



2019-20 ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS

General Regulations and Event-Specific Regulations for Adult Rugby (Collegiate and 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. USA Rugby is responsible for establishing the structure of USA Rugby Championship Events, along with Competition and Eligibility Regulations.
6. The National Competitions Committee and each Competitive Region Committee are responsible for determining the clubs that participate according to the structure established, and according to the Eligibility and Competition Regulations as determined by USA Rugby.
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 USA Rugby 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 USA Rugby 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 USA Rugby 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. **Academic Year.** An annual period during which a student attends a college or university beginning with the first day of the fall semester or quarter and ending at the conclusion of the **spring semester or quarter**.
2. **Academic Term.** An academic session that is a division of the Academic Year. This includes a Quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) and/or a Semester (Fall, Spring, Summer).
3. **Academy.** Formal arrangement between a Professional Rugby Club and targeted players who have demonstrated the potential to be a professional rugby player.
4. **Adult Rugby.** Rugby other than Elite Rugby and College Rugby played by teams comprising players normally of 18 years of age and older.
5. **Appeal.** A formal, written request, made by the affected player or Club to USA Rugby, for relief from a specified determination of USA Rugby or one of its subordinate committees or an Approved Governing Body in interpreting or applying these Regulations (Section 13.6).
6. **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
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **College Rugby.** Rugby played by players who are enrolled in a college or university. These teams would be registered with USA Rugby as 'Collegiate Clubs'.
10. **Collegiate Transfer Player.** A player with continuing college eligibility, who began the Fifteens Competitive Season with a collegiate Club and wishes to play with a senior Club at the conclusion of the player's collegiate Competitive Season (see Section 3.8).
11. **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.
12. **Competitions.** The Qualifying Match schedule for the clubs of an Approved Governing Body.
13. **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, located at usarugbystats.com, 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.
14. **Competitive Region (CR).** Eight competitive regions of the United States loosely defined along geographical lines, with four regions contained within the western ('American') and four regions set in the eastern ('National') halves of the country.
15. **Competitive Region Committee.** The Approved Governing Body, elected to work within each USA Rugby CR, with delegated responsibility to uphold the policies developed by the USA Rugby National Competitions Committee in accordance with the eligibility standards as specified within the Regulations.
16. **Competitive Region Championships.** Match or Matches scheduled after the regular season within the CR to determine the team(s) which will advance to the USA Rugby National Championship Series from that Competitive Region.
17. **Competitive Season.** August 15th through completion of the USA Rugby Club Sevens Championship.
18. **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 I, II and III in which there is a USA Rugby Championship Event.
19. **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 13.5.2).
20. **Elite Senior Club.** A Club participating in a Competition(s) that has been designated as 'elite' by the USA Rugby National Competitions Committee (see Section 3.6).
21. **Elite Senior Club Competitions.** Competitions that have been identified by the National 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.
22. **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 of up to 28 players is set and locked for duration of the Event Weekend (see Section 3.2).
23. **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.
24. **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.
25. **High Performance College Player.** A collegiate player who has received a waiver to participate for an Elite Senior Club during the Fifteens Competitions season without impact to his/her collegiate eligibility (see Section 3.6).
26. **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).
27. **Laws.** Laws of the Game of Rugby Union as published annually by World Rugby.

28. **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.
29. **Match.** A game in which two teams compete against each other.
30. **Match Roster.** List of starting players. For Senior Club Qualifying Matches, the CMS Match Roster must include the possible replacement players.
31. **Major League Rugby (MLR).** A professional rugby competition within North America.
32. **Members.** All Players, Coaches, Administrators, Referees, Player Support Personnel and other persons under the jurisdiction of the USA Rugby.
33. **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.
34. **National Competitions Committee (NCC).** 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.
35. **NCC-Required Play-In Game.** A match between teams of two different Competitive Regions or between teams from the same Competitive Region, scheduled by and required by the National 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.
36. **Non-Resident Player (NR).** A player who lacks U.S. citizenship or a Permanent Resident ("Green") Card.
37. **Participant.** Registered member of USA Rugby, which includes a Club, player, coach, manager, referee, medical support staff, administrator and official participating in USA Rugby.
38. **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.
39. **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.
40. **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 CR, and which lead to the earlier of either the USA Rugby 'Round of 8' or any USA Rugby-required Play-In matches which lead to the USA Rugby 'Round of 8.' Jurisdiction of this Competition lies with the Competitive Region Committee.
41. **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 CR(s) and the senior Club Eligibility Committee.
42. **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 Match (see Section 3.4-(a), Section 9.2-(b)).
43. **Regular League Season.** A set number of games against a set number of opponents of the same Division before the start of the CR play-offs.
44. **Regulations.** Eligibility guidelines relating to the Game and binding on all Approved Governing Bodies.
45. **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.
46. **Roster.** List of players competing in a specified Division for an entire Event Weekend (see also 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.
47. **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'.
48. **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.
49. **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.
50. **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.
51. **Spring Academic Term.** The academic term as defined by the University Registrar as spring – this may be a spring quarter or spring semester.
52. **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.
53. **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 13.5.2).

54. **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**.
55. **USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series.** Includes the Fifteens playoffs, starting with any NCC-Required Play-In Game, for Men's Division I, Men's Division II, and Men's Division III, as well as the Fifteens playoffs for the Women's Premier League, Women's Division I, and Women's Division II.
56. **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 13.5.2).
57. **Winter Quarter.** For schools that utilize a quarter system, the winter quarter typically concludes in March or April of any given year.

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 13.6.1) 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. 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:

- a. be **currently** registered **with USA Rugby**, with all dues fully paid; and
- b. have a registered coach certified by USA Rugby; and
- c. have a Roster minimum of nine (9) players for a Sevens Qualifying Tournament and fifteen (15) players for a Fifteens Qualifying Match; and
- d. adhere to the regulations and procedures for the particular USA Rugby Championship; and
- e. Teams selected to represent the Approved Governing Body in the USA Rugby Championship Event must be determined on the Basis of Competition (i.e., rather than on basis of allocation).

Each Club must fulfill the NCC's published divisional minimum number of Qualifying Matches (or predetermined goal) unless a waiver has been granted by the NCC. (See <https://www.usarugby.org/club-resources/>)

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:

- a. **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; and
- b. registered to the Club, by the deadline (See 3.4-(a)) to play in a Qualifying Match with that Club; and
- c. in compliance with the Event-Specific Regulations and procedures for each particular USA Rugby Championship Event.

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.

USA Rugby shall follow World Rugby policy regarding transgendered athletes: <http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/?documentid=1>

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/). 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/

2.7. USA Rugby Policy for Under 18s and Under 19s Playing College Rugby.

See Section 4.4

2.8. USA Rugby Policy for Under 15s Playing High School and U19 Rugby.

See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/

SECTION 3. SENIOR CLUB.

3.1. Competition Sanctioning.

- a. All 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 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 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 Western and Eastern play-offs, **or any NCC-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. Any **waiver of an NCC policy must be formally granted by the NCC, and any waiver of a local Approved Governing Body policy must be formally granted by the local Approved Governing Body, by the timeline specified in that policy** (See Section 13.6.2.).
- c. Matches in the USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series will adhere to the same Match Roster requirements as outlined in Section 3 of the USA Rugby Eligibility Regulations, except that:
 - i. No player participating as a **High Performance** College Guest Player may participate in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS.
 - ii. No player participating as an Elite Club Guest Player may participate in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS.
- d. 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.
- e. Clubs participating in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS must carry a minimum Roster of 20 players per Event Weekend.
- f. The Event Weekend Roster may include a maximum of ten (10) Non-Resident Players and a maximum of six (6) Collegiate Transfer Players.
- g. Match Rosters for USA Rugby Senior Club National Championship Series events may list a maximum of 23 players.
 - i. No Match Roster may contain more than five (5) Non-Resident Players.
 - ii. No Match Roster may contain more than three (3) Collegiate Transfer 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 Competitive Region 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. played the required minimum number of Qualifying Matches as determined by division (See **3.3-(b)**); and
 - iv. used the USA Rugby Competition Management System (CMS) for all Qualifying Matches. Entry for all Matches must occur no later than 48 hours after each Match has concluded. Competition policies of the Approved Governing Body should be published online and may be more restrictive for this requirement (but not less restrictive). Where Approved Governing Body policies are not published, the criteria listed in the USA Rugby Regulations shall apply.

b. National Competitions Committee Required Minimum Qualifying Matches.

Men's Division 1	10
Men's Division 2	9
Men's Division 3	9
Women's Division 1	6
Women's Division 2	6

Should a club fail to meet the minimum number of Qualifying Matches as set by the NCC due to circumstances outside of its control (forfeitures, cancellations), the club must request a waiver from the NCC (See Section 13.6.2.).

The full Match Roster, including possible replacement players, must be entered into CMS for each Qualifying Match whether the game was played or not.

Note: A club may appeal its assigned divisional status and/or required minimum number of Qualifying Matches by petitioning the local Approved Governing Body or NCC per the guidelines specified in Section 13.6.2

- c. Match Rosters for Qualifying Matches may list a maximum of 23 players.
 - ▶ No Match Roster may contain more than five (5) Non-Resident Players.
 - ▶ No Match Roster may contain more than three (3) Collegiate Transfer Players.
 - ▶ No Match Roster in a Match under the Club Guest Player Program (see Section 3.6) may contain more than a combined total of five (5) total Non-Resident Players and Elite Club Guest Players.
- d. 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.
- e. Clubs fielding multiple sides are subject to additional Regulations (See Section 3.5).
- f. Clubs must maintain proper player documentation at all times (See Sections 13.3 and 13.4). This documentation must be made available upon demand and/or prior to participation in any Qualifying Match and USA Rugby Championship Event.
- g. No Approved Governing Body is permitted to create additional or tighter eligibility restrictions than the national guidelines unless specifically approved by the National Competitions and/or Club Eligibility Committee.
- h. An Approved Governing Body, with approval from the National Competitions and/or Club Eligibility Committee, may proceed with looser eligibility standards within its local competitions. However, all players and clubs must be in compliance with the USA Rugby Regulations by the start of the NCS; there are no exceptions or waivers to this requirement.

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 13.5.2) must receive formal written approval from USA Rugby prior to participating in any 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 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 Qualifying Match, OR
 - ii. no later than 11:59 pm Mountain Time Zone on:
 - ▶ April 1 for Men's and Women's Division I, II, and III Competitions;
 - ▶ April 1 for any sanctioned USA Rugby competition that serves as a Men's Division I/II/III or Women's Division I/II Competition on a promotion/relegation basis; or
 - ▶ October 1 for Women's Premier League (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, and III Competitions;
 - ▶ April 1 for any sanctioned USA Rugby Competition that serves as a Men's Division I/II/III or Women's Division I/II Competition on a promotion/relegation basis; or
 - ▶ October 1 for Women's Premier League (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 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) of the Club's total Qualifying Matches 'played' prior to the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS (the total includes the CR play-off matches played after the Regular League Season and leading to the USA Rugby NCS).
An approved waiver from the NCC of the Club Match Participation Minimum (Section 3.3-(b)) is specific to the club and has no impact on the players' match participation minimum.

Play is defined as actually stepping onto the field either as a starter, reserve, or blood substitution for any length of time.

NCC-approved competitions (Section 3.7) may be used by players to meet minimum match participation only if the opponent is of the same or higher division, the player has registered to the club by the deadline, and the player's club uses CMS.

- e. The USA Rugby Competition Management System (CMS) is required for all sanctioned Competitions. The CMS is responsible for demonstrating the number of Qualifying Matches each player has played.
- f. For Competitive Region Championship Matches, each player must be capable of meeting the required Qualifying Match minimum by the start of the USA Rugby National Championship Series. CR Championship matches apply towards the player's match participation total.
- g. For Competitive Region Championship 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. CR Championship matches apply to the player's number of Qualifying matches with respect to divisional eligibility.

- h. Player must not have played in a 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 and Section 3.10 for Collegiate Transfer Players.
- i. Player must not have played in a USA Rugby Senior Club NCS Match for any other Club during the current Competitive Season.
- j. Players under the age of 18 may only participate at the Senior Club level with a Waiver from USA Rugby (contact eligibility@usarugby.org).
- k. Players under the age of 19 may only participate in the Front Row at the Senior Club level with a Waiver from USA Rugby (contact eligibility@usarugby.org)
- 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.

3.4.1. USA Rugby 36-Month Non-Resident Player (National Team Eligibility) Waiver.

This Section shall be in effect for Approved Governing Body and/or Elite Senior Club (see Section 3.6) Competitions through the conclusion of the 2019-20 Competitive Season. Each CR and Elite Senior Club Competition may, in its sole discretion, decide whether or not it will adopt the policy set forth in this Section prior to the first Qualifying Match of its Competitions for the current Competitive Season.

In those CR and Elite Senior Club Competitions which formally adopt this policy, a Non-Resident Player may apply to USA Rugby for a Waiver of the provisions of Section 3.3.b in accordance with the provisions of this Section. The NR Player must provide original or notarized copies of the documentation specified in Section 13.4(c) with his/her Waiver application to **USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org)**.

USA Rugby will review the Waiver application and supporting documentation and determine whether the applicant Non-Resident Player meets the requirements of this Section and so advise the applicant Non-Resident Player in writing.

Such Waiver will permit the Non-Resident Player to compete in the Approved Governing Body Qualifying and/or Elite Senior Club Competitions, as applicable, during the current Fifteens Competitive Season without counting against the Non-Resident Player Roster limits set forth in Section 3.4-b.

NOTE: Documentation (i.e. letters of application) which references the pursuit of permanent or conditional resident status in order to facilitate the Non-Resident Player's participation in Qualifying Competition is NOT sufficient.

There is no avenue to apply for this Non-Resident Player Waiver by a player or Club in any Competitions which does not agree to apply the policy.

Such Waiver does not permit the Non-Resident Player to compete in USA Rugby Championship Events during the current Fifteens Competitive Season without counting against the Non-Resident Player Roster limits set forth in Section 3.4-b.

If the requested Waiver is granted by USA Rugby, the Player shall ensure that the Waiver is made available to Qualifying Match officials for use in the event of a Roster challenge.

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.

Competitions that are sanctioned by USA Rugby but do not compete towards a divisional national championship must request clarity from the National Competitions Committee as to what divisional classification its teams are considered for the purpose of this rule, as well as how many Matches its teams must play for the purpose of this rule.

Note: A club may appeal its assigned divisional status and/or required minimum number of Qualifying Matches by petitioning the local Approved Governing Body or NCC per the guidelines specified in Section 13.6.2

b. Movement of players **between Lower Divisions and Upper Divisions of the same Club** is allowed except where specifically prohibited. **Players who play as starters in Upper Division Qualifying Matches may not play in Lower Division Qualifying Matches played on the same weekend.**

Players who play in a Lower Division Qualifying Match may play in Upper Division Qualifying Matches played on the same weekend during the Regular League Season only when the Lower Division Qualifying Match is played before the Upper Division Qualifying Match, subject to the following restrictions:

- i. Up to three (3) players **who played in a Lower Division Qualifying Match** may be listed as RESERVE PLAYERS for the Upper Division Qualifying Match(es); or

- ii. Up to four (4) players who played in a Lower Division Qualifying Match may be listed as RESERVE PLAYERS for the Upper Division Qualifying Match(es), if at least one of those players is a front row specialist.

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 CR play-offs or a USA Rugby Championship Event Weekend.

- c. For Competitive Region Championship Matches, each player must be capable of meeting the required Qualifying Match minimum by the start of the USA Rugby National Championship Series. CR Championship matches apply towards the player's match participation.
- d. Any player on a club fielding teams in contiguous divisions, who has played in at least the minimum number of 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).

Example: The club fields eligible teams in Division 1 and in Division 2. When a player has played in five (5) Division 1 Qualifying Matches, that player is immediately no longer eligible to play Qualifying matches for the Division 2 team.

- e. Any player on a club fielding teams in non-contiguous divisions, who has played in at least 3 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).

Example: The club fields eligible teams in Division 1 and in Division 3. When a player has played in at least 3 Division I 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.

Qualifying Match Participation Minimum for Upper Division-Only Eligibility		
Club's Upper Division Side	Club's Lower Division Side	Player Participation Triggering Upper Division-Only Eligibility
Men's Division 1	Division 2	5 (See 3.5-d)
Men's Division 1	Division 3	3 (See 3.5-e)
Men's Division 2	Division 3	4 (See 3.5-d)
Men's Division 3	n/a	
Women's Division 1	Division 2	3 (See 3.5-d)
Women's Division 2	n/a	

- f. For Competitive Region Championship 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 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 Qualifying Matches and 2 Lower Division 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) Qualifying Matches at the divisional (or lower) level entered into the USA Rugby NCS.
 Example: To compete in the Division II NCS, a player must have participated in at least two (2) Division II 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) 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 Qualifying Matches.
- j. No Club may have more than one side in each divisional level.

Figure 2. Regulation 3.5: USA Rugby NCS Player Divisional Eligibility.

Sample Player NCS Eligibility Matrix (on Clubs Fielding Multiple Sides)				
Number of Div 1 Matches Played	Number of Div 2 Matches Played	Number of Div 3 Matches Played	NCS Eligibility?	Regulation
6	4	n/a	Div 1 Only	3.5-(d)
5	5	n/a	Div 1 Only	3.5-(d)
3	2	n/a	Div 1 Only	3.5-(g)
1	1	n/a	Div 1 Only*	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
4	5	n/a	Both	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
0	2	n/a	Both	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
n/a	4	4	Div 2 Only	3.5-(d)
n/a	4	5	Div 2 Only	3.5-(d)
n/a	3	3	Div 2 Only	3.5-(g)
n/a	1	1	Div 2 Only*	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
n/a	2	3	Both	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
n/a	0	2	Both	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
4	n/a	2	Div 1 Only	3.5-(e)
2	n/a	2	Div 1 Only	3.5-(g)
1	n/a	1	Div 1 Only*	3.5-(g), 3.5-(i)
1	n/a	4	Both	3.5-(h), 3.5-(i)
0	n/a	3	Both	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 Pilot (2018-19).

The intent of this Pilot 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**.

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

- i. A player who starts in 3 or more WPL matches will no longer be eligible to play for that club's Lower Division side.
- ii. A player who plays in 4 or more WPL 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.

Example: A player is listed as a replacement for six WPL matches and plays in five of those games for a total of 110 minutes. This exceeds the permissible limit (25% x 5 matches/400 total available minutes) This player is not eligible to play for the Division 2 side.

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

- i. A player who starts in 3 or more WPL matches will no longer be eligible to play for that club's Lower Division side.
- ii. A player who plays in 4 or more WPL 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.

Example: A player is listed as a replacement for six WPL matches and plays in five of those games for a total of 75 minutes. This exceeds the permissible limit (15% x 5 matches/400 total available minutes) This player is not eligible to play for the Division 2 side.

3.6. Elite Club Competition Waivers.

Elite Club Competitions have been identified by the National Competitions Committee and the USA Rugby High Performance group as high-level Competitions that uniquely test the talents of the participants.

a. High Performance College Guest Player Waiver.

Non-graduating college players, or those with remaining collegiate eligibility, may receive a temporary, Match-specific, transfer to an Elite Senior Club upon approval by the USA Rugby High Performance Player Review Committee. High Performance College Guest Player transfers must be accompanied by a written release from the College Head Coach which clearly states the specific Matches and dates for which the temporary transfer is requested. A written statement from the player's High Performance Coach must be included confirming approval and that the player will benefit from this additional competitive opportunity.

- ▶ High Performance College Guest Players are not eligible to participate in Matches between Elite Senior Clubs and Senior Clubs not designated as Elite Senior Clubs.
- ▶ High Performance College Guest Players are not eligible to participate in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS with the Elite Club to which the player has received temporary eligibility under the provisions of Section 3.6.
- ▶ Any player that has played in at least four (4), or started in at least three (3) recognized Elite Senior Club Competitions as a High Performance College Guest Player, may not return to his/her college Club with eligibility for the remainder of the Fifteens Competitive Season.
- ▶ The High Performance College Guest Player transfer must be initiated prior to the player transfer/registration deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).

b. Elite Senior Club Guest Player Waiver.

Elite Club Competitions may opt into the Club Guest Player Program, with written submission to USA Rugby acknowledging the restraints of the program. The Club Guest Player Program allows players registered to senior Clubs not recognized as Elite Senior Clubs, to gain experience in Elite Club Competitions.

Players may participate as Elite Club Guest Players under the Club Guest Player Program AFTER the following conditions have been verified by USA Rugby (request application from eligibility@usarugby.org):

- i. The player has received a written release from their Club President (or highest officer) approving the guest transfer, and which clearly states the specific Matches and dates for which the temporary transfer is granted. And,
- ii. The player has received a written confirmation of no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues from his/her Approved Governing Body. And,
- iii. The player initiated his/her guest transfer prior to the player transfer/registration deadline (See: Sections 3.4-a).

Clubs participating in Competitions opting into the Club Guest Player Program may not use more than a combined total of five (5) Non-Resident players and Elite Club Guest players on their Match Roster.

Elite Senior Club Guest players are not eligible to participate in Qualifying Matches that are not part of an Elite Senior Club Competition.

Elite Senior Club Guest players are not eligible for participation in the USA Rugby Senior Club NCS with the Elite Club to which the player has received temporary eligibility under the provisions of Section 3.6.

Any player that has played in at least four (4), or started in at least three (3) recognized Elite Senior Club Competitions, may not return to his/her Club with eligibility to play in Qualifying Matches for the remainder of the Fifteens Competitive Season.

Elite Senior Clubs are required to use the USA Rugby Competition Management System for all Elite Club Competitions.

3.7 Recognized Cup and Friendly Matches.

NCC-approved Cup Tournament and Friendly matches (Midwest Thunderbird) may count as Qualifying Matches under the following circumstances:

- a. The Competitive Region(s), has/have submitted written support to the NCC USA Rugby for the match(es) to count as a Qualifier(s); and

- b. The Match(es) are played against a team within the same or a higher division (matches against teams in a Lower Division may not count towards USA Rugby Championship Event eligibility); and
- c. All matches are submitted for entry into the CMS at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date of competition, and all matches are entered into the CMS no later than 48 hours after each Match has concluded; and
- d. The player(s) have registered to the club prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).
- e. The home CR(s) 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 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.

3.8. Professional Rugby Pilot (2019-20).

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 13.5.2-(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.

3.9. Transfers To and From Senior Clubs.

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

All transfer requests, including as a **High Performance** College Player, Collegiate Transfer player, or Elite Club Guest player, 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.

Each transfer that requires approval from USA Rugby (see Section 13.5.2), 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 local 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 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 Section 3.4-(d).

3.10. Collegiate Transfer Players (Fifteens).

Non-Fall graduating college players, or those with remaining collegiate eligibility, may join senior Clubs upon the conclusion of their intercollegiate schedule and be eligible for Qualifying Matches with an approved transfer.

College players that wish to participate as Collegiate Transfer Players must meet each of the following criteria:

- a. The player's collegiate fifteens competitive season must have concluded; no Qualifying Matches remain to be played. And,
- b. The player has received a written release from their College Head Coach approving the transfer. And,
- c. The player has received a written confirmation of no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues from his/her college Conference/Union. And,
- d. The player initiated his/her transfer prior to the player transfer/registration deadline (Section 3.4-(a)).

Note: No transfer is required to train with a senior Club, or to compete in friendly games or tournaments.

Players that wish to participate with an Elite Senior Club for a specific Match or Matches during their college Fifteens competitive season may petition to USA Rugby (See Section 3.6).

3.11. 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 13.5.2). 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 13.5 (Waivers). Senior Club Waivers include: College Transfer Player Requests, Elite Club Guest Player Requests, **High Performance** College Player Requests, 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 USA Rugby National Office 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.

Section 4. COLLEGIATE CLUB.

4.1 Collegiate Team Eligibility.

Each team must be recognized by their Institution and in good standing with USA Rugby. For purposes of this rule, for a college team to be in good standing with USA Rugby, and therefore, eligible to participate in sanctioned Competitions:

- ▶ Team must be registered **with USA Rugby for the current academic year**, with all dues fully paid; and
- ▶ Team must have a registered coach certified by USA Rugby; and
- ▶ Team must have a Roster minimum of NINE (9) players for sevens Competitions and FIFTEEN (15) players for fifteens Competitions; and
- ▶ Each team must be in good standing with the college/university and the Approved Governing Body of which it is a member.

Each team may carry an unlimited number of student-athletes on its Roster.

Consortium agreements between universities will be recognized by USA Rugby provided there is an academic connection between the universities, the campuses are in reasonable geographic proximity, and:

- ▶ there is a formal academic connection between the universities by which the student is considered to be enrolled on a full-time basis by the home Institution (the college fielding the rugby team). This status **MUST** be verified by the Registrar on the USA Rugby Roster form, prior to the student participating in any Qualifying Match for the school. The player is considered to be ineligible for any Qualifying Match for the school until this status has been confirmed by means of Registrar written or stamped approval. OR,
- ▶ There is a written agreement in place for all recreational club sports.

4.2 Collegiate Student--Athlete Eligibility.

In order to participate in any Qualifying Match, and in any National Collegiate Championship, the student-athlete must meet all of the following eligibility criteria at the time of Competition:

- a. The student-athlete must be enrolled full--time as an undergraduate in their first degree or certificate seeking program and in good-standing, as defined by the university or college registrar, to be eligible to participate in their respective University or College rugby program.
- b. A student-athlete within his/her final two undergraduate Academic Terms may carry less than a full-time academic load and still maintain eligibility. This is only permitted if the student-athlete is a graduating senior and a letter from the Registrar confirming such status is obtained.
- c. A student-athlete may maintain eligibility after completing and/or receiving an undergraduate degree if that student-athlete is enrolled full time in post--graduate studies (graduate school or pursuance of an additional Bachelor's Degree) provided the student-athlete is at the same or at a different institution from that issuing the baccalaureate degree AND provided the student-athlete still falls within all other collegiate eligibility standards AND received his or her baccalaureate degree from an institution in the United States; AND is in good standing with USA Rugby and with the institution.
- d. A student-athlete competing for an institution utilizing the quarter system is eligible through the National Championships of that Academic Year if he/she graduated at the end of the Winter Quarter. This requires a letter from the registrar confirming such status.
- e. Every student-athlete has seven years in which s/he may compete a maximum of five (5) years:
- f. The seven-year period for College Rugby Eligibility begins in the Academic Year immediately following high school graduation date or the graduation date of his or her class (as determined by the first year of high school enrollment) or based on the prescribed educational path in the student athletes country.

- g. There are no waivers to the seven-year window for college rugby eligibility. (exception: 4.3.3 Collegiate Eligibility Military Waiver)
- h. A student is eligible to receive a waiver to compete in his/her sixth (6th) year following high school graduation upon submission of a waiver request, accompanied by official college transcripts and verification of the date of high school graduation prior to the start of each competitive season to the College Eligibility Committee.
- i. A student is eligible to receive a waiver to compete in his/her seventh (7th) year following high school graduation upon submission of a waiver request, accompanied by official college transcripts and verification of the date of high school graduation prior to the start of each competitive season to the College Eligibility Committee.
- j. The student-athlete must play on the team representing the school in which he/she is enrolled.
- k. The student-athlete must not have played in a Qualifying Match for any other collegiate team or senior Club at any level during the current Academic Year. The only exception would be for an approved Elite College Guest Player Waiver (See Section 3.6.A).
- l. All players must be In Good Standing with their Approved Governing Body and with USA Rugby.

4.3. Amateurism.

Student-athletes must meet and remain in compliance with all applicable amateur standards. A student-athlete is not eligible for participation in collegiate rugby if they have ever taken pay for competing in any form of rugby.

- a. Prize money based on place finish or performance in an open event from the sponsor of the event is permissible provided the amount of prize money does not exceed the actual and necessary expenses to participate in the event.
- b. A school, team, or organization may provide actual and necessary expenses to players provided the expenses are a reasonable amount for travel, lodging, meals, apparel and equipment subject to the provisions 4.3.1.b.i and 4.3.1.b.ii below. This includes per diem offered during participation with recognized USA Rugby national or representative team assemblies and player-win bonuses offered during participation with the USA Rugby National Team.

Athletic or academic scholarships, work-study grants, or stipends are allowable under this provision for student-athletes that attend an institution for the purpose of participation with the rugby Club or team in addition to their academic requirements.

A foreign academy development contract player may receive actual and necessary living expenses and tuition assistance from the academy provided the player is enrolled full-time in an accredited educational institution and is In Good Standing with the institution during the entire period for which the player is under contract. The player will not be eligible in any case if the enrollment with a USA college or university occurs in the final quarter/semester of the player's potential USA Rugby collegiate eligibility.

4.4. Collegiate Eligibility Military Waiver.

This waiver applies to all student-athletes participating in the USA Rugby College Competitions whose military service has prevented the individual's ability to compete five years within the ten years since high school graduation. To apply for this waiver:

- a. The student-athlete must meet all criteria listed in Section 4.3 and:
- b. The student-athlete must apply to USA Rugby each academic year to request the Military Waiver (it is not automatically awarded). AND
- c. The student-athlete is eligible for the Military Waiver for each year of active military service which prevented college attendance.

4.5. Collegiate Student-Athlete Players Under 18.

An Under 18 college student-athlete should not play in any College Rugby Match, in positions other than front row (but including all positions in rugby sevens), unless the following are obtained:

- a. written agreement from the Under 18 player to play College Rugby and acceptance of any associated risk with playing with older players who may be stronger and more physically developed; and
- b. written parental or legal guardian's consent; and
- c. written confirmation from a coach, with an appropriate understanding of the physical attributes required of and the risks to players in College Rugby and to whom the player is known, that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play College Rugby; and
- d. such other consents agreements or confirmations (if any) as may be required by the player's Approved Governing Body or to comply with the local jurisdiction.

4.6. Collegiate Student-Athlete Front Row Players Under 19.

An Under 19 college student-athlete should not play in any College Rugby Match in the front row unless the following are obtained:

- a. written agreement from the player in writing to play College Rugby in the front row and acceptance of any associated risk of playing with Adults who may be stronger and more physically developed than the player; and
- b. if the player is Under 18, written parental or guardian's consent; and
- c. 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 College Rugby and to whom the player is known that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play College Rugby in the front row; and
- d. such other consents or confirmations as may be required by the player's Approved Governing Body, or to comply with local jurisdiction.

Section 5. HIGH SCHOOL.

- 5.1. Team Eligibility.
- 5.2. Player Eligibility.

See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/
See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/

Section 6. HIGH SCHOOL CLUB.

- 6.1. Club Eligibility
- 6.2. Player Eligibility

See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/
See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/

Section 6A: HIGH SCHOOL ALL STAR EVENTS.

- 6A.1. Team Eligibility.
- 6A.2. Player Eligibility.

See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/
See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/

Section 7. NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ALL STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS.

- 7.1. Team Eligibility.
7.2. Player Eligibility.

No longer applicable.
No longer applicable.

Section 8. SENIOR NATIONAL ALL STAR FIFTEENS CHAMPIONSHIPS.

- 8.1. Team Eligibility.
8.2. Player Eligibility.

No longer applicable.
No longer applicable.

Section 9. NATIONAL CLUB SEVENS CHAMPIONSHIP.

- 9.1. Club and Sevens-Only Team Eligibility.
9.2. Player Eligibility.

See <http://www.usaclub7s.com/>
See <http://www.usaclub7s.com/>

Section 10. NATIONAL ALL STAR SEVENS CHAMPIONSHIPS.

- 10.1. Team Eligibility.
10.2. Player Eligibility.

No longer applicable.
No longer applicable.

Section 11. NATIONAL TEAMS.**11.1. Player Eligibility.**

- a. Player must meet all of the General Eligibility Regulations.
- b. Player must be **registered with USA Rugby**, either to a specific Club or as an at-large participant.
- c. For senior Club Competitions, player must be at least 18 years of age unless granted a waiver by USA Rugby.
- d. All players must meet the criteria for player eligibility to participate on the National Team of the United States. Per World Rugby Regulation 8, a player may only play for the senior USA Rugby National Sevens Team if the player:
 - i. Was born in the United States or
 - ii. Has one parent who was born in the United States; or
 - iii. Has completed 36 consecutive months of Residence in the United States immediately preceding the time of the event (Legal Resident); or
 - iv. Has not played for the senior National Team of another Union; and
 - v. Meets all other World Rugby standards for National Team Representation.

11.2. U20, U19, U18, and U17 Player Eligibility.

Players must meet all of the General Eligibility Regulations and:

- a. be under, or turn, 20 years of age on January 1st in a given year to be eligible for the U20 team in that year.
- b. be under, or turn, 19 years of age on January 1st in a given year to be eligible for the U19 team in that year.
- c. be under, or turn, 18 years of age on January 1st in a given year to be eligible for the U18 team in that year.
- d. be under, or turn, 17 years of age on January 1st in a given year to be eligible for the U17 team in that year.

Section 12. ARMED FORCES CHAMPIONSHIP.

- 12.1. Club Eligibility.
12.2. Player Eligibility.

No longer applicable.
No longer applicable.

Section 13. GENERAL PROCEDURES.**13.1 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%.

13.2 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 13.4).

All updated information on current year Eligibility Regulations will be maintained at www.usarugby.org.

13.3 Club Documentation.

See Section 13.4 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.

13.4 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 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 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 and/or assigned Non-Resident Player status for purposes of eligibility.

Acceptable documentation 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:
 - › Original or copy of U.S. birth certificate OR U.S. birth certificate along with a government-issued photo identification document. OR,
 - › Original or copy of photo page of U.S. passport. OR,
 - › Original or copy of Naturalization Certificate. 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.

- c. Proof of National Team Eligibility as verified by geographical presence (applicable through 2019-20):

Required: Original passport and I-94 Arrival/Departure Form confirming residency in the United States for a period of at least 36 consecutive months with at least ten (10) months actual physical presence within the United States throughout any qualifying year of the Residency period.

Additional verification may include:

- › Proof of employment (copy of job offer, contract, dated and including terms of employment).
 - › Proof of home ownership or rental agreement that covers the period of residency.
 - › Dated correspondence such as utility bills addressed to player at this address.
 - › Proof of a bank account opened within the United States with account activity during the period of residency.
- d. Proof of high school enrollment and supporting documentation. See www.usarugby.org/eligibility/
 - e. Proof of collegiate enrollment and supporting documentation may include:
 - › Collegiate Player Eligibility Form (signed and sealed by collegiate registrar, appropriately dated).
 - › Letter from registrar verifying status as a graduating senior.
 - › Official transcripts showing dates of initial enrollment and transfer status.
 - f. Proof of current member registration can be verified with a printout from USA Rugby Website showing valid registration dates.
 - g. Proof of official waiver from USA Rugby can be verified with waiver letter signed by USA Rugby National Office staff or Eligibility Committee Chair, delivered by electronic mail, displaying player name, Club, official dates of eligibility, and the specific Regulation waived.

13.5 Waivers.

13.5.1 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 USA Rugby National Office at least five (5) business days prior to any Qualifying Match or USA Rugby Championship Event for which the player/club is requesting a waiver.

The USA Rugby Staff and 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.

Regular waiver requests are considered and reviewed without charge when received at least five (5) business days prior to event for which eligibility is requested. Upon payment of a \$50.00 expediting fee, waiver requests may be made within 48 hours of initial event for which eligibility is requested. Where indicated, payment must accompany waiver request.

Players requesting an eligibility waiver from USA Rugby must receive USA Rugby approval of the waiver BEFORE participating in any Qualifying Match. 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.

All waiver requests must be submitted to **USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).**

13.5.2 Senior Club Eligibility Waivers.

Requests for a waiver of the Eligibility Regulations contained herein will not be reviewed or considered when submitted to USA Rugby less than 48 hours prior to a Competition for which eligibility is required.

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 player has registered **with USA Rugby** by the deadline (see Section 3.4-(a)) and the request does not conflict with the intent of these Regulations or the Spirit of the Rules.

A. College to Senior Club In-Season Transfer.

Mid-year graduates and non-graduating college players, including those with remaining collegiate eligibility, may join senior Clubs upon the conclusion of their intercollegiate schedule for training, friendly Matches or tournaments. The player may not compete in any Qualifying Match for the senior Club without a waiver from USA Rugby.

The transfer request must be initiated with USA Rugby prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)).

Note: College players with continuing collegiate eligibility, registered with a collegiate team but seeking to join a senior Club for the Sevens Competitive Season, will have their registration transferred by USA Rugby no earlier than May 1.

i. Fall Term Graduates.

Fall term graduating college players seeking a waiver to join a senior Club with full eligibility for the remainder of the Competitive Season must:

- a. provide proof of graduation (copy of Diploma or Final Official Transcripts stamped with date of degree completion); and,
- b. initiate the request with USA Rugby by the **membership** registration deadline (see Section 3.4-(a)).

ii. Collegiate Transfer Players (Fifteens).

The Collegiate Transfer Player policy provides college rugby players an opportunity to continue playing rugby at the conclusion of their collegiate Fifteens Competitive Season. **College Players seeking to join a senior Club with eligibility for Qualifying Matches must request a waiver from USA Rugby which includes:**

- a. Verification that the player's collegiate Fifteens Competitive Season has concluded; and,
- b. Written approval for the in-season transfer from college head coach; and
- c. Confirmation from the Approved Governing Body that the player has no outstanding disciplinary or financial issues.
- d. The transfer request must be initiated by the **membership** registration deadline (see Sections 3.4-(a)).
- e. The transfer request may not be initiated prior to the conclusion of the player's collegiate Fifteens Competitive Season. The conclusion of the Competitive Season is defined by the date on which the individual player's team has concluded its regular league schedule and/or has been eliminated from the play-offs.
- f. No more than three (3) Collegiate Transfer Players will be allowed on any senior Club Match Roster.

iii. High Performance College Players seeking temporary transfer to an Elite Senior Club.

High Performance College Players, as identified and approved by an ad hoc Elite Player review committee, may receive a temporary transfer to join an Elite Senior Club for a high level competitive opportunity while retaining the player's current year collegiate eligibility.

High Performance in-season transfer applications must be approved by the ad hoc **High Performance** Player review committee **and must include a written release from the player's college Head Coach and that confirms the specific dates and matches for which the temporary transfer is approved.**

B. 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)).

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.

C. Missed Match Participation Requirement due to Medical/Personal Hardship.

A request to waive the Match participation minimum specified (Section 3.4-(d)) must be initiated prior to the **membership** registration deadline (see Section 3.4-a and 9.2-b) and must be accompanied with include 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.

The player must have registered with USA Rugby prior to the deadline (See Section 3.4-(a)). A late **membership** registration will not be waived on basis of early or unexpected return from an injury or illness.

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.

13.5.3. Required College Waiver Request Documentation.

Individual circumstances must be thoroughly explained and documented on the Eligibility Waiver Request Form Cover Sheet with the following attachments:

- a. Proof of date(s) of enrollment in college or university, i.e. official school transcripts, containing signature and/or seal of the registrar – unofficial or student copies of transcripts will not be accepted.
- b. Any and all applicable military documentation showing specific dates of all deployment and details of military service.
- c. Any and all applicable documentation of official church service, including letter form church officials.
- d. Any and all other documentation relevant to the specific waiver request.
- e. Any and all applicable medical documentation – only considered if medical condition was severe enough to prevent individual's enrollment from college or university for at least one full academic year.

13.6. Appeals (See Figure 3).

If a Club or player has been deemed ineligible, **or has had an appeal of a local competitions policy denied, either** by an Approved Governing Body or USA Rugby **Committee**, the affected player or club **has the right to appeal that determination to a USA Rugby Appellate Panel (See 13.6.3).** The Appeal must:

- i. **include** the initial written ruling by the Approved Governing Body or USA Rugby **Committee**; and,
- ii. **contain** all relevant documents and written communication regarding the decision; and
- iii. **contain a clear and concise statement of the reasons why the appellant believes the initial determination is incorrect, and cite any relevant rules or policies that support reversing the initial determination; and,**
- iv. **must be received by USA Rugby within seven (7) days from the date of the decision being appeals; and,**
- v. **where noted, must include the required fee.**

The USA Rugby Committee chair or designee shall notify the **appropriate officer of the Approved Governing Body or the USA Rugby Committee which** issued the decision that an Appeal has been docketed **and share all information submitted to USA Rugby by the appealing party.**

13.6.1. Appeal of USA Rugby Eligibility Committee Decision.

In the event a player or club wishes to appeal an Eligibility Committee Decision arising from 13.5.2-(a-d) above, all explanation and relevant data must be submitted to **USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).**

Required Fee:	Individual Player:	\$100.00
	Senior Club:	\$500.00

The full fee will be returned upon a favorable determination for the appellant by the Appellate Panel (see Section 13.6.3). A determination against appellant will result in USA Rugby depositing the fee in its account for the benefit of the USA Rugby Club Department.

13.6.2. Appeal of USA Rugby Competitions-Related Decision.

a. Protest to Local Approved Governing Body or Committee.

In the event a club wishes to contest a competitions-related decision or policy of **its local Approved Governing Body**, the matter shall first be addressed by the local Approved Governing Body, pursuant for the rules for such matters, not later than seven (7) days **after the initial application of the policy to the club.**

b. Appeal of Local Approved Governing Body's Competitions Decision.

Should the club wish to appeal the local Approved Governing Body Committee decision, all relevant **documentation** must be submitted to the NCC no later than within seventy-two (72) hours after the **local approved governing body or committee's** determination has been **sent to the appellate club.** All materials must be submitted to **USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).**

The NCC shall seat a three-person panel which may speak to the parties involved or ask for additional information.. An open hearing shall not occur for competitions appeals. However, the NCC may, at its discretion, conduct a conference call of all interested parties. **Only the players, coaches or administrators directly involved in the matter may participate in the Appeal.** This panel will render a written decision as expeditiously as possible.

c. Appeal of National Competitions Committee (NCC) Decision or Policy.

In the event the club wishes to Appeal a the NCC decision or application of an NCC policy, all relevant documentation must be submitted to **USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).**

Required Fee:	\$500.00
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The full fee will be returned upon a favorable determination for the appellant by the Appellate Panel (see Section 13.6.3). A determination against appellant will result in USA Rugby depositing the fee in its account for the benefit of the USA Rugby Club Department.

13.6.3. Appellate Panel.

As referenced in the USA Rugby Bylaws, an Appeal shall be conducted in accordance with the rules established by the Board:

- ▶ The Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall randomly choose a three-person panel from the Appellate Panel to consider the Appeal.
- ▶ **No member of the three-member Appellate Panel shall have an interest in the matter under Appeal. At least one member of the three-member Appellate Panel must be a qualified International Athlete.**
- ▶ The Panel must act on the Appeal in a timely manner.

- ▶ Such Appeal must be made within seven (7) days of the decision of the USA Rugby Committee, but not less than five (5) business days prior to a Qualifying Match or USA Rugby Championship Event for which eligibility has been requested. There shall be no waivers to this timeline.
- ▶ The National Office staff liaison must provide the Appellate Panel with all documents and relevant communications that were part of the record in the initial consideration by the USA Rugby Committee.

If a Member is dissatisfied with the Panel's decision, the complainant's sole remedy is an appeal to the American Arbitration Association pursuant to the commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association then in effect. The request for arbitration shall be submitted in writing within thirty (30) days of the Member's receipt of the decision from the Appellate Panel. The arbitration shall be final and binding and shall be conducted on a timely basis and as set forth in the USA Rugby Bylaws. For further information please contact USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).

13.6.4. 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/

Report a Violation.

To make a formal complaint to USA Rugby regarding a suspected Anti-Doping Rule Violation by another Member, contact USA Rugby (telephone: 303.539.0300 / email: eligibility@usarugby.org).

Note: There may be a fee required to launch an investigation on this claim.

Figure 3. USA RUGBY GOVERNANCE PATHWAY.

