

Saskatchewan Rugby

Age Dispensation Policy



[Approved on May 2022]

Age Dispensation Policy

Rugby Canada and all provincial members unions are committed to providing and maintaining a safe, competitive environment. The Age Dispensation Policy aims to protect the safety and welfare of age grade rugby players by trying to ensure that participants with broadly compatible physical development and skills levels play with and against each other.

A dispensation is given to a player to allow them to play in an age grade that they would not usually be able to play in because of their age and as per the Rugby Canada Age Banding Guidelines. Best practise is for players to play within a one year "age window". This tends to be driven by calendar year, eg Born in 1997 or by academic year. Acceptable practise is for players to play within a two year "age window". In exceptional circumstances a player may play within a three year "age window". As an example, a player participating in an Under 18 match must be turning 18, 17 or 16 years of age during the calendar year. Players considering playing in a lower age grade category should only be 1 year removed from that perspective age category they wish to participate in.

The Age Dispensation Policy applies to all competitions sanctioned by Saskatchewan Rugby. It focuses on allowing participants to play rugby safely and not influence game results.

It is important that all people involved in a decision to permit a junior player to participate in different age category fully understand that rugby is a contact sport and like all contact sports, players are exposed to the risk of injury. This risk could be heightened by allowing players to participate in matches organized for a different age category if their physical development, skill level, maturity and experience differ from that of the players he/she will play with or against.

Eligibility

- 1.1 **Senior Rugby:** To be eligible for senior contact rugby players must be turning 18 years of age during the calendar year. Front row players are not eligible for dispensation to senior rugby.
- 1.2 **Higher Age Grade Contact Rugby:** To be eligible for higher age grade contact rugby players will be permitted to participate in an age grade match that is not more than two years above their age on January 1st of the year in which the match is being held, otherwise known as the two year "age window".
- 1.3 **Lower Age Grade Contact Rugby:** to be eligible for lower age grade contact rugby, players will be permitted to participate in an age grade match that is no more than 1 year below their age on January 1st of the year in which the match is being held.

Any players not meeting the Eligibility requirements are required to apply for an Age Dispensation as an exceptional circumstance. Playing up or down requests will be considered outside of designated age groups, considering the weight, height and experience level of the player and the welfare of the other players in that age group.

All applications submitted must be completed on the online form. Each online form must have an uploaded signed assessment from a qualified coach, a signed confirmation by the players parents or legal guardian as well as a signed medical clearance by a medical practitioner.

Applicants must not participate in matches outside their age category until written notification of approval has been received. An approved application will only be valid for the year in which the application is made. Saskatchewan Rugby reserves the right to evaluate and assess players requesting dispensation independently. The decision of Saskatchewan Rugby is final and Saskatchewan Rugby reserves the right to change this policy from time to time at its sole discretion.

Front row players need particular attention. If the participant is a front row player (prop and hooker) in rugby potentially carries an increased risk of injury with respect to the scrum. There are additional questions on the Age Dispensation Form in this scenario.

Procedure

The link to the online Age Dispensation Form can be found online at www.saskrugby.com/registration. As part of the online form, you must upload the following documents:

Appendix A: Written Confirmation from a coach with an appropriate understanding of the physical attributes required and of the risks to players in Rugby and to whom the player is known that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play rugby at the desired level.

Appendix B: Written Agreement from players's parents or guardian to play and acceptance of the associated risk with playing with people who may be stronger and more physically developed than them.

Appendix C: Written confirmation and agreement from a Medical practitioner with an understanding of the demands of rugby to whom the player is known that the player is in a physical condition to play rugby at the desired level and that this view is supported by a Musculo-skeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments.

Applicants will receive written notification from Saskatchewan Rugby whether their application has been approved or rejected. Applications will be processed as they are received and may take up to 7 days to be approved.

Appendix A: Written Confirmation from Coach

In accordance with the Saskatchewan Rugby Age Dispensation Policy, this documentation is to provide consent for the following age dispensation

Athlete Name: _____ Athlete DOB: _____

Proposed level of competition: _____

Coach Information

Name: _____ NCCP Certification # _____

Email: _____ Telephone #: _____

Coach Certifications

(circle your answer)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Rugby Ready Certification | Yes / No |
| Concussion Management Certification | Yes / No |
| Tackle Smart Training | Yes / No |

Coach Assessment for Dispensation

The coach listed above will assess the player along the following criteria and circle their response where indicated.

(circle your answer)

| | |
|---|----------|
| <i>Physical and Mental Development</i> In your opinion does the player's level of physical and mental development allows the player to compete with players in the proposed level of competition? | Yes / No |
| <i>Skill Level</i> In your opinion is the player's skill level comparable with the other players in the proposed competition? This includes skills specific to his/her playing position and in relation to the games fundamentals (e.g. tackle, pass, ruck, maul, scrum, etc.) | Yes / No |
| <i>Level of Experience</i> Does the player have the experience to compete with other players at a comparable standard of competition? | Yes / No |

Coach Attestation

This is to attest that the player's physical development, skill level and experience are sufficient to compete safely with players in the proposed competition level. The aforementioned coach has explained the risks involved to the player and his/her parent and/or guardian.

Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Written Agreement from Player's Parent or Guardian

In accordance with the Saskatchewan Rugby Age Dispensation Policy, this documentation is to provide consent for the following age dispensation

Athlete Name: _____ Athlete DOB: _____

Proposed level of competition: _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Name: _____

Email: _____ Telephone #: _____

Parent/Guardian Attestation

I attest that:

- I am a parent or legal guardian of the aforementioned Athlete, and that I have been provided with a copy of Saskatchewan Rugby's Age Dispensation Policy.
- The coach (listed in Appendix A) has explained to me that, in his/her opinion, the player's physical development, skill level and experience is sufficiently high that the Athlete is capable of competing safely in the proposed competition level.
- It has been explained to me that the risk of injury to the Athlete may be increased by participation in rugby outside of their competition level and age band.
- I also understand that rugby is a contact sport and, like all contact sports, players are exposed to risk of injury.
- I also understand that the level of risk may be heightened where a younger player participates in a rugby competition above their specified playing division, and in circumstances where the player's physical development, skill level and experience may be inferior to that of the players he or she will play against.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Written Confirmation and Agreement from a Medical Practitioner

In accordance with the Saskatchewan Rugby Age Dispensation Policy, this documentation is to provide consent for the following age dispensation

Athlete Name: _____ Athlete DOB: _____

Proposed level of competition: _____

Medical Practitioner Information

Name: _____ Telephone #: _____

Medical Credentials: _____

Clinic Address: _____

This is to confirm that, based on my understanding of the physical and competitive environment expected for the aforementioned Athlete in the proposed level of competition, an examination has indicated that he/she is physically capable of safely participating in the proposed rugby activities. This acknowledges that they have no active medical conditions, injuries, or other health concerns that would hinder their participation at this level.

Additional Comments (Optional):

Medical Practitioner Signature: _____ Date: _____