

— Introduction

Rugby prides itself on inherent qualities of Respect, Teamwork, Discipline and Friendship and it is important for our volunteers and participants to understand the importance of these and to strive to uphold what is good for the Game.

The objective of this document is to identify issues relating to Age Grade Rugby activities and to guide participants when conducting rugby activities so they may truly enjoy the Rugby Experience.

**IRFU Age Grade Rugby
2011**

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— Club & Schools

Registration

- Clubs/ Schools must ensure they update their player register at the start of each season.
- Players must be registered or de-registered (in the event of players who left the School) before participating.
- Branch Youth Registrars to verify the date of birth (copy of birth cert or passport) at the first registration of a player.

Eligibility

- Players must comply with the eligibility criteria for the competitions or matches they participate in.
- Clubs/ Schools are responsible to ensure coaches, players and parents are aware of the eligibility criteria for the competitions they are participating in.
- Concerns regarding eligibility must be raised through the Club/School to the Branch or if required the IRFU.

Communication

- Communication relating to Clubs/Schools issues must be raised through the Club Co-ordinator/ School Games Master to the respective Branch Youth or School committees.

Membership & Insurance

The IRFU insurance scheme is not intended that the benefit should compensate for general injury or day to day medical expenses. It is therefore important that clubs and schools ensure all players and volunteers are aware of membership/ affiliation requirements.

The IRFU requests Clubs and Schools to advise members of:

- The detail of the cover provided by this compulsory scheme i.e. it is for serious injury (paralysis) or fatality only.
- The availability of optional extra cover which can be purchased by the club or by individuals by contacting AON directly.
- The responsibility of each member to make sure that he/she is adequately covered for the consequences of any injury and to ensure to have cover for all medical expenses i.e. Aviva/ Quinn Healthcare etc.

A copy of the Policy Document, setting out full details of Cover, Conditions and Exclusions, is sent in September to the Honorary Secretary of all registered Clubs and is also available on the Irish Rugby Website or can be requested from IRFU or AON.

Serious Injuries

Should be notified to the Branch or the IRFU immediately and a Serious Injury Report form completed as soon as possible.

Serious Injury Reports must be completed for the following injuries:

- Any head or neck injury that requires the player to be transported directly from the ground to an emergency department, hospital or after hours medical centre.
- Any injury that results in the admission of a player into hospital after a game.

- Any injury that is expected to prevent a player from playing for a period of 8 weeks or longer.
- Serious injury reports must be forwarded to the Provincial Union headquarters within 48 Hours of the injury coming to the notice of the referee or team management.

For more information see:

[http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Serious Injury Report Form Final Version.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Serious%20Injury%20Report%20Form%20Final%20Version.pdf)

Child Welfare

- Clubs/Schools must ensure players and volunteers are aware of and support the IRFU policy regarding Child Welfare and Best Practice.
- Clubs/Schools are responsible for the recruitment and appointment of their volunteers and coaches and should have the necessary recruiting policies and procedures in place.
- All rugby activities must be conducted in a safe, responsible and enjoyable manner.
- All matters relating to child welfare must be dealt with through the Club Child Welfare Officer to the Branch or National Child Welfare Officers.

For more information see:

[http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU ChildWelfare.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU%20ChildWelfare.pdf)

Matches involving a team(s) from other Unions (Home or Away)

Clubs/Schools should ensure teams planning these fixtures/events follow procedures and as set out by the IRFU.

Application form available at:

[http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU ChildWelfare.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU%20ChildWelfare.pdf)

Codes of Conduct

Club/Schools must ensure their volunteers and teams adhere at all times to the IRFU Codes of Conduct as per the IRFU Child Welfare Document.

For more information see: [http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU ChildWelfare.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU%20ChildWelfare.pdf)

Medical

- Medical recommendations for the Age Grade sides are generally the same as for the Adult game and these are best covered by referring to best medical practice as available and as it changes from time to time.
- The basic minimum standard should be that an individual trained in first aid should attend all rugby training and games.
- All coaches should be encouraged to participate in a First Aid course.
- In the setting of Events/Festivals the First Aid person should wear a High visibility jacket and set up a First Aid station.

- Clubs/schools should maintain an Injury Logbook and report serious injuries to their Provincial Branch and the form is currently available on the IRFU web page.

Standard Medical Room: [www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU Standard Medical Room.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU%20Standard%20Medical%20Room.pdf)

Infections in Sport: [http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Preventing Blood Infection In Sport.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Preventing%20Blood%20Infection%20In%20Sport.pdf)

Events of less than 3000: [www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU Event management.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU%20Event%20management.pdf)

Events of over 3000: [www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU Advisory handbook.pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/IRFU%20Advisory%20handbook.pdf)

IRB Rugby Ready

- Specific advice to non medically-trained individuals re Injury Management is best avoided, however the IRB RugbyReady programme has an excellent section on Injury Management.

For more information see: www.irbrugbyready.com

Concussion

IRB Regulation 10 relates to concussion in rugby. If a player (of any age) has suspected concussion, they should be removed from the field of play and take no further part in the training session or match. The IRB Concussion guidelines relate to the steps required for a player to return to play.

IRB Regulation 10:

www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/23/26/100518gfirbhandbook2010freg10english.pdf

IRB Concussion Guidelines:

www.irbplayerwelfare.com/?documentid=3

Injury Prevention

- It is important that measures to encourage and promote injury prevention are considered and that the risks of participation in rugby are minimised.
- Coaches are central to the development of injury prevention protocols and individual players must also consider the issue of injury prevention.
- Parents may observe techniques in training or during matches which they feel could predispose injury and if this is the case then it is best to discuss your concerns with the Coach and/or School Principal

What can we do?

During the season your team should devote parts of occasional training sessions to discuss and develop goals for injury prevention. Coaches and/or Directors of Rugby should be involved in these discussions.

Examples of some realistic goals for injury prevention for a team(s):

- Proper warm up before every training session or match.
- A formal assessment of the pitch to ensure it safe for use - no pot holes and or other hazards.

- During the season a frequent review of injuries and discussions as to the possibility that some of these injuries might have been preventable.
- Recording of the occurrence and severity of injuries.
- Wearing of mouth guards during training and playing.
- Ensuring boots and studs comply with regulations.
- Check all equipment regularly scrum machines, tackle bags, training equipment to ensure they are in good working order.
- Notice board in your changing room with emergency contacts details of the local Accident and Emergency Department doctor (GP) and Ambulance service.
- Coaches to have mobile phone available.

Action points

Appropriate warm-up

- It is very important to perform a general warm-up prior to playing and training, followed by some position specific exercises.

Fitness levels and rugby technique

- An unfit/unconditioned player is more likely to get injured.
- Optimise your fitness level before full match participation.
- Poor technique in the scrum or during the tackle are important factors in the occurrence of rugby injuries.
- Learn the right technique if you are not sure, ask your coach.

Obey the rules

- Breaking the rules in rugby may let your Club/School, your family and yourself down.
- It has been estimated that 5-10% of injuries in rugby occur because an individual breaks the rules, in other words, 5-10% of injuries can be prevented by following the laws of the game

Environment and protective equipment

- The quality of the playing surface (e.g. pot-holes), the presence of unpadded barriers and goal posts, sharp corner flags, the cleanliness of the changing rooms/showers, and extremes of weather conditions, are examples of issues to consider in the prevention injuries and illnesses.
- Always wear a mouth guard it has been shown that the use of a mouth guard reduces dental injuries by 43%.
- Ensure that your boots are approved for rugby and that the studs do not have sharp edges.

Nutrition

- Appropriate hydration and nutrition allows for optimum performance in rugby which can lead to a small reduction in the occurrence of injuries and/or illness.

Injury reporting and management

- Record the occurrence of any significant injuries.
- The identification of trends of injury occurrence can assist in the development of effective injury prevention protocols.
- The importance of full recovery from injury before returning to play must be emphasised.
- Playing with an injury is likely to exacerbate the existing injury and also predispose you to other injuries.

Miscellaneous

- Ensure good emergency access to your pitches and that these access areas are always kept clear.
- Ensure that a stretcher is available and in good working order and consider possible injury scenarios during the course of the season.
- Introduce measures for dealing with the common injuries e.g. a first aid station for festivals and tournaments, availability of a first aid bag, ice, tape, crutches etc.

Nutrition

Young players need constant fuelling. Their nutrition needs are of great importance to their overall health, growth and development as well as to their sporting performance. The well-nourished young player will be able to play better and for longer, and recover quicker from training and matches. On the other hand, the young player who is not getting enough total calories will become tired and lethargic, and will probably struggle to maintain their enjoyment in rugby. The amount of food and drink required will vary and will increase with age and greater training and match demands. Good hydration in young players is crucial, as they are not as efficient at regulating their body temperature as adults are.

For more information see: www.irishrugby.ie/eat2compete

Supplements

- Young rugby players should focus on good eating and drinking practices to support optimum performance.
- The use of protein supplements should not be recommended by schools, coaches, teachers or others involved in the training of young rugby players. The IRFU strongly advises against the use of nutritional ergogenic aids, in particular creatine, in young rugby players under 18 years of age.
- Young rugby players with medical conditions (for example diabetes, asthma, coeliac disease and nutritional allergies) should receive appropriate medical and nutritional advice to assist their optimum performance.

For more information see: www.irishrugby.ie/eat2compete

— Players

Clothing

For all matches Clubs / Schools must ensure that the players' clothing complies with IRB Regulations and should be suitable to all types of weather conditions.

Track suits & hooded tops

- Track suits can be worn during warm up and or fun activities and coaches should use their discretion regarding the wearing of such items in cold weather conditions.
- Track suits with hooded tops and bottoms with zips may be worn during warm up and drill work which does not involve contact with other players.
- During training, match time and/ or drills with contact and tackling etc. no clothing with a hooded top and or zips should be worn; its the responsibility of coaches and referees to check this prior to the start of a match or training session.
- Clubs/ Schools should ensure coaches/ managers enforce this message and if there are concerns over younger players being cold then they should be advised to wear either a jog suit with elasticised leggings & top or other thermal wear / “skins”.
- Coaches with under 7 players to use their discretion as they will be playing non-contact rugby.

For more information see: <http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com>

Protective wear

- Clubs/ Schools must ensure all protective wear complies with IRB Regulations, however consideration should be made not to make it compulsory due to potential cost implications.

For more information see: <http://www.irb.com/lawregulations/approvedequipment/index.html>

Footwear

- Parents should consult with the Club/ School prior to purchasing boots and boots should fit properly with studs complying with IRB regulations (Regulation 12).
- Moulded rubber multi-studded soles are acceptable provided they have no sharp edges or ridges.
- It is recommended that clubs/schools ensure regular boot inspection takes place in order to ensure studs/ blades are safe and according to the regulations.

For more information see: <http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com>

Mouth guards

- It is recommended Age Grade players wear a properly fitted mouth guard when participating in contact activities and/ or matches.

Long Term Player Development

- The IRFU's LTPD model helps to ensure that the experience of training and playing the game is appropriate for the development stage of the player involved. The model is a Player-Centred one, in that the specific characteristics pertaining to each stage are based on the particular capacities of players, performance and enjoyment of Irish Rugby.
- It is important to remember that the LTPD model is not intended to be a production line of world-class players but rather an integrated series of stages to maximize the potential of players according to their own ability and ambition.
- The establishment and maintenance of a long-term programme of development will be essential to that small number of players with the talent and inspiration to become elite performers.

For more information see: [http://www.irishrugby.ie/development/long-term player development.php](http://www.irishrugby.ie/development/long-term%20player%20development.php)

Stages of the LPTD Model

Stage

Fundamental	Learn to Play & Practice	Train to Train	Train to Compete
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Chronological Age (approx.)

5 to 12	12 to 14	15 to 17	18 to 21
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Developmental Stage

Early Childhood – Late Childhood	Late Childhood – Early Puberty	Early Puberty – Late Puberty	Late Puberty – Early Adulthood
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Essence and Characteristics of : The Player

PLAYS	EXPLORES	FOCUSES	SPECIALISES
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The Coach

GUIDES	TEACHES	CHALLENGES	FACILITATES
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The Game

FUN	STRUCTURED	PERFORMANCE	OUTCOME
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— Coaches

Timing of Courses

- IRFU Branches decide where and when they run their provincial courses, as well as the division of time (2 days or 4 evenings etc.).
- Access to courses is managed locally, i.e. through the Branch's consultation with the clubs/schools re: appropriate times.
- Branches are responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the course processes and administration regardless of the timings.

Coaching Courses and Workshops

- Coaching course modules are in effect targeted, as they relate to the LTPD stage of the game in question variations in technical application within a Stage/Course (e.g. 13-15 and 16-18 yrs) are the responsibility of the Tutor to draw out and explore.
- Tutors should consider sub-dividing coaches attending into specific course groups relating to the age of their particular players where possible and specific, more age-targeted work may be offered to coaches on a regional workshop/ seminar basis as is currently the case.

Accreditation

- Branches making submissions of coaches to attend these courses should clearly explain the accreditation process to the coaches before submitting their names to attend in order to ensure coaches are not dissuaded from pursuing the accreditation.

Garda/ Access NI Vetting

- The IRFU is committed to the highest standards of Child Welfare in Sport in Ireland and this is currently supported by the design and implementation of the IRFU Child Welfare Policy, Codes of Best Practice, Child Welfare Awareness training, staff vetting etc.
- The IRFU is working towards Garda / Access NI vetting being a key component of coach licensing.

Fitness & Conditioning

Fitness Equipment and Facilities

- Once you have a qualified fitness coach it is then time to think about fitness equipment and facilities.
- There is a difference in the equipment and facilities needed for a young players compared to adult players.

For more information see: <http://clubhouse.irishrugby.ie/18001.php>

Training Workload for Young Player

- It is important that coaches are informed about the appropriate training workload for young players by qualified fitness personnel (if they do not have such a qualification themselves).
- Coaches should seek advice from an appropriately qualified fitness coach if they have any concerns / ideas..
- A fitness coach should start the season with a periodised plan which contains the volume and intensity for the season.

Before the games begin there are two very important stages of the season to complete:

Off Season

- Is an important part of the season that last between 4 to 6 weeks where the player concentrates on rest and recovery from the previous season. There is also an opportunity to complete alternative or cross training events and to correct functional compensations.

Pre season

- This is an important developmental stage of the season which lasts somewhere between 6 to 12 weeks. It is this stage of the season where with appropriate supervision and content gains can be made in the different areas of fitness and skills.

In order for the young players to get the most out of the above stages the guidelines below should be followed, it is to explain the most appropriate and fun way to lead into your rugby season.

Find a qualified fitness coach

- It is important that an appropriately qualified fitness coach works with young players as this will ensure that the players complete fitness content that is suitable for their stage of development.
- The IRFU strongly advise coaches to attend courses on the Fitness Education pathway or appoint a coach who has already completed appropriate fitness courses.

For more information see: www.irishrugby.ie/46881.php

Foundation Strength

To help prevent injuries and improve performance it is advisable Age Grade players complete a foundation strength programme (Anatomical adaptation) at home or in a local gym. Such programmes gradually help to strengthen muscles, ligaments and tendons for the season ahead. The most appropriate programme for a rugby player with a low training history would be an anatomical adaptation session. This is a mainly body- weight based session, related to an initial fitness test / screen.

A programme like this should only be prescribed by a suitably qualified fitness coaches.

Game Fitness

As it gets close to the season players will have to get prepared for the in- season with pre- season training on the pitch. This does not have to consist of numerous laps or multi sprint endurance. Player fitness for the season should be developed through conditioned games and integrated rugby conditioning.

There are two very important rules before you start out on this:

- 1) Complete a good warm up and warm down.
- 2) Do not rush into high intensity training.

One easy way to measure training is the Rate of Perceived Exertion. Players should regularly use the below table to assess the intensity of training and provide important ongoing feedback to the coach about how players are reacting to the training.

10	Match
9	
8	
7	Very Hard
6	
5	Hard
4	Somewhat Hard
3	Moderate
2	Easy
1	Very Easy
0	Rest

If you complete your first training session at intensity level 10 it may be too high a level of intensity to start your on field training, especially if you have not played rugby for some time. It is recommended that you control the intensity you train at for the first few training sessions to help prevent any earlier injuries.

An example of the first few weeks back to pitch training would be like this:

Week 1 Session Intensity (3)

Week 2 Session Intensity (5)

Week 3 Session Intensity (7)

Week 4 Session Intensity (9)

— Fixtures & Events

Matches/ Festivals

- It is essential Clubs/School ensure matches or events are well planned and that all involved are kept informed of all arrangements.
- It is recommended for organisers /teams to liaise with each other prior to the matches/events in order to ensure all matters are clarified.

Competitions

- All participants must fully comply with all competition regulations as well as players must fulfil the required eligibility criteria.

Team lists

- Registration cards and team lists should be ready for inspection as set out in the Competition Regulations.

Mini Rugby Festivals/events

- Host Club/School must apply to their Branch for permission to host a festival/event one month in advance of the festival/event taking place.
- All IRFU regulations and procedures must apply to the festival/event.

Application form available at:

<http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU ChildWelfare.pdf>

Matches involving a team(s) from other Unions (Home or Away)

- Clubs/Schools must ensure teams planning these fixtures/events follow procedures and as set out by the IRFU.

Application form available at:

<http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFU ChildWelfare.pdf>

Match officials

- The hosting team must liaise with their Branch Referee Association within a reasonable time period (to be agreed with Referee Association) regarding fixtures/ events and officials appointed should be informed of cancellations /postponements within a reasonable time (as agreed with Referee Association).
- Clubs/Schools are responsible for the behaviour of their players and supporters and therefore must ensure match officials are treated with respect at all times.
- Concerns regarding abuse of match officials, not reported by the referee, must be reported to the Club and Branch Child Welfare Officers.

Medical

- It is recommended that qualified first aid person(s) be in attendance at all rugby activities and that the IRFU Best Practice Guidelines are followed regarding supervision and safety.
- If possible inform the club doctor and local hospital of the match (standby alert).

For more information see: <http://www.irishrugby.ie/images/content/clubcommunity/IRFUChildWelfare.pdf>

Pitches/ Playing Enclosures

- The host team should ensure the pitch is clearly marked for matches and that the playing surface is clean and safe prior to the start of the match.
- Spectators must be outside the pitch enclosure area if pitch has a perimeter fence.
- If no perimeter fence exists, the playing enclosure must be marked by a rope or a visible line and the areas for team managements and replacement players must also be roped off or clearly marked.

Warm up

- Teams should warm up in the areas designated to them by the host club and teams must make their own arrangements regarding equipment needed for the warm up and / or training before the match.

Squad Members

- Squad and management members must be in the area allocated to them area during the match.
- Only the Coach, Assistant Coach and nominated Medical Person will be allowed in the allocated technical area during the match as well as onto the pitch during half time.
- Squad members, not playing, must be in the area allocated to them until required to play in the match. Replacements to warm up in the area allocated to them as agreed with the match referee.

Water

- Only the identified management members, allowed on the touch line as stated above, are allowed to take water onto the pitch during injury breaks.
- These management members are not to engage (physical or verbal) with opposition players and / or management when taking water onto the playing area.

Behaviour

- The team management is responsible for the behaviour of their members and supporters and must ensure that at all times the behaviour of their group does not bring Age Grade Rugby, their Club/School or the IRFU into disrepute.

Summer Camps

Branches

- Summer Camp Staff must be recruited according to the IRFU Child Welfare Policy and screened through Garda Vetting or Access NI. Coaches should be appropriately qualified (eg IRFU Mini Rugby Coach) and comply with the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document by signing the Declaration of Intent and established Codes of Conduct for players and coaches.
- The programme for these camps must be aligned to an appropriate IRFU rugby syllabus as established by the Coach Development and Technical Departments.
- Branches are responsible for promotional items and player appearances as part of the camp fees and also to ensure facilities and insurance arrangements are place.

Information to be made available to participants regarding

1. Injury - medical/first aid arrangements
2. Child drop off & collection
3. Wet/ bad weather operations
4. Equipment (clothing & protective wear) required
5. Adult to player ratios

Clubs and Schools who wish to run summer camps

- Clubs and Schools are responsible for ensuring facilities and sufficient insurance cover is in place and that suitably qualified staff work on the camps are recruited according to the clubs recruitment policy and procedure.
- Availing of screening through Garda vetting or Access NI is the clubs decision and potential participants must be informed of this decision.
- Staff must be appropriately qualified (eg IRFU Mini Rugby Coach) and comply with IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document by signing the Declaration of Intent agreeing to a Codes of Conduct for players and coaches.
- In order to get endorsement from the IRFU and or Branch the programme for camps must be aligned to an appropriate IRFU rugby syllabus as established by the Coach Development and Technical Departments.
- It is the clubs responsibility to arrange promotional items and player appearances if marketed as part of the Camp fees.

Information must be made available to participants regarding

1. Injury - medical/first aid arrangements
2. Child drop off & collection
3. Wet/ bad weather operations
4. Equipment (clothing & protective wear) required
5. Adult to player ratios

— Regulations

Lifting in the Line Out: Junior Cup (U16) and Medallion (U15) levels

- The regulation relating to pre-gripping and lifting on the shorts applies at this level.
- This regulation should be enforced at all suitable age levels and for all schools and clubs to be consistent in applying this regulation.
- Referees at this level must be up-to-date and informed on the regulations, and consistent in applying them.

Date of Eligibility

1st January

- Date of eligibility is the 1st January.

1st July or 1st September

- To assist Branches to maximise participation and ensuring clubs/schools can field teams at various age levels, Branches agree the date of eligibility and age categories to apply in their province, for Branch competitions, and formally apply to the IRFU Domestic Game Committee for approval.
- The date of eligibility and age categories must be discussed and agreed with the relevant schools and youth committees.
- Fixtures or competitions involving teams from other provinces or Unions must be played using the 1st January eligibility date.

Players playing at a higher age category

- Age Grade players can play in two age categories the year a players is eligible for and one year up e.g. U14 playing also at U15.
- Any individual player identified to play 3 age categories above e.g. U17 to U19 must provide the written consent of:
 1. Parents/ Guardians
 2. Coach
 3. Clubs/ School
 4. IRFU Schools and Youth Committees will agree respective processes for administration in order to accommodate the above.

Mini Rugby

Procedure for allowing U12 players to play at U13

- (Only)In instances where clubs have a concern regarding numbers e.g. not enough U13 players in the club, may a club apply to their Branch Youth Committee with supporting documents explaining the reason(s) to allow this.
- This to only apply to players who are U12 - no U11 player playing at U12 allowed to play up.
- Branch Youth Committee to ensure that the decision does not affect playing opportunities of the U12 team(s).

Playing at adult level

- Age Grade players must have reached their 18th birthday prior to playing adult rugby.

Girls' Rugby

To assist with increasing participation numbers as well as ensuring clubs can field teams:

- Date of eligibility of 1st July with age categories at U14 U16 and U18
- Lifting in the line out regulation of pre-grip lifting on the shorts to apply at U18 level only.
- Branches to liaise with the IRFU Domestic Game Committee regarding the option best suited to their province regarding participation number and teams.

Time gap between matches

- In the interest of player welfare as well as participation, Age Grade players may play no more than a game and half (length of half being relative to the players age) within a 48 hour period. (The 48 hour period begins once a player participates in a match whether as replacement or selected to start a match.)

Variations

- There are several Regulation variations in place to ensure relevance to the capacity of players, appropriate skill development, physical conditioning issues etc. and with a view to maximising participant enjoyment and gradual progression.
- Regulations for the various levels in Age Grade Rugby are regularly reviewed and updated.

For more information see: <http://www.irishrugby.ie/club/resources/index.php>

Competitions

- In accordance with the IRFU Long Term Player Development pathway “**competitions**” (defined as: Leagues/ Cups/ Blitzes or other formally organised events resulting in play-off matches and /or finals) are not permitted at Mini and Leprechaun Rugby levels. This includes all rugby activities for participants U12 and younger.

Community Games

As outlined above, the IRFU does not currently support the Community Games competition format for participants at this level (U12 and or younger) including all matches and events as part of the Community Games Rugby programme.

Rugby for Pre-Mini Rugby stage players aged 5 to 6 years

The IRFU will not recognise any commercially-based enterprises in Mini & Leprechaun Rugby.

- Participants can only participate in non-contact rugby Leprechaun and or TAG Rugby.
- Parents to be present at sessions and at least one parent to attend the session at all times.
- Participants must have reached his/her 7th birthday before they can participate in fixtures and or events involving teams from other clubs.
- Adult player ratio to be 1 adult to every 5 players.

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