



## 2021-22 ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS

### *General Regulations and Event-Specific Regulations for Adult Rugby (Senior Club)*

The following rationale and principles apply to USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations:

1. To provide fair and equitable standards of eligibility throughout the season for all matches leading to, and including, the USA Rugby National Championships.
2. To provide minimum eligibility and registration standards for all matches, which helps ensure safety and liability insurance coverage.
3. To promote appropriate player movement within a Club.
4. To facilitate appropriate Competitions for all ages and ability levels.
5. The Senior Club Competition and Eligibility Committees are responsible for establishing the structure of USA Rugby Senior Club Championship Events, along with Competition and Eligibility Regulations.
6. The Senior Club Competitions and Eligibility Committees are responsible for determining the clubs that participate in the USA Rugby Senior Club Championship Events.
7. Additional participation opportunities outside of USA Rugby National Championship Series channels is encouraged.
8. Each member Club and all members of USA Rugby (i.e. player, coach, manager, referee, medical support staff, administrator or official) shall be familiar with, and comply with, all applicable USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations as set forth herein in the conduct of its/their rugby program.
9. A member Club and its players must monitor its/their own compliance with all Eligibility Regulations to identify and report to the Approved Governing Body instances in which compliance has failed, whether intentionally or not.
10. In instances of known or suspected non-compliance, a member Club shall take immediate corrective action, including notification of the appropriate administrative authorities.
11. Interpretation ambiguities and waiver allowances are solely the responsibilities of the Senior Club Eligibility Committees and any appeal board sanctioned by USA Rugby, per USA Rugby rules, practices and procedures.
12. No member Club or player is permitted to advance its/their own interpretation to its/their advantage nor to the detriment of an opponent. It is the responsibility of a member Club or player to seek resolution of an ambiguity where ambiguity arises and would be reasonably recognized as such by another reviewing the situation. That which is reasonably recognized is within the sole purview of the Senior Club Eligibility Committee and any appeal board sanctioned by USA Rugby.
13. A player or member Club found to not be in compliance with the Eligibility Regulations established herein or which is found to have violated the USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations shall be subject to such disciplinary and corrective actions as provided under USA Rugby rules and all member Clubs and players must adhere to the process provided.
14. **Spirit of the Rules (World Rugby Charter)** - Rugby owes much of its appeal to the fact that it is played both to the letter and within the spirit of the laws. The responsibility for ensuring that this happens lies not with one individual, it involves coaches, captains, players and referees. It is through discipline, control and mutual respect that the spirit of the game flourishes, and in the context of a game as physically challenging as rugby, these are the qualities which forge the fellowship and sense of fair play so essential to the game's ongoing success and survival.

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## Section 1. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS.

1. **Academy.** Formal arrangement between a Professional Rugby Club and targeted players who have demonstrated the potential to be a professional rugby player.
2. **Adult Rugby.** Rugby other than Elite Rugby and College Rugby played by teams comprising players normally of 18 years of age and older.
3. **Appeal.** A formal, written request, made by the affected player or Club to USA Rugby, solely on the procedural basis applied by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee or an Approved Governing Body in interpreting or applying these Regulations (Section 7.6).
4. **Approved Governing Body.** The local or direct administrative body for a Competitions and which is deemed to have full knowledge of the content of these Regulations
5. **Basis of Competition.** Game between two teams, playing what is considered to be the strongest squad on that day, in an effort to determine the ‘best’ team.
6. **Club.** A group, having registered under a specific Club Registration number, which may field multiple Teams or Sides, registered to USA Rugby and to all Approved Governing Bodies in accordance with the Regulations contained herein.
7. **Community Rugby.** Local amateur rugby, includes participation at the youth/high school, college and/or senior club level.
8. **Competition.** Unless otherwise specified by the participants as a social or friendly Match, a Match between two teams, using squads considered strongest on that day, to determine the ‘best’ team.
9. **Competitions.** The Qualifying Match schedule for the clubs of an Approved Governing Body.
10. **Competition Management System (CMS).** Required for all Qualifying Matches. Entry must be completed no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of each Match. The CMS shall confirm the number of Qualifying Matches each player has played. Published local competition policies of the Approved Governing Body may be more restrictive for this requirement, but not less restrictive.
11. **Competitive Season.** August 15th through completion of the USA Rugby Club Sevens Championship.
12. **Division.** Competitive level of Competitions with the ‘Higher’ Division intended for the more experienced, skilled and continuing players and the ‘Lower’ Division intended for developmental, emerging or less experienced players. This definition applies to Divisions in which there is a USA Rugby Championship Event.
13. **Eligibility Decision.** Written determination from USA Rugby in response to a formal, written request for a Waiver submitted by the affected player or Club (see Section 7.5.2).
14. **Elite Senior Club.** A Club participating in a Competition(s) that has been designated as ‘elite’ by the USA Rugby Senior Club Competitions Committee (see Section 3.6).
15. **Elite Senior Club Competitions.** Competitions that have been identified by the Senior Club Competitions Committee and the USA Rugby High Performance group as high-level Competitions that uniquely test the talents of those participating (see Section 3.6). Examples include the ARP, PRP, and the WPL.
16. **Event Roster.** List of the eligible players, both ‘starters’ and ‘replacements,’ available to the team for the duration of that Event.
17. **Event Weekend.** The time period covering a single USA Rugby Championship Event, i.e. from team check-in through the final whistle in any given category, division or gender, in which the full Roster is set and locked for duration of the Event Weekend.
18. **Fifteens Competitive Season.** The Fifteens Competitions leading to any USA Rugby Championship Event for men and women. Runs from August 15th through the completion of the current year’s USA Rugby Fifteens Championship final.
19. **Higher Division Side.** Intended division for experienced and continuing senior Club players seeking and able to compete at the highest level possible with the largest and most competitive Clubs. The top rugby players on a Club fielding teams in more than one division.
20. **Historic.** A player’s connection to a specific club or team established by membership and participation in a previous season or seasons (See Sections 5.2-(f), 7.5.2.C).
21. **In Good Standing.** Player/Club must meet criteria specified in the Eligibility Regulations to participate in USA Rugby sanctioned Competitions (See Section 2.4 and 2.5).
22. **Laws.** Laws of the Game of Rugby Union as published annually by World Rugby.
23. **Lower Division Side.** Intended division for less competitive Clubs, or the developmental squad of larger Clubs, so as to provide competitive opportunities to less experienced and emerging players, team members returning from injury. Provides avenue for Clubs fielding teams in more than one division to develop their own players.
24. **Match.** A game in which two teams compete against each other.
25. **Match Roster.** List of starting players. For Senior Club Qualifying Matches, the CMS Match Roster must include the possible replacement players.
26. **Major League Rugby (MLR).** A professional rugby competition within North America.
27. **Members.** All Players, Coaches, Administrators, Referees, Player Support Personnel and other persons under the jurisdiction of the USA Rugby.
28. **Membership.** Registration with USA Rugby. All Clubs and players must be registered and in good standing with USA Rugby before participating in any Competition or other rugby activity of a physical nature, in accordance with the Regulations contained herein.
29. **National Championship Qualifying Match.** Any Match in which the result is used to determine official Competition standings and/or to determine qualification for any USA Rugby Championship Event. In the Senior Club division this applies to all matches between teams within the same Approved Governing Body, and which lead to the earlier of either the USA Rugby ‘Round of 16’ or

any Senior Club Competitions Committee required Play-In matches which lead to the USA Rugby 'Round of 16.' Jurisdiction of this Competition lies with the Senior Club Competitions Committee.

30. **National Championship Series (NCS).** The USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series includes the playoffs for Men's Divisions I, II, and III, and the playoffs for Women's Divisions I and II, starting with the earlier of either the USA Rugby 'Round of 16' or any Senior Club Competitions Committee required Play-in Match or Matches, and culminating in the National Championship. The USA Rugby Senior Club NCS also includes the Women's Premier League Championship Semifinal and Final/Third Place Matches.
31. **Senior Club Competitions Committee.** Sub-Committee of the USA Rugby Club Strategic Committee responsible for establishing a competitive policy defining the pathway for Clubs to advance to USA Rugby National Championship Events and which is in accordance with the eligibility standards specified within the Regulations.
32. **Senior Club-Required Play-In Game.** A match between teams of two different Approved Governing Bodies, scheduled by and required by the Senior Club Competitions Committee, and/or USA Rugby for a Club which otherwise does not qualify directly to the USA Rugby NCS due to circumstances beyond its control, or to fill an unfilled berth in any USA Rugby Championship Event. This is an extension of any USA Rugby Championship Event and falls under the jurisdiction of USA Rugby.
33. **Non-Citizen Player (NC).** A player who lacks U.S. citizenship.
34. **Non-Resident Player (NR).** A player who lacks U.S. citizenship or a Permanent Resident ("Green") Card.
35. **Participant.** Registered member of USA Rugby, which includes a Club, player, coach, manager, referee, medical support staff, administrator and official participating in USA Rugby.
36. **Play.** Play is defined as actually stepping onto the field either as a starter, reserve, or blood substitution for any length of time. A player can be named on the roster for a match and not actually "play" in the match.
37. **Professional Rugby.** Any team or organized competitions which (a) Provides any of its players more than actual and necessary expenses for participation on the team; and (b) Declares itself to be professional.
38. **Qualifying Event.** Any Competition in which the result is used to determine official Competition standings and/or to determine qualification for any USA Rugby Championship Event.
39. **Recognized Cup and Friendly Matches.** Provision to allow Clubs to schedule outside Competitions which meet standards of a Qualifying Match and which shall provide opportunities to players/clubs to meet Qualifying Match participation minimum criteria (Section 3.4-(d)) for the USA Rugby NCS. Matches and Match Rosters must be approved in advance by the home Approved Governing Body match organizer and the senior Club Competitions Committee.
40. **Registration Deadline.** Date by which a player must be registered to the Club and residing in the United States in order to participate in any Qualifying Event (see Section 3.4-(a), Section 9.2-(b)).
41. **Regular League Season.** A set number of games against a set number of opponents of the same Division before the start of the local Union play-offs.
42. **Regulations.** Eligibility guidelines relating to the Game and binding on all Approved Governing Bodies.
43. **Release.** A Club and the Approved Governing Body agree to end the Registration of a participant with that Club. The Club and the Approved Governing Body shall provide USA Rugby an approval for the Transfer and verification that the participant has no outstanding financial or disciplinary issues.
44. **Roster.** List of players competing in a specified Division for an entire Event Weekend (see also Event Roster, Match Roster and Event Weekend). The full 28 person Roster for the Event Weekend must be confirmed by the date and time announced by USA Rugby.
45. **Senior Club.** Rugby other than Elite Rugby and College Rugby played by Clubs comprising players normally of 18 years of age and older. This includes games played at the U20 level and rugby sevens. These Clubs would be registered with USA Rugby as 'Senior Clubs'.
46. **Sevens Competitive Season.** Governs Club Sevens Competitions leading to this USA Rugby Championship Event. Runs from June 1st through completion of the Club Sevens USA Rugby Championship Event.
47. **Sevens Qualifying Tournament.** A Competition taking place over the course of at least one day between four or more registered sevens teams. Rosters used to qualify players for the USA Rugby Championship Event must be verified and submitted by an event host to USA Rugby.
48. **Sevens Qualifying Tournament Roster.** The list of players available for a club for duration of a Sevens Qualifying Tournament. Each Roster is locked for duration of that Qualifying Event and must include a minimum of nine (9) players.
49. **Spirit of the Rules (World Rugby Charter).** The responsibility for ensuring that rugby is played both to the letter of the rules and within the intent of the laws lies with all participants including the coaches, captains, players and referees.
50. **Spring Academic Term.** The academic term as defined by the University Registrar as spring – this may be a spring quarter or spring semester.
51. **Team or Side.** A subgroup of a Club that represents varying levels of Competition for any given match or set of matches – often designated as A-side, B-side or C-side, or 'upper' or 'lower' side, or first-side and second-side, with "A-side", 'upper' and 'first-side' being the highest competitive level of players on that Club.
52. **Transfer.** Official process of changing Club affiliation. Subject to all rules of USA Rugby Eligibility contained herein. Waivers may be needed for transfers during the Competitive Season (see Section 7.5.2).
53. **USA Rugby Championship Event.** Designates those events under the authority and jurisdiction of USA Rugby. Includes: USA Rugby Playoffs starting with any USA Rugby-Required Play-In Games and which culminate in the USA Rugby Championships.

- 54. USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series (NCS).** The USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series includes the playoffs for Men's Division I, II, and III, and the play-offs for Women's Divisions I and II, starting with the earlier of either the USA Rugby 'Round of 16' or any Senior Club Competitions Committee Required Play-in Match or Matches, and culminating in the National Championship. The USA Rugby Senior Club NCS also includes the Women's Premier League Championship Semifinal and Final/Third Place Matches.
- 55. Waiver.** Relief from the specified requirement(s) of these Regulations, granted in writing by USA Rugby in response to a formal, written request, made by the affected player or Club (see Section 7.5.2).

## **SECTION 2. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS.**

### **2.1. General Policy Statement.**

The General Eligibility Regulations apply to all matches. Event-Specific Regulations apply to all Qualifying Matches. All of the following General and Event-Specific Regulations must be strictly enforced by the Approved Governing Body for all matches. USA Rugby is responsible for establishing the structure of USA Rugby Championship Events and minimum Competitions and Eligibility standards. The Approved Governing Body is responsible for determining the Clubs that participate according to the structure established by USA Rugby (and which may be reviewed from time to time to ensure compliance).

### **2.2. Power to Provide Official Interpretations and/or to Amend Provisions During the Season.**

In the event that any USA Rugby Eligibility Committee considers it is in the interests of USA Rugby or an USA Rugby Competitions, it may provide Official Interpretations and/or amend Eligibility Regulations during a Season.

- a. If exceptional and extraordinary material circumstances, such as a natural disaster, have occurred during any USA Rugby Competitions which either have not been provided for in or cannot be fairly dealt with under USA Rugby Regulations (particularly if national play-off status is likely to be affected), the appropriate Eligibility Committee may provide Official Interpretations or amend Eligibility Regulations for the current Competitive Season and/or determine the results of Qualifying Matches that have not been played for reasons related to the above exceptional and material circumstances.
- b. Any decision made or taken by this Eligibility Committee shall become final and binding unless any person/Club affected has submitted an appeal (See Section 7.6.1) to USA Rugby. Such appeal must be made:
  - i. within seven (7) days of the affected person/Club receiving notification of the Eligibility Decision; and
  - ii. no less than five (5) business days prior to the event for which eligibility is being requested.
- c. Appeals of any Eligibility Decision will not be heard on day of the Qualifying Match for which eligibility is being requested or within five (5) business days of such Qualifying Match.

### **2.3. Compliance with Eligibility.**

All updated information on current year Eligibility Regulations will be maintained at [www.usarugby.org](http://www.usarugby.org). Each Approved Governing Body:

- a. is deemed to have full knowledge of the content of these Regulations; and
- b. must ensure that it complies with these Regulations; and
- c. must ensure that it takes appropriate action to inform each and every one of its members of the terms of the Regulations and the obligation to comply with the same; and
- d. must ensure that it complies with the Spirit of the Rules and takes appropriate action to ensure that each and every one of its members understands the obligation to comply with the same.

### **2.4. Club Eligibility.**

All Clubs must be In Good Standing with their Approved Governing Body and USA Rugby. To be In Good Standing, and therefore eligible to participate in sanctioned Competitions, a Club must be currently registered with USA Rugby, with all dues fully paid, and have a registered Level 200-or-higher coach certified with USA Rugby

Clubs entering the United States from other international Unions must receive official clearance through home Union and USA Rugby in accordance with World Rugby Regulations.

### **2.5. Player Eligibility.**

All players must be In Good Standing with their Approved Governing Body and USA Rugby to be eligible to participate in sanctioned Competitions. Each player must be: currently registered with USA Rugby, with all dues fully paid, prior to participating in any Competition or other rugby activity of a physical nature, in accordance with the Regulations contained herein.

Players entering the United States from other Unions must receive official clearance through their home Union and USA Rugby in accordance with World Rugby Regulations.

All Members shall follow USA Rugby and World Rugby policy regarding transgendered athletes: <http://usa.rugby/transgender/>

All Members of USA Rugby, as a condition of membership, accreditation and/or participation in the Game in any capacity, shall be aware, and have knowledge, of the World Rugby Anti-Doping Policy (<https://www.worldrugby.org/handbook/regulations/reg-21>) and list of prohibited substances ([www.USADA.org/substances/prohibited-list/](http://www.USADA.org/substances/prohibited-list/)). It is the player's responsibility to comply with the policy.

### **2.6. USA Rugby Policy for High School and Under 18s Playing Elite or Adult Rugby.** See [www.usarugby.org/eligibility/](http://www.usarugby.org/eligibility/)

Players under the age of 18 may not play Adult rugby without a Waiver from USA Rugby. Coaches allowing any U-18 to participate in Adult rugby without the USA Rugby Waiver are subject to sanction. This Waiver requires all members of the Club to be in compliance with the USA Rugby SafeSport Certification policy (See 2.8).

### **2.7. Co-Ed Rugby.**

With the exception of non-contact rugby, no woman shall play on a men's team and no man shall play on a women's team. This policy applies to all levels of competition, from competitive (League/Qualifying) to social (Friendly/Tournament).

### **2.8. SAFESPORT Certification.**

USA Rugby requires all its member coaches, referees, administrators, players, Board members, and all other covered individuals to comply with the code and policies and procedures of the US Center for SafeSport: See <https://www.usa.rugby/usa-rugby-safesport/>

### **SECTION 3. SENIOR CLUB REGULATIONS.**

#### **3.1. National Championship Qualifying Competition Sanctioning.**

- a. All National Championship Qualifying Matches must be a part of a sanctioned USA Rugby Competitions or sanctioned playoff pathway.
- b. Non-sanctioned Matches and Competitions may be recognized by USA Rugby for the purpose of determining eligibility inside of sanctioned Competitions.
- c. All National Championship Qualifying sanctioned Matches shall be governed by the World Rugby Laws of the Game. Any and all "Union Specific Variations" are applicable to national Unions only, with USA Rugby the sole decider in determining whether such variations are open to use for National Championship Qualifying Matches.
- d. Clubs participating in sanctioned competitions must adhere to all Club-specific regulations as outlined in Section 3 of these USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations.

#### **3.2. Senior Club National Championship Series (NCS).**

The USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series includes the playoffs for Men's Divisions I, II, and III, and the playoffs for Women's Divisions I and II, starting with the earlier of either the USA Rugby 'Round of 16' or any Senior Club Competitions Committee required Play-in Match or Matches, and culminating in the National Championship. The USA Rugby Senior Club NCS also includes the Women's Premier League Championship Semifinal and Final/Third Place Matches.

- a. Clubs must participate in a sanctioned USA Rugby Competitions in order to qualify for the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS.
- b. Matches in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS will adhere to the same Match Roster requirements as outlined in Section 3 of the USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations. In addition no player participating as a Guest Player may participate in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS.
- c. Clubs participating in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS may carry a maximum Roster of 28 players per Event Weekend. For purposes of this Regulation, the full Roster is locked for the duration of the Event Weekend.
- d. Clubs participating in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS must carry a minimum Roster of 20 players per Event Weekend.
- e. The Event Weekend Roster may include a maximum of ten (10) Non-Resident Players.
- f. Match Rosters for USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series events may list a maximum of 23 players.
- g. No Match Roster may contain more than five (5) Non-Resident Players.
- h. Clubs fielding multiple sides are subject to additional Regulations at USA Rugby Senior Club NCS Events (See Section 3.5).

#### **3.3. Club Eligibility.**

- a. To qualify for the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS, each team selected to represent the Approved Governing Body must have:
  - i. participated in a sanctioned USA Rugby Competitions; and
  - ii. qualified on the Basis of Competition (as opposed to on the basis of allocation); and
  - iii. used the USA Rugby Competition Management System (CMS) for all National Championship Qualifying Matches. Entry for all Matches must occur no later than 48 hours after each Match has concluded; and
  - iv. Competition policies of the Approved Governing Body should be published online. Where Approved Governing Body policies are not published, the criteria listed in the USA Rugby Regulations shall apply; and
  - v. The full Match Roster, including possible replacement players, must be entered into CMS for each National Championship Qualifying Match whether the game was played or not.
- b. Match Rosters for National Championship Qualifying Matches may list a maximum of 23 players. No Match Roster may contain more than five (5) Non-Resident Players.
- c. Clubs must be Registered and In Good Standing with USA Rugby prior to either their first Qualifying Match or April 1, whichever date occurs first.
- d. Clubs fielding multiple sides are subject to additional Regulations (See Section 3.5).
- e. Clubs must maintain proper player documentation at all times (See Sections 7.3 and 7.4). This documentation must be made available upon demand and/or prior to participation in any National Championship Qualifying Match and USA Rugby Championship Event.

#### **3.4. Player Eligibility.**

The purpose of these Regulations is to maintain the integrity of the game, and to preclude Clubs from importing guest players in an effort to strengthen teams advancing to post-season or play-off competitions leading to a USA Rugby Championship Event. This Regulation is designed to prevent what is known as 'club hopping.'

A player requesting a Waiver (see Section 7.5.2) must receive formal written approval from USA Rugby prior to participating in any National Championship Qualifying Match. Submitting a waiver request to USA Rugby does not provide temporary eligibility. The Eligibility Decision must be received before the player may play for his/her Club.

Players must meet each of the following criteria in order to participate in any National Championship Qualifying Match:

- a. Player must be registered to the Club and reside in the United States, either upon initial enrollment or with an approved Waiver from USA Rugby, by the earlier of:
  - i. any participation in a National Championship Qualifying Match, OR
  - ii. no later than 11:59 pm in the Player's Local Time Zone on April 1 for Men's and Women's Division I, II, III and WPL Competitions;
- b. Non-Resident (NR) players must have entered and be residing in the United States prior to: April 1 for Men's and Women's Division I, II, III and WPL Competitions;



NOTE: Passport and/or other Proof of Entry into the United States is required to document that this criteria has been met.

- c. National Team players must be registered with a senior Club prior to the Registration deadline and before any participation in a National Championship Qualifying Match. The National Team player has eligibility only with the senior Club with whom he/she is registered during the Competitive Season unless a Waiver has been approved by USA Rugby. National Team players must meet all criteria outlined in 3.4 for eligibility in any USA Rugby Championship Event.
- d. Player must play in at least two (2) National Championship Qualifying Matches with the Club.
- e. Play is defined as actually stepping onto the field either as a starter, reserve, or blood substitution for any length of time.
- f. The USA Rugby Competition Management System (CMS) is required for all sanctioned National Championship Qualifying Competitions. The CMS is responsible for demonstrating the number of National Championship Qualifying Matches each player has played.
- g. For Approved Governing Body Play-off Matches, each player must be capable of meeting the required Qualifying Match minimum by the start of the USA Rugby National Championship Series. Approved Governing Body Championship matches apply towards the player's match participation total.
- h. For Approved Governing Body Play-off Matches, each player is restricted to the division(s) in which he/she will be eligible to compete in the USA Rugby National Championship Series. Approved Governing Body Championship matches apply to the player's number of National Championship Qualifying matches with respect to divisional eligibility.
- i. Player must not have played in a National Championship Qualifying Match for any other Club, regardless of the division of, or the geographical distance between the two Clubs, during the current Competitive Season without a Waiver from USA Rugby. See section 3.9 for Senior Club Player Waivers.
- j. Player must not have played in a USA Rugby Senior Club NCS Match for any other Club during the current Competitive Season.
- k. Players under the age of 18 may only participate at the Senior Club level with a Waiver from USA Rugby (See <https://www.usa.rugby/club/eligibility/>).
- l. A player entering the United States from any other international Union must receive official clearance through his/her home Union and USA Rugby in accordance with World Rugby Regulations.
- m. Players on Clubs fielding multiple sides are subject to the additional Regulations outlined within Section 3.5.

### 3.5. Senior Clubs Fielding Multiple Sides.

The intent of these Regulations is to control the movement of players on Upper Division sides to Lower Division sides. For purposes of this rule, these divisions are defined as:

**Lower Division:** *intended division for less competitive Clubs or the developmental squad(s) of larger Clubs providing opportunities to less experienced and emerging players, as well as team members returning from injury. This division provides an avenue for Clubs fielding teams in more than one division to develop their own players. A Lower Division side is literally in a lower division of play than an Upper Division side.*

**Upper Division:** *Intended division for experienced and continuing senior Club players seeking and able to compete at the highest level possible with the largest and most competitive Clubs. The top rugby players on a Club fielding sides in more than one division.*

#### a. Club Divisional Status.

Only with the approval of, or at the direction from, the local Approved Governing Body, may a club field eligible teams in non-contiguous divisions.

For purposes of this rule, a Club that participates in the WPL and/or which chooses to participate in a recognized, non-USA Rugby Championship Competitions, such as the American Rugby Premiership (ARP), shall be considered to be at the level of Division I for the purposes of determining player eligibility with a second team fielded by that Club and which is participating within the USA Rugby NCS.

Note: A club may appeal its assigned divisional status by petitioning the Approved Governing Body.

No Club may have more than one side in each divisional level.

#### b. Movement of players between Lower Divisions and Upper Divisions of the same Club is allowed except where specifically prohibited by the Approved Governing Body.

Note: The movement of players included on the 28-person Roster of a Lower or Upper-Division side to the 28-player Roster of a different division side fielded by the same Club is not allowed during the USA Rugby NCS. Match organizers may opt to lock Rosters at the start of the Approved Governing Body play-offs.

- c. For Approved Governing Body Play-off Matches, each player must be capable of meeting the required National Championship Qualifying Match minimum by the start of the USA Rugby National Championship Series. Approved Governing Body Play-off matches apply towards the player's match participation.
- d. Any player on a club fielding teams which compete in either contiguous or non-contiguous divisions, who has played in at least 66% of the total National Championship Qualifying Matches for the club's Upper Division side is immediately no longer eligible to play for that club's Lower Division side (See Figure 1).  
During the course of the season, should the number of matches played by the club change for reasons outside the club's control (forfeit, cancellation) and a player's eligibility for a/the Lower Division side be impacted, the player must request a waiver from USA Rugby. (See [www.usa.rugby/club/eligibility/](http://www.usa.rugby/club/eligibility/))
- e. Any player on a club fielding teams in three divisions (1, 2 and 3), who has played in at least 66% of the total National Championship Qualifying Matches for an Upper Division side, based on the schedule of the higher division team with the fewer number of Qualifying Matches, is immediately no longer eligible to play for the Division 3 side (See Figure 1).

*Example: The club fields eligible teams in Division 1 and in Division 3. When a player has played in at least 3 Division 1 Qualifying Matches, that player is immediately no longer eligible to play for the Division 3 team.*

**Figure 1. Regulations 3.5-(d) and 3.5-(e): In-Season Player Divisional Eligibility.**

National Championship Qualifying Match Participation Minimum for Upper Division-Only Eligibility.	
Qualifying Matches for the Club's Upper Division Side or of the Upper Division Side with fewer Qualifying Matches.	66% Triggering Player Eligibility for Upper Division Only (or Non-Division 3 Eligible).
14	9
13	9
12	8
11	7
10	7
9	6
8	5
7	5
6	4
5	3

- f. For Approved Governing Body Play-off Matches, each player is restricted to the division(s) in which he/she will be eligible to compete in the USA Rugby National Championship Series.
- g. Using the total number of National Championship Qualifying Matches played by a player (when the Upper Division-Only minimum specified in Regulation 3.5-(d) or 3.5-(e) has not been met), if 50% or more were with the Upper Division side, that player is not eligible to participate with the Lower Division side in the USA Rugby National Championship Series.  
*Example: If a player plays in 3 Upper Division National Championship Qualifying Matches and 2 Lower Division National Championship Qualifying Matches, that player is not eligible for the Lower Division NCS Matches.*
- h. To be eligible to compete in a USA Rugby Championship Event in the Lower Division, a player must have played in a minimum of two (2) National Championship Qualifying Matches at the divisional (or lower) level entered into the USA Rugby NCS.  
*Example: On a senior club fielding teams in Divisions 1 and 2, to compete in the Division II NCS, a player must have participated in at least two (2) Division II National Championship Qualifying Matches.*
- i. To be eligible to compete in a USA Rugby Championship Event in the Upper Division, a player must have played in a minimum of two (2) National Championship Qualifying Matches at any division level with his/her Club.  
*Example: A player may be eligible for the Division I NCS having only competed in two (2) Division II National Championship Qualifying Matches.*

**Figure 2. Regulation 3.5-(g), 3.5-(h) and 3.5-(i): USA Rugby NCS Player Divisional Eligibility.**

Sample Player NCS Eligibility Matrix (on Clubs Fielding Multiple Sides)				
Number of Div 1 NC Qualifying Matches Played	Number of Div 2 NC Qualifying Matches Played	Number of Div 3 NC Qualifying Matches Played	NCS Eligibility?	Regulation(s)
4	3	n/a	Div 1 Only	3.5-(g)
3	3	n/a	Div I Only	3.5-(g)
3	2	n/a	Div 1 Only	3.5-(g)
1	1	n/a	Div 1 Only*	3.5-(g)
2	3	n/a	Both D1 & D2	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
0	2	n/a	Both D1 & D2	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
n/a	4	4	Div 2 Only	3.5-(g)
n/a	3	5	Both D2 & D3	3.5-(g), 3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
n/a	3	2	Div 2 Only	3.5-(g)
n/a	1	1	Div 2 Only*	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
n/a	2	3	Both D2 & D3	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
n/a	0	2	Both D2 & D3	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
3	1	1	Div 1 Only	3.5-(g)
2	2	2	Both D1 & D2	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
1	3	2	Both D1 & D2	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
1	1	4	All (D1, D2, D3)	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
0	0	2	All (D1, D2, D3)	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)

\* Player failed to play 2 matches at the lower divisional level but did play two (2) matches overall

### 3.5.1. Women's Premier League (2021-22).

The intent of this Regulation is to control the movement of players from the WPL to Lower Division sides. WPL clubs must verify the timestamp in CMS with respect to Match substitutions. Further, the WPL shall post the running time sheet and player on/off forms signed by both clubs and the Match Recorder, which will, along with match video, confirm eligibility of players for the club's lower division. These guidelines apply to all clubs for the full schedule, leading to and including all matches played on the Championship weekend.

**NOTE:** WPL clubs fielding teams that compete in Divisions 1 and/or 2 must review the WPL Regulations for further player eligibility guidelines.

#### a. WPL Club fielding a team in Division 1. (25% = 20 minutes).

A player who plays in 66% or more of the total WPL League matches, with a cumulative total playing time exceeding 25% of the total available minutes of rugby in those WPL matches, will no longer be eligible to play for that club's Lower Division side.

*Note: For the 2022 WPL season, 66% = 5 WPL League matches.*



**b. WPL Club fielding a team in Division 2. (15% = 12 minutes).**

A player who plays in 66% or more of the total WPL League matches, with a cumulative total playing time exceeding 15% of the total available minutes of rugby in those WPL matches, will no longer be eligible to play for that club's Lower Division side.

*Note: For the 2022 WPL season, 66% = 5 WPL League matches.*

**3.6 Recognized Cup and Friendly Matches.**

Approved Governing Body/match organizer-approved Cup Tournament and Friendly matches (Midwest Thunderbird) may count as Qualifying Matches under the following circumstances:

- a. The Approved Governing Body/match organizer has submitted written support to the Senior Club Competition Committee for the match(es) to count as a National Championship Qualifier(s); and
- b. All matches are submitted for entry into the CMS no later than 48 hours after each Match has concluded; and
- c. The player(s) have registered to the club prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).
- d. The home Approved Governing Body/match organizer of the affected club or clubs, as well as the Senior Club Eligibility Committee, have the right to review individual players seeking participation credit toward the USA Rugby match participation minimum requirement (Section 3.4-(d)).

No player has an automatic right to count Cup Tournament and Friendly matches towards their minimum National Championship Qualifying Match participation requirement.

If a club or individual is suspected of bad-faith action, the Cup Tournament and Friendly match(es) may not count toward that club or individual's minimum match participation requirements.

**3.7. Professional Rugby.**

These Regulations aim to provide a balance between (a) needed flexibility for developmental and/or prospective Professional Rugby players to continue to get match-time experience with local amateur teams, and (b) the protection of fair competition within the USA Rugby Senior Club game. Understanding that certain players may move up from local amateur teams to Professional Rugby at any given point in the season, these Regulations intend to provide a mechanism, with limitations, as to player movement between amateur and Professional Rugby.

**a. Rugby-related Transfer.**

A request to transfer to a new senior club on this basis will be considered for Professional Rugby (e.g. MLR) participation only. Players must request a waiver from USA Rugby and include the following documentation:

- i. Documentation of relocation for employment with a Professional Rugby team or participation in an Academy formally affiliated with a Professional Rugby Team; and
- ii. Dated document(s) verifying reason for relocation (contract and/or offer of employment including terms of employment, start or report date in the new location); and,
- iii. Release from original Club; and,
- iv. Confirmation supplied by the Approved Governing Body of no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues.
- v. The waiver request must be initiated with USA Rugby prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).

Rugby-related transfers under this Regulation will be considered by the Eligibility Committee pursuant to Section 7.5.2-(d).

Note: No more than two players approved for a rugby-related transfer may be on any Match Roster for Division 2 or Division 3 club; no limit on players for Division 1 club.

**b. Movement Between Professional Rugby and USA Rugby Club.**

- i. USA Rugby Club competes in Division 1.  
On playing in four (4) or more regular season matches with a Professional Team, a player is no longer eligible to compete with a team competing towards any USA Rugby Championship in Division 1.
- ii. USA Rugby Club competes in Division 2.  
On playing in three (3) or more regular season matches with a Professional Team, a player is no longer eligible to compete with a team competing towards any USA Rugby Championship in Division 2.
- iii. USA Rugby Club competes in Division 3.  
On playing in one (1) regular season match with a Professional Team, a player is no longer eligible to compete with a team competing towards any USA Rugby Championship in Division 3.

**3.8-Transfers To and From Senior Clubs.**

Once a player has 'played' in any National Championship Qualifying Match for a senior Club, a transfer must be approved by USA Rugby for the player to have National Championship Qualifying Match eligibility with a different senior Club during the same Competitive Season.

All transfer requests must be initiated with USA Rugby prior to the player registration deadline (Section 3.4-(a)).

Transfer requests which USA Rugby can confirm were submitted prior to the deadline, even if not completed, will be considered initiated by the deadline but must still be approved by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee.

Each transfer that requires approval from USA Rugby (see Section 7.5.2), must be formally requested and include:

- ▶ a personal statement from the player that provides full background information supporting the request, and
- ▶ approval from the previous Club, and
- ▶ verification of no outstanding financial or disciplinary issues with the previous Approved governing body, and
- ▶ contemporaneous documentation supporting reason cited for an in-season transfer of Clubs.

All players must appear on the USA Rugby Club's Membership roster confirming registration to the Club, or have an approved Waiver from USA Rugby, before being declared eligible for National Championship Qualifying Matches with the new club.

The player's match participation with the original team does not transfer to the new club for purposes of meeting criteria specified in Sections 3.4 or 3.5.

### 3.9. Senior Club Player Waivers.

Players that do not meet the criteria for participation with their Club under Section 3.4 may seek a waiver from USA Rugby (see Section 7.5.2). No player is guaranteed a waiver, and must be diligent in documenting their case for receiving one.

- a. Players may seek a waiver per the guidelines outlined in Section 7.5 (Waivers). Senior Club Waivers include: Transfers due to Geographic Relocation for Non-Rugby Reasons, and/or Legitimate Medical/Personal Hardship Requests.
- b. Each request for a waiver of an Eligibility Regulation must:
  - i. be in writing and supported by required documentation; and
  - ii. include a personal statement from the player; and
  - iii. address reason the waiver is requested, including any unusual and/or extraordinary personal circumstances; and
  - iv. be received by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee at least ten (10) business days prior to any Match for which the player is requesting a waiver.

A waiver of the Eligibility Regulation(s) is not guaranteed upon submission of a request. This shall be specified within the Eligibility Decision returned by USA Rugby.

Submit completed waiver requests to: [seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby)

## SECTION 4. SENIOR NATIONAL ALL STAR FIFTEENS CHAMPIONSHIPS.

### 4.1. Team Eligibility.

All fifteens all-star teams must be registered and in good standing with the Approved Governing Body.

### 4.2. Player Eligibility.

Prior to participation in any fifteens all-star rugby activities, all players must be registered and in good standing with both:

- a. USA Rugby, and
- b. the Approved Governing Body.

Registration to a specific club or team in the Approved Governing Body is not required.

Players under the age of 18 may not play Adult rugby without a Waiver from USA Rugby. Coaches allowing any U-18 to participate in Adult rugby without the USA Rugby Waiver are subject to sanction. This Waiver further requires all members of the Club to be in compliance with the USA Rugby SafeSport Certification policy. (See [www.usarugby.com/club/eligibility/](http://www.usarugby.com/club/eligibility/)).

## SECTION-5. SENIOR CLUB SEVENS REGULATIONS.

### 5.1. Competitive Club Eligibility.

Clubs must adhere to all general USA Rugby club eligibility regulations (See Section 2 above). Additionally, clubs must follow the pertinent Club Sevens regulations including (but not limited to):

- a. A Club must be registered and In Good Standing with USA Rugby and the Approved Governing Body by June 15th. A Club or team may be registered solely to play Sevens. Clubs currently enrolled with USA Rugby do not need to re-register to participate in Sevens.
- b. All teams wanting to participate in the Club Sevens National Championship must complete and submit the ***Intent to Participate Form*** by the earlier of either the team's first Qualifying Tournament or July 1. ([www.usaclub7s.com/](http://www.usaclub7s.com/)).
- c. Each participating Club may carry a maximum Roster of 13 players per Event: 12 players plus an alternate, or 13th, player.
  - i. **For local Sevens Qualifying Tournaments that do not utilize the World Rugby Global Law Trial:** All players must be registered, or transferred, to the club by July 1. There is no limit on number of players used by a Club in multiple Qualifying events. Teams may carry a 13th 'traveling reserve player' who may take the place of a player on the 12-player Roster if:
    - (a) The Qualifying Tournament has an approved Event medical staff, and
    - (b) The Event medical staff rules a player from the initial 12-player Roster is unable to compete for the remainder of the tournament, and
    - (c) The tournament director has been notified of the Event medical staff ruling and removed the injured player from the remainder of the competition.
  - ii. **For the Club Sevens National Championship, the World Rugby Global Law Trials will be used.** (Note: ***Local Sevens Qualifying Tournaments may use the World Rugby Global Law Trial so long as the tournament director ensures the game-by-game rosters are collected from each team ahead of each game throughout the event.***)
    - All players on the roster (the 12 active plus the alternate) are eligible for selection to each game roster; however, no more than 12 players may be selected to a game roster. A team may nominate and use up to five replacements (this is in addition to substitutions to cover HIA, blood, injury or foul play incidents).
    - All players must be registered, or transferred, to the club by the deadline specified in Section 5.2-(a).
    - Substitutions can be made on a rolling basis.
    - In the event of extra-time, a sixth replacement can also be utilized.
- d. Each Roster must include a minimum of nine (9) players.
- e. Each Roster may include a maximum of three (3) players who are not U.S. citizens *or four (4) provided that at least one of these players is a Green Card holder.*

- f. Clubs may Qualify MORE than one team as long as each team has registered with USA Rugby by June 15th as a separate club (e.g., Boulder #1, Boulder #2). A second Club, registered and formed from an existing Club is considered the same as a new Club, and held to all USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations for the USA Championship Event.
- g. Players must register with, and can only compete in Qualifying Tournaments for, one Club.
- h. Clubs may enter more than one team into Qualifying Tournaments. All players must be registered to the Club by the deadline (July 1). For purposes of this Regulation, each Roster is locked for the duration of the Qualifying Tournament.

**Clarification:** If a club is only trying to Qualify one team for Nationals but wishes to play its 2nd team in Qualifier tournaments it may do so. For purposes of this Regulation, each Roster is locked for the duration of the Qualifying Tournament. However, the club may move players between the 1st and 2nd team in subsequent tournaments. Again, each Roster is locked for the duration of that Qualifying Tournament. Also, the Club must designate which of its teams is trying to progress to Nationals before the start of any Qualifying Tournament in which it has more than one team entered.

- i. Teams intending to use non-Regional Qualifier Sevens for the purpose of getting players eligible to compete at the Club Sevens National Championship must do all of the following:
  - i. Notify the Club Sevens Commissioner ([seniorclub7s@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclub7s@usa.rugby)) about the team's intention to use a non-qualifier sevens tournament for player qualification purposes prior to the Event.
  - ii. Get the tournament director to agree to ID check your team prior to play and then complete this at the Event.
  - iii. Get the tournament director to sign a copy of the team roster based on the checked-in players.
  - iv. Take a team photo at the Event.
  - v. Send the team Roster & Photo to the Club Sevens Commissioner ([seniorclub7s@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclub7s@usa.rugby)) within seven (7) calendar days of the completion of the tournament.

## 5.2. Player Eligibility: Qualifying Tournament.

In order to compete in Club Sevens qualifying tournaments, players must meet the following criteria in order to participate:

- a. Be Registered to the Club and residing in the United States, through initial enrollment or transfer, prior to the earlier of (i) playing in any Qualifying Tournament, or, (ii) July 1.
- b. Players may register with any Club for sevens but may not play in any Qualifying Tournaments for any other Club during the Sevens Competitive Season. Players who transfer to another Club must initiate the request prior to the July 1 deadline and have approval of their previous Club and Approved Governing Body.
- c. For Local/Regional Qualifying Events, each player must be capable of meeting the required Regulations for the USA Rugby Championship Event.
- d. Players under the age of 18 may not play Adult rugby without a Waiver from USA Rugby. Coaches allowing any U-18 to participate in Adult rugby without the USA Rugby Waiver are subject to sanction. This Waiver further requires all members of the Club to be in compliance with the USA Rugby SafeSport Certification policy.
- e. Players must have proof of identification and citizenship available at all events in which they participate. Original or legible copies of citizenship documentation must be presented at the Event. A copy may be paper or electronic (cell phone, laptop or tablet). If the documentation is not legible the Player will be noted as a Non-Citizen on the Roster. Valid proofs of identification and citizenship include:
  - ▶ Government-issued photo ID *accompanied by* a birth certificate from a U.S. state or territory. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of photo page of U.S. passport. or U.S. passport card/Enhanced Driver's License. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Naturalization Certificate *accompanied by* a Government or school-issued photo ID. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Native American Tribal Identification Card. OR,
  - ▶ Official school-issued ID for students *accompanied by* a birth certificate from a U.S. state or territory.

Note: Social security cards, State ID cards and military IDs are NOT acceptable for verification of citizenship.

**Clarification:** Non-Citizens must have a government-issued ID to prove identity. Players who do not possess U.S. passports or U.S.-based birth certificates will count as non-citizens for the purpose of player eligibility. Players who do not bring foreign-based passports to Events will still need to prove residency/entry prior to July 1.

- f. Players unable to compete with their Historic clubs due to other rugby or life commitments may apply for a waiver to compete with their club when/if they qualify for the Club Sevens National Championship. This provision is intended to protect clubs that unexpectedly lose players to Professional XV's or have mandatory rest in high-performance environments.
- g. Players may only compete in qualifying competition with a single team and must be registered to the team which they represent in competition, even if a club fields multiple qualifying sides.

## 5.3. Player Eligibility: National Championship.

- a. In order to compete at the Club Sevens National Championship, players must play for the Club in at least two sevens Qualifying Tournaments (or other tournaments as pre-approved by the Club 7s Commissioner ([seniorclub7s@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclub7s@usa.rugby)) scheduled at least one week apart, prior to this USA Rugby Championship Event. Other pre-approved tournaments must be rostered events, with rosters supplied to USA Rugby by the tournament organizer.
- b. All players competing at the Club Sevens National Championship must be in compliance with Section 5.2 of this document, including possession of documents to verify eligibility, identity/citizenship, proper completion of all required tournament paperwork (liability waivers, media questionnaire, media waivers) listed in the tournament information packet, and competitive play in at the minimum number of events.

#### 5.4. Club Sevens Player Waivers.

Players that do not meet the criteria for participation with their Club under Section 5.2 may seek a Waiver from USA Rugby (see Section 7.5.2). A Waiver is not guaranteed, and players must be diligent in documenting their case for receiving one. Requests for a waiver of the Eligibility Regulations will not be reviewed or considered when submitted to the Senior Club Eligibility Committee less than ten (10) business days prior to a Competition for which eligibility is required.

##### 5.4.1. Waiver Application Process.

Players requesting an eligibility waiver from USA Rugby must receive USA Rugby approval of the waiver BEFORE participating in any Qualifying Tournament or Championship Event. Submitting a waiver request to USA Rugby does not provide temporary eligibility. The formal Waiver from USA Rugby must be received before the player may play for his/her Club.

Players may seek a waiver per the guidelines outlined in Section 7.5 (Waivers). Senior Club Waivers include:

- i. In-Season Transfer due to Geographic Relocation for Non-Rugby Reasons.
- ii. Missed Match/Tournament Participation due to Medical/Personal Hardship.
- iii. Missed Tournament Participation due to High-Level Rugby Commitments.
- iv. In-Season Transfer due to Geographic Relocation for Professional Rugby Reasons.
- v. Missed Registration Deadline (Sevens Only).

Each request for a waiver of an Eligibility Regulation must:

- i. be in writing and supported by required documentation; and
- ii. include a personal statement from the player; and
- iii. address reason the waiver is requested, including any unusual and/or extraordinary personal circumstances; and
- iv. be received by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee at least ten (10) business days prior to any Qualifying Event for which the player is requesting a waiver.

A waiver of the Eligibility Regulation(s) is not guaranteed upon submission of a request. This shall be specified within the Eligibility Decision returned by USA Rugby.

Submit waiver requests to: [seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby).

## SECTION 6. NATIONAL ALL STAR SEVENS CHAMPIONSHIPS.

10.1. Team Eligibility.

No longer applicable.

10.2. Player Eligibility.

No longer applicable.

## SECTION 7. GENERAL PROCEDURES.

### 7.1 Medical.

#### Concussion.

Players suspected of having concussion or diagnosed with concussion must go through a graduated return to play protocol (GRTP: available on <http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/concussion>). The World Rugby Head Injury Assessment (HIA) protocol does not apply to USA Rugby domestic Competitions.

#### Heat.

USA Rugby recommends that the Heat Illness Prevention Interventions established by World Rugby (<http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/>) be applied if, during the Match, conditions reach a temperature higher than/equal to 86° F with humidity greater than/equal to 60%.

### 7.2 USA Rugby Championship Event Rosters.

Upon qualifying for a USA Rugby Championship Event, each Club shall submit to USA Rugby, within the time frames requested, a roster of the players and a list of the support staff that will be in attendance at the USA Rugby Championship Event. The roster shall designate information specific to player and Club eligibility for each such Event. The roster must be signed and certified by a responsible Club official and Approved Governing Body Representative.

All Clubs must check with their Approved Governing Body officials for any other requirements of documentation that must be retained and/or presented at Qualifying Matches (See Section 7.4).

All updated information on current year Eligibility Regulations will be maintained at [www.usarugby.org](http://www.usarugby.org).

### 7.3 Club Documentation.

See Section 7.4 for the full list of documentation that should be maintained at all times by a responsible Club official and be available upon demand and/or prior to participation in any Qualifying Match and USA Rugby Championship Event.

### 7.4 Player Documentation.

The following is a guide to documentation that should be maintained at all times from the start of the Competitive Season by a responsible club official. This documentation should be made available upon demand and/ or prior to participation in any Qualifying Match/Event and USA Rugby Championship Event.

A player may be required to submit documentation to prove as needed (a) identity; (b) citizenship status and/or qualification as a resident (as opposed to a Non-Resident or Non-Citizen Player); (c) USA Rugby Registration; (d) waiver granted by USA Rugby; and (e) college enrollment. Players unable to provide appropriate documentation will be deemed ineligible to play in Qualifying Matches/Tournament and/or assigned Non-Resident or Non-Citizen Player status for purposes of eligibility.

Acceptable documentation, original or a legible copy which may be paper or electronic (cell phone, laptop or tablet), includes:

- a. Proof of Identification.
  - ▶ Current government issued photo identification and/or official school-issued ID for students.
- b. Proof of Citizenship can be verified with:

- ▶ Government-issued photo ID *accompanied by* a birth certificate from a U.S. state or territory. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of photo page of U.S. passport. or U.S. passport card/Enhanced Driver's License. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Naturalization Certificate *accompanied by* a Government or school-issued photo ID. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Native American Tribal Identification Card.
  - ▶ Official school-issued ID for students *accompanied by* a birth certificate from a U.S. state or territory.
- c. Proof of U.S. Residency for Fifteens National Qualifier Eligibility can be verified with:
- ▶ Government-issued photo ID *accompanied by* a birth certificate, copy or original, from a U.S. state or territory. OR,
  - ▶ Official school-issued ID for students *accompanied by* a birth certificate, copy or original, from a U.S. state or territory. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of photo page of U.S. passport. or U.S. passport card/Enhanced Driver's License. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Naturalization Certificate *accompanied by* a birth certificate from a U.S. state or territory. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Permanent (Green Card) or Conditional Permanent Resident. OR,
  - ▶ Original or copy of Native American Tribal Identification Card.
- Note:** Documentation in reference to the pursuit of permanent or conditional resident status in order to facilitate a player's participation in the Competition is NOT sufficient.
- d. Proof of current member registration can be verified with a printout from USA Rugby Website showing valid registration dates.
- e. Proof of official waiver from USA Rugby can be verified with waiver letter signed by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee Chair, delivered by electronic mail, displaying player name, Club, official dates of eligibility, and the specific Regulation waived.

## 7.5 Waivers.

### 7.5.1 Waiver Request Process.

Each request for waiver from these Eligibility Regulations must be in writing and supported by required documentation, including a personal statement from the player or club. Each request must be received by the Senior Club Eligibility Committee at least ten (10) business days prior to any Qualifying Match/Tournament or USA Rugby Championship Event for which the player/club is requesting a waiver.

The Senior Club Eligibility Committee will have up to ten (10) days from the date of receipt of all required documentation to respond to the applicant. Individuals seeking a waiver should consider that backlogs of requests can occur. Player eligibility should be investigated by the club and any waivers requested prior to the beginning of each Competitive Season.

Players requesting an eligibility waiver from the Senior Club Eligibility Committee must receive approval of the waiver BEFORE participating in any Qualifying Match or Event. Submitting a waiver request to the Senior Club Eligibility Committee does not provide temporary eligibility. The formal Waiver from the Senior Club Eligibility Committee must be received before the player may play for his/her Club.

Submit waiver requests to: [seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby](mailto:seniorclubeligibility@usa.rugby).

### 7.5.2 Senior Club Eligibility Waivers.

The Senior Club Eligibility Committee will review all waiver requests that pertain to National Championship Eligibility, for both fifteens and sevens. The following are the basic categories of waivers which may be granted by the USA Rugby Senior Club Eligibility Committee. This is not an exhaustive list. Members may seek a waiver of the Regulations based on other unusual or extraordinary personal situations provided the request does not conflict with the intent of these Regulations or the Spirit of the Rules.

#### A. In-Season Transfer due to Geographic Relocation for Non-rugby Reasons.

Players seeking an in-season transfer due to geographic relocation must apply for a waiver prior to the membership registration deadline (see Section 3.4-(a) or 5.2-(a)).

Each request must include:

- i. Documentation verifying geographic relocation for non-rugby related employment, or military transfer, enrollment in educational program by player and/or spouse/family member; and,
- ii. Dated document(s) confirming basis for relocation (military transfer papers; offer of employment including terms of employment and start date in the new location; acceptance or admissions notification); and,
- iii. Release from original Club; and,
- iv. Confirmation supplied by the Approved Governing Body of no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues.

The timing of the request (standing and remaining schedule of the original Club, standing and remaining schedule of the new Club) and will factor into waiver consideration.

Player must not have played in a USA Rugby Senior Club NCS Match for any other Club during the current Competitive Season.

#### B. Missed Match Participation Requirement due to Medical/Personal Hardship.

A request to waive the Match/Tournament participation minimum specified (Section 3.4-(d) or 5.3-(a)) must be accompanied by documentation of extraordinary circumstances:

- i. Contemporaneous or other medical documentation from a medical doctor which confirms injury or illness; and
- ii. Statement, which includes the date, that the player has been cleared for full participation from a Professional Medical Practitioner; and
- iii. Any additional medical records or documents which substantiate the request; and
- iv. Contemporaneous or other appropriate documentation which establishes the player's inability to compete as a result of a personal hardship.

#### C. Missed Match/Tournament Participation Requirement due to High-Level Rugby Commitments.



A request to waive the Match/Tournament participation minimum specified in Section 3.4-(d) or 5.3-(a) must be accompanied by documentation of extraordinary circumstances:

- i. Evidence of invitation to a National Team camp or tournament held during the time the player's club is scheduled to participate in a Qualifying Tournament.
- ii. Evidence of a U.S.-based professional contract with Major League Rugby that requires participation during the time the player's club is scheduled to participate in Qualifying Tournaments.
- iii. Evidence of a Historic participation connection with the club for which they are seeking to participate.

Players seeking a waiver of the Minimum Participation Requirement due to High-Level Rugby Commitments must play in at least one Qualifying Match/Tournament with their club. No player with high-level rugby commitments is guaranteed a waiver of eligibility from the Senior Club Eligibility Committee. 'Mandatory Rest' required by a National Team or Major League Rugby club may be taken into consideration but is not considered on the same level as mandatory participation in a camp, tournament, or match.

#### **D. In-Season Transfer due to Geographic Relocation for Professional Rugby Reasons.**

Rugby-Related in-season transfers will be considered only for players demonstrating geographic relocation to participate with a Professional Rugby team. Players must initiate the transfer request prior to the membership registration deadline (see Section 3.4-(a)). Each request must include the following:

- i. Documentation of relocation for employment with a Professional Rugby team or participation in an Academy directly affiliated with a Professional Rugby team; and
- ii. Dated document(s) verifying reason for relocation (contract and/or offer of employment including terms of employment, start or report date in the new location); and,
- iii. Release from original Club; and,
- iv. Confirmation supplied by the Approved Governing Body of no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues.
- v. The waiver request must be initiated with USA Rugby prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).

No more than two (2) players approved for a rugby-related transfer may be on any Match Roster for a Division 2 or a Division 3 Club; no limit on players approved for a rugby-related transfer with a Division 1 Club.

Player must not have played in a USA Rugby Senior Club NCS Match for any other Club during the current Competitive Season.

#### **E. Missed Registration Deadline (Sevens Only).**

A request to waive the Player Registration Deadline specified in Section 5.2-(a) must be accompanied by documentation verifying the participation and/or registration history with that sevens team, or a Community Rugby club in the proximity of the sevens team (at level of youth, college or senior club) for at least one previous competitive season.

- ▶ The Player must register to the sevens team prior to participating in any Qualifying Events with the team.
- ▶ The Player may not have played in any Qualifying Events with a different sevens team during the current sevens competitive season.
- ▶ This exception is available to senior club sevens competitions only.
- ▶ This exception does not waive the Qualifying Event participation minimum specified in Section 5.3-(a).

### **7.6. Appeals.**

#### **7.6.1. Appeal of Senior Club Eligibility Committee / Approved Governing Body Eligibility Decision.**

A player or club has the right to Appeal a Senior Club Eligibility Committee, or Approved Governing Body, determination only on procedural basis. To request a hearing, all explanation and relevant data must be submitted to the USA Rugby Disciplinary and Grievance (D&G) Committee (See Section 7.6.3.).

#### **7.6.2. Appeal of Senior Club Competitions Committee / Approved Governing Body Competitions-Related Decision.**

A player or club has the right to Appeal a Senior Club Competitions Committee, or Approved Governing Body, determination only on procedural basis. To request a hearing, all explanation and relevant data must be submitted to the USA Rugby Disciplinary and Grievance (D&G) Committee (See Section 7.6.3.)

#### **7.6.3. USA Rugby Appellate Panel.**

As referenced in the USA Rugby Bylaws, an Appeal shall be conducted in accordance with the rules established by the Board. The Appellate Panel will be seated by members of the USA Rugby Disciplinary and Grievance Committee and a Judicial Officer. The Appeal can only be based on procedure, to the actual decision of the Senior Club Eligibility Committee or Approved Governing Body. Such Appeal must be made with seven (7) days of the decision of the Senior Club Eligibility Committee or the Approved Administrative Governing Body, but not less than five (5) business days prior to a Qualifying Match/Tournament or USA Rugby Championship Event for which eligibility has been requested. There shall be no waivers to this timeline.

A Member may file a Grievance with the USA Rugby Disciplinary and Grievance Committee to review whether there has been a civil rights violation claim.

#### **7.6.4. Anti-Doping.**

Having a fair and effective anti-doping program is vital to ensure that the rights of clean athletes and the integrity of competition are upheld. USA Rugby is opposed to the practice of doping in sport, and fully supports the policies, protocols, and rules set forth by World Rugby and as further outlined by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA).

#### **The Prohibited List.**

Members are responsible for anything they may ingest and for knowing the banned substances and methods included on WADA's Prohibited List. This List is evaluated, updated, and published annually: [www.USADA.org/substances/prohibited-list/](http://www.USADA.org/substances/prohibited-list/)

#### **Report a Violation.**

To make a formal complaint regarding a suspected Anti-Doping Rule Violation by another Member, contact USA Rugby. Note that there may be a fee required to launch an investigation on this claim.