the risk of catastrophic cervical spinal injury:
  - a. The **Coach**, who shall have no less than an **IRB Level 2** coaching qualification, wanting to select a younger player to participate in a league or division above their current Age-grade, as stipulated in Clause 2, has to submit a completed and accepted **SCHEDULE A**, and **SCHEDULE B** where applicable, to the appropriate Union’s offices, before selecting the player to train or participate in such a league or division
    - i. For example in the U18 Age-grade, the youngest player could be 15 years old, as per the *Minimum Age* definition, turning 16 during the year in question, but must have submitted a completed and accepted **SCHEDULE A**, and **SCHEDULE B** where applicable, to the Union’s offices, before training or participating in an U18 division squad or league
  - b. The players as described in 3(a) may **NOT** train or participate in a division above their Age-grade, in any of the positions locks, loose-forwards, scrumhalf, flyhalf, centres, wings and fullback, unless they have submitted a completed and accepted **SCHEDULE A** to the Union’s offices
  - c. The players as described in 3(a) may **NOT** train or participate in a division above their Age-grade, in any **front row** position i.e. positions tight-head prop, hooker or loose-head prop, unless they have submitted both completed and accepted **SCHEDULE A and SCHEDULE B** to the Union’s offices
  - d. Local research has identified the front row positions, especially the hooker, as having a higher risk for permanent catastrophic cervical spinal cord injury, especially in the scrum
4. **Teams** within “*Primary School Rugby*” e.g. U10, U11 and U13, have to compete within the specific age-banding required of their league or division as stipulated in Clause 1.
  - a. For example an U10 team cannot compete in an U11 league or division, as the youngest player in the U10 team could potentially be 8 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, as per the *Minimum Age* definition, and therefore not be able to compete within the U11 team structure, as they would be more than two (2) years younger than the oldest player in the U11 team.
5. **Teams** within “*Secondary School Rugby*” e.g. U15 and U16, subject to Clause 6 where applicable, have to compete within the specific age-banding required of their league or division as stipulated in Clauses 2 and 3.
  - a. For example an U15 team cannot compete in an U16 league or division, as the youngest player in the U15 team, without having submitted a completed and accepted **SCHEDULE A**, and **SCHEDULE B** where applicable, to the Union’s offices, could potentially be 13 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, as per the

*Minimum Age* definition, and therefore not be able to compete within the U16 team structure, as they would be more than three (3) years younger than the oldest player in the U16 team.

6. The current school system has to cater for U19 scholars, or players aged 18 years old, turning 19, or players having already turned 19 years old, during the year in question, and legally these players cannot be denied participation within the school rugby system. To maintain higher rugby safety standards given this limitation, the following stipulations need to be upheld:
  - a. The recommended two (2) year age-band for U19 level rugby, would normally field players aged 17 years old turning 18, and players 18 years old turning 19, during the year in question
  - b. Due to the small number of players aged 18 years old, turning 19, or players having already turned 19 years old, during the year in question, the U19 Age-grade, applied at School level only, will be expanded to accommodate a maximum three (3) year age-band
  - c. The expanded three (3) year age-band for the U19 School level Age-grade, will therefore include 16 year olds turning 17 years old during the year in question
  - d. The naturalistic majority of players in the U19 School level Age-grade, will come from 16 year old players turning 17, and 17 year old players turning 18 years old, during the year in question
  - e. There is no room for expansion to a four (4) year age-band under any circumstances
  - f. All *front row* players, tight-head prop, hooker or loose-head prop, within the U19 School level Age-grade, who fall outside the recommended two (2) year age-band, have to complete **SCHEDULE A** and **SCHEDULE B**, regardless of their circumstances, before playing U19 School level Age-grade rugby in these high-risk front row positions
  - g. The automatic three (3) year age-band expansion only applies to the U19 School level Age-grade and cannot be applied at any other School Age-grade or division
  - h. In keeping with Clause 5's stipulations, should an U19 School team wish to play against an U18 School team, or vice versa, the U19 team, at no time, may select or field any players who are 18 years old turning 19, or players who have already turned 19 years old, during the year in question
  - i. At no given time, may any U19 level Age-grade rugby team select or field players aged 19 years old turning 20, or players older than 20 years old, during the year in question
7. As supported by the South African Schools Rugby Executive Committee, players should play within their respective Age-grade divisions, as per the age-banding criteria stipulated above.
8. Rugby playing Schools have to cater for opportunities for all players to be able to play rugby, and with this in mind, an U16 Age-grade division (or U17 in Schools playing in U19 leagues or divisions) should preferably be catered for, where possible, as it is not desirable for players more than two (2) years younger than their prescribed Age-band, even within the stipulations above, to participate in U18 or U19 divisions.

## SCHEDULE A - AGE-GRADE TWO-YEAR EXEMPTION AND CONSENT FORM FOR **ALL** APPLYING PLAYERS TO COMPLETE

COMPLETED FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED TO YOUR PROVINCIAL UNION MANAGER OF SCHOOLS RUGBY – **Front Row players, additionally need to Submit SCHEDULE B**

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLAYER (PRINT CLEARLY)			
Players Full Names:			
ID Number:		Competition/Province	
Date of birth:		Current Age-grade e.g. U16 – (15 year old)	
Club/School Name		Age-grade applied for e.g. U18	
Playing position:		Contact Number:	
Number of years' experience playing at this position		Email address:	
SECTION B: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLAYER'S COACH (PRINT CLEARLY)			
Coach's Full Names:			
ID Number:		Contact Number:	
IRB Level Coaching qualification:		Email address:	
IRB Level Expiry date:		BokSmart Certification Code	
Years of coaching experience		BokSmart Expiry date:	
<p>The coach has to assess the player against the following considerations. If there are any <b>NO</b> answers to any of the considerations, the player should <b>NOT</b> be allowed to participate in the Age-grade applied for, as this indicates an increased risk to safe participation in the Proposed Age-grade.</p> <p><b>Please Note:</b> In exceptional cases, a player's physical, emotional, motor and cognitive development, skill level and experience, may be such that he may be allowed to participate in an Age-grade above his current two-year age-band. However, within the year in question, he, in keeping with the "Minimum Age" definition, may <b>not</b> participate in an Age-grade greater than three years above his age on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January of that year.</p> <p>The coach performing this assessment on the player shall have no less than an IRB Level 2 Coaching qualification. Not having an IRB Level 2 qualification therefore does not qualify the Coach, to competently and objectively assess the player's capabilities. Furthermore, the coach has to have an active BokSmart Certification status.</p>			
Physical Development:	Is the player physically developed, big, fit and strong enough to be able to adequately compete in his position within the age-division applied for?	YES	NO
Skill Level:	Is the player technically skilled enough in his position to be able to adequately compete in the age-division applied for?	YES	NO
Level of Experience:	Does the player have the necessary experience in his position to compete with other players at a comparable standard in the age-division applied for?	YES	NO
Safety Risk:	Can the player compete safely in his nominated position, and is the player at no more risk of serious and catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury than any of the other participants in the age-division applied for?	YES	NO
	Have you completed the BokSmart Pre-participation screening questionnaire with the player?	YES	NO
<p>I have explained to both the player and his parents or legal guardian, that the player will be competing in a higher age-division against older players and that this may normally involve an increased level of risk.</p> <p>However, in my qualified opinion, the player's physical development, skill level and level of experience is of a sufficiently high standard so that the player can safely compete in the proposed Age-grade, in his nominated position, with no more risk of serious and catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury than any of the other participants that play in the same position applied for within the proposed Age-grade.</p>			
Signature of Coach:		Date:	
SECTION C: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLAYER'S PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN (PRINT CLEARLY)			
Full names:			
ID Number:		Contact Number:	
I hereby confirm that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I am the parent or legal guardian of the abovementioned player</li> <li>b. I have been provided with and read a copy of the SARU Under-age guidelines applicable to School rugby Age-banding</li> <li>c. The coach has explained to me that in his qualified opinion the player's physical development, skill level, and level of experience is of a sufficiently high standard so that the player can safely compete in the proposed Age-grade, with no more risk of serious and catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury than any of the other participants that play in the same position applied for within the proposed Age-grade</li> <li>d. It has however been explained to me that the player will be competing in a higher age-division against older players and that this may normally involve an increased level of risk</li> <li>e. I understand that rugby is a contact sport, and like all contact sports, players are exposed to a risk of injury, and in the case of rugby union, albeit very few in number, potentially also catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury</li> <li>f. I acknowledge and fully comprehend that the level of risk of these injuries may be increased where a player competes above the two-year window, and where the player's physical development, skill level, and level of experience may potentially be inferior to that of the players that he may play against.</li> <li>g. I knowing the above agree to the extent permitted by Law, to waive any claims for liability against SARU, the Provincial Union, or any of its affiliate clubs, schools or rugby bodies, and any of its participants, including but not limited to players, coaches, referees, medical support staff, volunteers and administrators and release every such body or participant from all liability that may be incurred in connection with the player's participation in the proposed Age-grade</li> </ul>			
Signature:		Date:	
SECTION D: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PROVINCIAL UNION'S MANAGER OF SCHOOLS RUGBY (PRINT CLEARLY)			
Full names:			
ID Number:		Contact Number:	
I hereby confirm that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I have received all the necessary and completed <b>SCHEDULE A</b> documentation as required by the School Age-banding exemption policy, and confirm that all stipulations have been met</li> <li>b. I have also received Certified Copies of the applying Coach's Identity document, IRB Level 2 (or above) coaching qualification and active BokSmart Certification status, in application for exemption of the two-year window for the player mentioned above, and within the restrictions of the three (3) year maximum window stipulations</li> <li>c. I further acknowledge that all records of the Consent and this application are kept on file at the Union offices and that the office, the player's parents or legal guardian and the coach have received copies of the completed exemption documentation</li> </ul>			
Signature:		Date:	

**SCHEDULE B - ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION INFORMATION FORM REQUIRED FOR FRONT ROW PLAYERS TO BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER WITH SCHEDULE A**

COMPLETED FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED TO YOUR PROVINCIAL UNION MANAGER OF SCHOOLS RUGBY

**SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLAYER (PRINT CLEARLY)**

Full Names:			
ID Number:		Competition/Province	
Date of birth:		Current Age-grade e.g. U16 – (15 year old)	
Club/School Name		Age-grade applied for e.g. U18	
Playing position:		Contact Number:	
Number of years' experience playing at this position		Email address:	

The coach has to assess the player against the following considerations. If there are any **NO** answers to any of the considerations, except for the question, "Did the player miss any games last year as a result of a significant head, neck or spine injury?" where a **YES** answer would apply, the player should **NOT** be allowed to participate in the Age-grade applied for, as this indicates an increased risk to safe participation in the Proposed Age-grade.

**Please Note:** In exceptional cases, a player's physical, emotional, motor and cognitive development, skill level and experience, may be such that he may be allowed to participate in an Age-grade above his current two-year age-band. However, within the year in question, he, in keeping with the "Minimum Age" definition may not participate in an Age-grade greater than three years above his age on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January of that year.

The coach performing this assessment on the player shall have no less than an IRB Level 2 Coaching qualification. Not having an IRB Level 2 qualification therefore does not qualify the Coach, to competently and objectively assess the player's capabilities. Furthermore, the coach has to have an active BokSmart Certification status.

**SECTION B: PLAYING SKILL AND EXPERIENCE (PRINT CLEARLY)**

– to be completed by the COACH in consultation with the PLAYER and their PARENT(S)/LEGAL GUARDIAN(S)

Has the player played more than two consecutive seasons/years in the front row?	YES	NO
Has the player played more than two consecutive seasons/years in their current front row position?	YES	NO
Did the player play in the front row last year?	YES	NO
Did the player play a full season in the last year in the front row?	YES	NO
Did the player miss any games last year as a result of a significant head, neck or spine injury?	YES	NO
Knowing the increased risk of front row positions, can the player compete safely in his nominated position, and is the player at no more risk of serious and catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury than any of the other participants in the age-division applied for?	YES	NO

**NB – Rugby medical research studies have indicated that players in the front row, especially the hooker, are exposed to an increased risk of catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injuries, and that the head, neck and spine injuries in these positions and in the scrum are generally more severe.**

**SECTION C: LEVEL OF COACHING AND TRAINING RECEIVED IN THE FRONT ROW POSITION (PRINT CLEARLY)**

– to be completed by the COACH

Has the player received any form of specialised front row coaching over the last two years?	YES	NO
Has the player received any form of specialised front row technical conditioning over the last two years?	YES	NO
Does the player have the necessary technical experience and ability to compete safely in the front row?	YES	NO

**SECTION D: STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING BACKGROUND (PRINT CLEARLY)**

– to be completed by the COACH in consultation with the PLAYER and their PARENT(S)/LEGAL GUARDIAN(S)

Does the player undertake regular strength and conditioning i.e. more than 2 x per week?	YES	NO
Has the player participated in a structured pre-season preparation programme of more than 1 month prior to participation?	YES	NO
Has the player participated in regular strength training over the last two years?	YES	NO
Have you as coach, reviewed, and monitored the player's strength training programme and are you satisfied that they are suitably conditioned to play in the front row at the Age-grade indicated?	YES	NO
Does the player undertake regular NECK strengthening and conditioning i.e. more than 2 x per week?	YES	NO
What is the player's current weight in kilograms?		Kg
What is the player's current height in Centimetres?		Cm
What is the player's current bench press 1RM in kilograms?		Kg

**SECTION D: DECLARATION OF TRUTH (PRINT CLEARLY)**

I hereby confirm and declare that all the information provided is accurate and correct, and understand that should any false information be provided, that there may be legal ramifications.

Signature of player:		Date:	
Signature of parent or legal guardian as specified in SCHEDULE A:		Date:	
Signature of IRB Level 2 Coach as specified in SCHEDULE A:		Date:	

**SECTION E: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PROVINCIAL UNION'S MANAGER OF SCHOOLS RUGBY (PRINT CLEARLY)**

Full names:			
ID Number:		Contact Number:	

I hereby confirm that:

- I have received all the necessary and completed **SCHEDULE A AND B** documentation as required by the School Age-banding exemption policy for **FRONT ROW PLAYERS**, and confirm that all stipulations have been met
- I have also received Certified Copies of the applying Coach's Identity document, IRB Level 2 (or above) coaching qualification and active BokSmart Certification status, in application for exemption of the two-year window for the player mentioned above, and within the restrictions of the three (3) year maximum window stipulations
- I further acknowledge that all records of the Consent and this application are kept on file at the Union offices and that the office, the player's parents or legal guardian and the coach have received copies of the completed exemption documentation

Signature:		Date:	
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