



# INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD

## *Putting players first*

### *IRB Age Guideline - Under 18s Playing Adult Rugby*

In this Guideline the following phrases have the following meanings:

#### **Adult Rugby:**

Rugby played by teams comprising players normally of 18 years of age and older. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes games played at the under 20 and under 19 levels and rugby sevens;

#### **Community/Participant Rugby:**

Rugby other than Elite Rugby;

#### **Elite Rugby:**

Rugby played between representative teams of unions, cross border rugby played between the senior clubs, provinces, states and other sub-unions or associations of unions and such other rugby within its territory as a union may decide is Elite Rugby; and Elite Adult Rugby shall be Elite Rugby played by teams comprising players normally of 18 years of age and older;

#### **Under 18:**

being under 18 years of age.

## **1. Introduction**

Under 18 players should not normally play Adult Rugby.

This Guideline relates to players who are Under 18 who wish to play or be involved in training for Adult Rugby and differentiates between Elite Adult Rugby and Community/Participation Rugby because of:

- 1.1** the intensity of Elite Rugby;
- 1.2** the physicality and fitness of Elite Rugby Players;
- 1.3** the ability to monitor regulations and protocols specific to Elite Rugby;
- 1.4** the expert professional advice and support normally available to Elite Rugby Players;  
and
- 1.5** the disparity between Community Rugby played in different Unions making the setting of common guidelines inappropriate.

## 2. Elite Rugby

Because of the particular nature of the front row from other positions different criteria apply before an Under 19 player may play Elite Adult Rugby. This specific requirement does not apply to players who may play in the front row in rugby sevens.

### 2.1 Front Rows (excluding rugby sevens)

An Under 19 player should not play Elite Adult Rugby in the front row unless the following are obtained:

- (a) written agreement from the player in writing to play Elite Adult Rugby in the front row and acceptance of any associated risk of playing with Adults who may be stronger and more physically developed than him;
- (b) written confirmation from a medical practitioner with an understanding of the demands of Elite Rugby to whom the player is known that the player is in a physical condition to play Elite Adult Rugby in the front row and that this view is supported by a musculo-skeletal evaluation and other appropriate assessments;
- (c) written agreement from a medical officer with an understanding of the demands of Elite Rugby employed or retained by the player's home union that the player is in a physical condition to play Elite Adult Rugby in the front row and that this view is supported by a musculo-skeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments;
- (d) written confirmation from a coach with an appropriate understanding of the physical attributes required of and the risks to players in the front row in Elite Adult Rugby and to whom the player is known that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play Elite Adult Rugby in the front row; and
- (e) such other consents or confirmations (if any) as may be required by the player's home union or to comply with the local jurisdiction.

### 2.2 Positions other than front row (but including all positions in rugby sevens)

An Under 18 player should not play Elite Adult Rugby unless the following are obtained:

- (a) written agreement from the Under 18 player in writing to play Elite Adult Rugby and acceptance of any associated risk with playing with Adults who may be stronger and more physically developed than him;

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- (b) parental or legal guardian's consent in writing;
- (c) written confirmation from a medical practitioner with an understanding of the demands of Elite Rugby to whom the player is known that the player is in a physical condition to play Elite Adult Rugby and that this view is supported by a musculo-skeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments;
- (d) written agreement from a medical officer with an understanding of the demands of Elite Rugby employed or retained by the player's home union that the player is in a physical condition to play Elite Adult Rugby and that this view is supported by a musculo-skeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments;
- (e) written confirmation from a coach with an appropriate understanding of the physical attributes required of and the risks to players in Elite Adult Rugby and to whom the player is known that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play Elite Adult Rugby; and
- (f) Such other consents agreements or confirmations (if any) as may be required by the player's home union or to comply with the local jurisdiction.

### 2.3. Records

The player's home union:

- (a) must keep a full and permanent record of the process undertaken and the consents, confirmations and agreements sought and obtained in relation to each Under 18 player or Under 19 Front Row player who plays Elite Adult Rugby; and
- (b) if so reasonably required by the IRB (or if required by the organiser of a competition in which the Under 18 player or Under 19 Front Row player is to take part) to provide certification or evidence of the process that has been undertaken and the consents, agreements and confirmations obtained in accordance with either paragraphs 2.1, or 2.2 above.

### 3. Participation /Community Rugby

The union having jurisdiction over the Community Game in its territory shall decide having regard to safety, player welfare and local conditions and circumstances on the policy, regulations and/or guidelines applicable if Under 18 players are to be permitted to play Adult Rugby.