

Rugby NorCal

Policies and Procedures



Amended November 3, 2019

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For instances where a particular issue is not defined or explicitly stated by the RNC Policies and Procedures, please refer to USA Rugby and the World Rugby Policies and Procedures documents and California State Law.

1. Objectives

These policies, in accordance with Rugby NorCal (RNC) Bylaws and the 2018 Player Welfare Program, Code of Conduct, and Zero Tolerance Policy, shall provide more specific guidance and direction for the activities of RNC and shall be evaluated, ratified and/or modified and then approved on an annual basis by the RNC Board of Directors. The purpose of these policies is to support the following objectives:

- To develop and maintain a strong, well organized and enduring youth rugby program for high school and younger players in Northern California and to provide youth of all ages, sexes, cultures, and socio-economic status an opportunity to participate in a positive, rewarding and safe athletic experience.
- To promote and maintain the ideals of strong character, good sportsmanship, leadership, good citizenship, fair play and camaraderie between all players, coaches, referees and spectators.
- To promote and represent rugby in a positive, legitimate and professional manner and be the primary representative and ambassador of Northern California rugby in all relevant matters and events, including but not limited to relationships and dealings with USA Rugby, regional, state, national or international rugby organizations and their affiliates, and the public.
- To develop and encourage a positive family-oriented atmosphere to the teams, clubs, conferences and RNC so as to empower parents to learn about the sport, help run the clubs, and exert a positive influence where it is needed.
- To promote and uphold the core values of World Rugby; Integrity, Discipline, Solidarity, Passion and Respect.

2. Rugby Laws and Variations

RNC shall determine the law variations under which each Division shall play the game of rugby. These shall be consistent with those variations prescribed by USA Rugby, but where USA Rugby provides latitude for choice of law variations for the various age groups, RNC shall determine the appropriate method of play. These law variations are decided by the respective committee, i.e. Junior Youth Committee and Competitions Committee.

3. Code of Conduct

RNC shall adopt a Code of Conduct that shall set forth expected conduct of players, coaches, administrators and spectators. Violations of the Code of Conduct shall be referred to the Discipline Committee for review and sanctions. The Code of Conduct form must be signed annually and submitted to RNC by the President or Chairman of each Club prior to participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. An RNC Sanctioned Event is any Conference Match, Tournament or Tour that is organized, coordinated or managed by RNC, or a separate league that has been authorized by RNC and maintains the registration requirements of RNC and USAR.

4. Student-Athlete Status

RNC supports the ideals of promoting student-athletes. We support the basic principles of the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) policies related to student-athlete participation and conduct. We recognize that there is no current agreement between clubs with regard to eventually seeking CIF status, however, we are hoping that we will be able to come to a partnership with CIF in the future, and recognize the benefits of adopting certain policies that promote proper student-athlete conduct and standards. We will adopt the following guidelines:

- a. It is recognized that participation in rugby is a privilege, not a right.
- b. It is recognized that school attendance comes first, athletic participation is secondary.
- c. All players must be enrolled in a school (or home schooled in an appropriate program or graduated early by virtue of GED requirements) and be a fulltime student.
- d. A player who is expelled from school shall be ineligible while expelled.
- e. Grade Point Average (GPA) –RNC supports academics above participation in rugby, however, it is not practical for RNC to monitor or check the GPA of student-athletes. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that

all coaches monitor their player's academic performance, as is reasonably practical, and that all players achieve and maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA, on a 4.0 scale. At this time, there shall be no action or recourse from opposing teams for players that do not meet this minimum standard.

5. Coach Development, Licensure and Certification

All Teams shall have at minimum, one Level 200 USA Rugby Certified Coach. No RNC Sanctioned Event can take place without a Level 200 Certified Coach present. All clubs, coaches, players and administrators shall be registered with USA Rugby and shall pay the required seasonal dues prior to commencing any RNC Sanctioned or sponsored events. In addition, all coaches must be in compliance and certified with the USA Rugby Coach Development program with a minimum Level 100 certification for assistant coaches, and a minimum Level 200 certification for head coaches.

RNC will seek to provide coaching development opportunities and resources to improve the quality and experience of rugby coaches in Northern California. Areas to be considered shall include coaching clinics, participation in Positive Coaching Alliance, and other activities that will increase and improve the pool of active rugby coaches in Northern California.

USA Rugby requires all Level 200 coaches to complete ten (10) Professional Development Credits (PDCs) in any given membership year, in order for your coaching membership to stay active from year to year. USA Rugby provides online modules that can be taken to add PDCs to your coaching membership.

Online modules and courses can be found here:

<https://www.usarugby.org/professional-development/>

6. Referee Development, Coordination and Management

- a. RNC has an active Referee Committee which will provide leadership and direction for referee development, Conference and Tournament Match Scheduling for all Divisions, and a Strategic Plan to establish a sustainable, well organized and competent pool of referees, with the explicit intent of eventually providing qualified and Certified Referees to all RNC Sanctioned Events. For the present, the hierarchy of providing qualified and Certified Referees will flow from High School competition through Middle and Youth. It is intended that all Conferences or Regions will provide a Referee Coordinator who will be a member of the RNC Referee Committee and will work through a central repository to schedule Referees for RNC Sanctioned Events. RNC shall seek to support the development of new referees and provide for scheduling of referees for games. This shall be done in consultation with the Referees' Society.
- b. Each team shall be required to have at least one (1) certified referee that is affiliated with each team in their club. For example, a club with five (5) teams must have five (5) certified referees. This requirement is so that RNC will have enough referees to cover all Conference Matches during the season. Referees should referee unaffiliated matches only. There may be times when a certified referee must referee a match where his/her team or club is competing, but this should be avoided to the greatest degree possible.

7. Poaching and Raiding

RNC prohibits club representatives and especially coaches from "raiding" or "poaching" players from another club and/or encouraging their players to recruit or poach a player(s) from another club. Poaching is considered any attempt by a club representative or attempt through others to coerce or lure a player away from their current club e.g. offering a hardship scholarship or the potential of college scholarship. Raiding is considered any attempt by a club representative or attempt through others to coerce or lure more than one player away from their current club at a time e.g. soliciting group of players so that we can win a championship is an example of Raiding.

If a club representative is found guilty of poaching or raiding, or encouraging others to poach or raid, a suspension will be levied by the Board of Directors. Suspension length and determination is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

If you suspect that a club has been raiding or poaching players, you must submit a written report to the RNC Executive Director. With your report, you must include viable and sufficient evidence, or the claim will be dismissed immediately. RNC will have fourteen (14) days to investigate a supported claim and come to a ruling.

8. Player Transfers

Player transfers may occur either off-season (defined as the point between when one season ends and the next one begins for the following year) or mid-season (time in which the season for which a player has registered is currently happening).

- a. Offseason transfers: If a player wishes to register with a different club than the one they played with the previous season, they may do so without the previous club's permission, however it is suggested that the player/family let their previous club know they will not be returning.
 - i. Midseason transfers: If a player wishes to transfer midseason, they must EMAIL a player transfer request (PTR) to Rugby NorCal.
 - ii. Under no circumstances can a transferred player compete in High School Conference Matches, Playoffs or Championships for the 15's season if the PTR is received after April 1st.
 - iii. Once the PTR is approved the player's respective coach will be notified.
- b. Mid-season transfer requests require reasoning behind wanting the transfer. The more descriptive the better, so that RNC can make a decision regarding the transfer of any player.
- c. RNC recognizes that players may have reasons to change to another club and so transfers will occur. Any player transfer questions and controversies may be reviewed, deliberated and approved/denied by the RNC Officers (Executive Director, President, Vice President – Operations, Vice President – Competitions, Vice President – Discipline, Vice President – Junior Youth, Treasurer and Secretary).
- d. Junior Youth and Middle School players DO NOT need to submit a player transfer request if they are transferring between seasons or in the off-season, however, they should notify both coaches before they intend to transfer so that their initial club knows they will not be registering with that club. Junior Youth and Middle School players DO need to submit a player transfer request if they are transferring mid-season.
 - i. Although players are not required to submit a PTR in the off-season (though encouraged to do so for the High School divisions), allegations of poaching and/or raiding may still occur, and any claims will continue to follow disciplinary procedures.
- e. Summer Sevens Season Transfers – Players are not required to fill out a PTR for the Summer Sevens Season and are free to participate as guest players for other clubs. RNC must be notified of any guest players prior to them playing for another club.

9. Newly Established Clubs and Divisions

RNC will encourage, promote and support the growth of the sport and provide guidance and direction to the expanding clubs in the fairest, rational and unbiased manner possible. It is understood that when a new club is established it will very likely involve players that previously played on another club. RNC will promote this growth in an orderly and logical manner, with the understanding that there will be issues and possible controversy during the establishment of these new clubs. All new clubs will have to formally apply to be members of RNC. The application shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors and either approved, rejected, or approved with conditions. In situations that involve controversy of player participation RNC Officers/Board will work to resolve these issues in the best interest of the association.

10. Match Facilities and Oversight

RNC will endeavor to assign a referee to every HS Varsity and JV match each week. It is unfortunately unlikely that every match will be assigned a referee due to the limited supply of referees, thus it is ultimately the responsibility of the home team to organize and/or provide appropriate referees and match officials for home scheduled matches, if one has not been assigned in Match Apt two (2) days prior to the match. It is also the responsibility of the home team to provide match fields that are consistent with the rules and regulations set by RNC and USA Rugby Technical Zone laws, which includes, but is not limited to a regulation sized field that is free of obstructions and other unsafe playing conditions, and has clearly marked field lines, technical zones (team and administrative areas), goal posts, padding, crowd control measures and other safety precautions.

In accordance with RNC's Player Welfare Program, RNC will endeavor to assign a Certified Athletic Trainer to every match (U8 through High School) as well as tournaments throughout the season. In order to give adequate time to our Player Welfare Director to assign Athletic Trainers, it is mandatory that game times and locations be entered in the Match Apt no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the match.

RNC will endeavor to have open communication with the clubs regarding ATC assignment and availability, in hopes of providing ample time for host clubs to find alternate means of medical assignment if RNC is unable to assign an ATC. If clubs do not have match information in the Match Apt within 14 days of the scheduled match, RNC may not be able to secure an ATC. If no ATC has been scheduled within one week of the match, RNC will communicate with the host club.

11. Schedule Policy

- a. Once a division schedule is released and agreed upon, all teams must abide by the finalized schedule.
- b. A team must not reschedule a game due to lack of player numbers (not showing up at the scheduled time), lack of field availability, or any other controllable situation, the team requesting a reschedule the day of the game shall be issued a forfeit.
- c. In the case of weather, field precedence (high school sport), or any other non-controllable situation, the game will then be rescheduled by the teams involved at a mutually agreed upon time and venue.
- d. For the cases of school sanctioned events, prom, senior trip, high school tournament, or any other foreseen event that may become an issue of player numbers or field availability, a reschedule request must be made no less than 2 weeks (14 days) in advance of the scheduled game. Email requests to Rugby NorCal must include the home team and visiting team coaches and/or admins. If an ATC or Referee is assigned, they should be included in the email.
- e. It is expressly prohibited for Senior and Junior year players to play in the Junior Varsity division. If your team does not have enough players to man a team, you must forfeit the game. It is up to the coach's discretion to allow a JV aged player to play in the Varsity division, for player number reasons only.
- f. If field availability is an issue for an upcoming game, a neutral alternate location should be agreed upon by both competing teams, and if no neutral location is available, the game may be played at the visiting team's field. There is a list of field locations in the Match Apt for use in such an instance.
- g. There is a make-up week built into the schedule for such situations as a non-controllable weather/field related issue, or if a 2-week reschedule request was granted permission and no other time/venue has been agreed upon. This make-up week is not to be used for a game being rescheduled in the event of not having enough players or any other controllable situation.

12. Post Season Scheduling

RNC shall determine, by the regularly scheduled quarterly November or December Board Meeting, and prior to any current season, all post-season schedules, including Northern California playoffs, select side matches, playoffs towards National Championships, or other competitions as applicable. Conference representatives on the Competitions Committee shall determine their own season schedules to conclude prior to any applicable post-season events.

Each Conference Representative shall be responsible for submitting their respective Conference season schedule to the Competitions or Junior Youth Committee to be formally submitted to the RNC Executive Director by December 1st. These schedules shall include all the Conference Matches, dates, and home clubs. The purpose of this submittal is to create an RNC Master Schedule and to organize and coordinate with the Referee Society to provide Referees for the events.

Because Referees are limited the priority for providing Referees shall be in the order of Divisions, going from Premier Divisions, Varsity Division 1, Junior Varsity Division 1, Middle School, U-12, U-10 and U-8. If Referees are not assigned by RNC it is the responsibility of the Home Team to organize them as specified in the Match Facilities and Oversight section. RNC shall endeavor to post all scheduled Conference Matches, with referees assigned, on their website.

13. Forfeiture, Cancellation, or Postponement without notifying RNC

Matches that are agreed to be forfeited, cancelled, postponed, times changed, or otherwise abandoned, as agreed upon by the home and visiting team, must be notified to the Rugby NorCal Office, assigned referee and athletic trainer by 5:00pm on the Friday before the scheduled match. If there is no assigned referee and/or athletic trainer in Match Apt, it is safe to say that Rugby NorCal is the only appropriate party to notify. The team initiating the change in match time/date, is responsible for notifying the previously mentioned parties.

The penalty for failing to notify Rugby NorCal and the assigned referee and athletic trainer will be a \$250 fine, which shall be paid to Rugby NorCal, forfeiture of the match in question, as well as loss of 1 point in league standings. The club will not be in good standing until the fine is paid in full.

Matches that are forfeited, canceled, postponed, times changed, or otherwise abandoned, without agreement by both teams, i.e. failure to show up for a match, not enough players, etc., by 5:00pm on the Friday before the match, shall receive the same sanction as above, given to the team forfeiting or canceling the match. Additionally, the team will be responsible for any referee or athletic trainer costs that may be incurred.

14. Multi-School vs. Single-School Definitions

Multi-School High School: A team or club with players from more than one school that do not meet the Single-School definition below but otherwise meet the USA Rugby and RNC eligibility requirements, and the eligibility and geographic requirements of their individual conference.

Single-School High School: A team or club with players from a single designated high school, that meet the USA Rugby and RNC eligibility requirements, and the eligibility and geographic requirements of their individual conference, with the following clarifications/exceptions: a maximum of three (3)* registered and age appropriate players that do not attend the designated high school may participate with the single-school team under the following conditions:

- a. The player must be named and then designated by the appropriate Conference Administrator prior to playing in any Conference Match, **and**
- b. The player must have a permanent resident address within the school district boundaries in which the designated high school is located and be enrolled in an appropriate GED or home school program, **or**

- c. The player must be a fulltime enrolled student at an appropriate aged school (i.e. high school, charter school, continuation school, etc.) within the same school district boundaries as the single-school, or in a school that is in a district contiguous to the same school district in which the designated single-school is located and where there is no other such program available to the player.

Furthermore, a maximum of three (3) individual players may be designated during the course of the prescribed rugby season, regardless of the player's playing status (ie. injury, relocated, quit, etc.). The intent of this section is that single school teams do not game the system by rotating or backfilling players.

*Note: USA Rugby does not allow any non-school players (ie. from another high school or home schooled) to participate in any High School (referred to as Single-School by RNC) National Championship Events.

15. Division Group Definitions, Age, Gender, and Eligibility Requirements

RNC shall periodically determine the Division groups under which rugby shall be played in Northern California. The current age definitions are based on the players' ages on September 1st, preceding the current season. So, for example, for the 2018 season, the age is determined as of September 1, 2017. The Division groups are:

- a. **High School Varsity Club and Single School Varsity**– Must be enrolled, attending and in good standing in a high school or an equivalent non-post-secondary educational program or institution (home schooled). The player must be within four (4) years of the moment the player first enrolled in the ninth grade, regardless of when the player started playing rugby or had the ability to start playing rugby. Players may also be eligible if they would otherwise be in high school but have graduated early by virtue of early graduation and/or passing, or in the process of passing, the GED. In accordance with World Rugby and USA Rugby regulations/recommendations, no female player 15 years and older may play/participate on a Varsity Boys team due to the safety and legal concerns that are associated with mixed-gender teams playing in a contact environment.
- b. **High School Junior Varsity (Frosh/Soph) Club and Single School Junior Varsity**– Must be enrolled, attending and in good standing in a high school or an equivalent non-post-secondary educational program or institution (home schooled), and be a high school Freshman or Sophomore. In accordance with IRB and USA Rugby regulations/recommendations, no female player 15 years and older may play/participate on a Junior Varsity Boys team due to the safety and legal concerns that are associated with mixed-gender teams playing in a contact environment.
- c. **Middle School**– Must be enrolled, attending and in good standing in a 6th, 7th and/or 8th grade school or other appropriate educational program (home schooled). Gender regulations are applied at this age level; thus Middle School aged girls should not be participating on teams with Middle School aged boys.
- d. **U-12 Youth**– Must be U-12 and enrolled, attending and in good standing in a grade school or other appropriate educational program (home schooled).
- e. **U-10 Youth**– Must be U-10 and enrolled, attending and in good standing in a grade school or other appropriate educational program (home schooled).
- f. **U-8 Youth**– Must be U-8 and enrolled, attending and in good standing in a grade school or other appropriate educational program (home schooled).

Per USA Rugby regulations, there is a two-year age ceiling for participation in the various leagues. Middle School players playing High School rugby, only 8th grade players may play up in High School, but only on a Junior Varsity side. Under no circumstances may a Middle School aged player participate in Varsity High School rugby (teams including any Junior or Senior High School grade players).

Varsity players, enrolled in Junior or Senior year of High School, are not eligible to participate on a Junior Varsity side.

Any Club or Team found to have allowed participation in an RNC Sanctioned or Sponsored Event (matches, tournaments or tours) if one (1) or more of their players are in violation of these requirements will receive head coach suspension, immediately, for two matches. Further occurrences will be referred to the Board of Directors, and may be further sanctioned, suspended or disassociated until such time as they have shown clear indications and assurances to the Board of Directors that they have corrected and/or rectified their violation and that they will assure appropriate participation in future events. Additionally, scrutiny will be utilized for not less than one (1) season following such an occurrence. Multiple violations of a club or team shall result in suspensions or disassociation.

16. Team Definition for Youth Divisions

For the purposes of a team definition in the RNC Bylaws in conjunction with the USA Rugby registration policies, in order to be an active club, each team must have a minimum of fifteen (15) players and one USA Rugby Certified Level 200 coach.

17. High School Playoff and Championship Rules

- a. RNC Playoffs and Championships shall follow National and International USA Rugby and World Rugby Tournament Rules (Law 3 of the Laws of the Game Rugby Union), which have a maximum roster size of twenty-three (23), which includes an extra front row player, and no open substitutions.
- b. If a team makes the RNC Playoffs and/or Championships and is not able to attend, for whatever reason, they must give at least ten (10) days advance written notice to RNC (email to the Executive Director will suffice) before the scheduled match that they will not be able to attend.

18. Summer Sevens Series Requirements

- a. Per USA Rugby regulations, players are not permitted to play more than 90 minutes in one day of play. All tournament schedules are created to give teams at least three games which equals approximately 45 minutes and gives time for additional games and/or playoffs.
- b. Players are eligible to participate in Summer 7's tournaments based on their age and not their grade. U16 players are eligible for JV teams.
- c. All players that are present at any given tournament must be listed on the club roster that is provided upon team/club check in. Any club that does not provide a current roster of players for the tournament is subject to forfeit games.
- d. For the Championship 7s Tournaments, only the players present on the day of the tournament are to be rostered. In the playoffs, all starters must be noted on the roster at the Host/Check-In tent.
- e. Player Transfers – Players are free to participate as guest players for other clubs without a transfer. RNC must be notified of any guest players prior to them playing for another club.
- f. When registering your club to any given tournament, you will be asked to provide the name and contact information of a certified referee. Make sure that the referee you are listing is available on that date, and will 100% attend the tournament to referee matches.

19. Match Apt: Registration, Rosters, Photos, School Verification and Age Determining Documents for Players, Coaches and Referees

- a. Registration - RNC utilizes Match Apt for all dues, fees, registration, documentation and eligibility issues. Club Administrators must properly register all players, prior to participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. RNC coaches, referees and administrators must register directly through USA Rugby and pass a background screening before they can be recognized as active by RNC. The proper registration includes annual RNC Club and Player Dues, USA Rugby CIPP fees, Player Pictures, Player School ID Cards, and for Players competing in Middle School and younger divisions, Birth Certificates or Passport copies. A player, coach or referee cannot participate in any RNC Sanctioned Event unless they have properly been registered and are in good standing with RNC, their respective Conference, and USA Rugby. Coaches who roster unregistered players or players

without proper documentation will be subject to disciplinary action. This is a zero-tolerance policy due to the extremity of repercussions that come from playing unregistered players. All coaches/clubs/players are no longer covered under insurance if any match is played with at least one unregistered player and/or uncertified coach.

- b. Rosters - RNC Player Rosters must be input into Match Apt at least twelve (12) hours prior to the start time of the RNC Sanctioned Event (ie. Conference Match). This allows the opposing teams the opportunity to review and print the Rosters. If a team fails to enter match details into Match Apt within this time frame they will play their following match under protest and may be subject to forfeit. The same sanction applies if a roster has been edited within the 12 hour window. In case of roster change within 12 hours, please notify your opposing team head coach immediately.
- c. RNC requires the rosters be printed by both teams, and presented to the opposing team prior to the match starting. Both teams must review the rosters of the opposing team to confirm registration and playing statuses of players.
- d. Photos – Player Photos must be input into Match Apt prior to participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. Player Photos should be portrait styled color pictures from the shoulders up. File sizes should be less than 250 kb. Coaches who roster players without proper supporting documents are subject to disciplinary action.
- e. School Verification - School ID Cards or other form of School Identification Documents (with player's grade and picture [if possible]) must be scanned and input into Match Apt prior to participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. File sizes should be less than 250 kb. Coaches who roster players without proper identification are subject to disciplinary action.
- f. Age Determining Documents - For all players and teams participating in Middle School or younger Divisions, all players must have an age determining document input into Match Apt prior to participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. This could include a scanned copy of a birth certificate, passport or any other legal document. File sizes should be less than 250 kb.
- g. Failure to comply with the items above can result in sanctions by RNC and forfeiture, as determined by Rugby NorCal, or by the RNC Board and/or Disciplinary Committee.
- h. Match Apt Supporting Documents Requirements (by division).
 - i. U8-Middle School: Headshot and Birth Certificate/Passport upon first registration.
 - ii. Middle School: New Headshot upon entry to Middle School.
 - iii. High School: Headshot and School ID upon first registration (includes students coming from a Middle School division).

20. Dues Structure

RNC Member Council shall periodically determine the dues structure for its conferences, clubs, teams, coaches, referees, administrators and players, and all such participants shall only be eligible if such dues are paid prior to participating in an RNC Sanctioned Event. All RNC Club Dues must also be paid prior to any Club Team participating in any RNC Sanctioned Event. In addition, all USA Rugby Player Dues must be paid, which they are automatically paid through Match Apt, prior to any participation in a RNC Sanctioned Event. RNC coaches, administrators and referees must register directly through USA Rugby and pay their RNC Dues at the point of registration on the USA Rugby Platform. It is desirable to maintain a reasonable dues structure to minimize hurdles to participation, but it is also recognized that a budget is required to pursue these Policies. See current RNC dues structure below:

- a. \$70 per individual High School Players
- b. \$45 per individual Middle School Players
- c. \$30 per individual Youth Players
- d. \$10 per individual Rookie Rugby Player (non-contact)
- e. \$30 per individual Coach
- f. \$20 per individual Administrator

- g. \$10 per individual Referee
- h. \$250 for annual Club Dues (this amount is for each Club, regardless of how many USA Rugby Club ID # are issued for the Club)
- i. Current USA Rugby annual dues as determined by USA Rugby in addition to RNC Dues

21. Insurance

The players shall comply and meet all insurance requirements as set by the RNC Bylaws and USA Rugby.

22. Club Incorporations

For proper liability, insurance and legitimacy purposes, RNC will actively promote and provide advice and technical assistance to clubs to incorporate as 501(c)3 non-profit corporations.

23. Technical Zone

Technical zones, consisting of three separate areas: a coach's box, a bench zone that all teams and assistant coaches must stay inside of for the duration of the match, and an administrative zone. These technical zones will be painted/roped/coned on the field along with the field of play markings.

Coach's boxes, bench zones and administrative area requirements are as follows:

- a. Each home team is responsible for painting/roping/coning clearly marked technical zones to include the following areas: coach's box, bench zones, and administrative area for every home game.
- b. There will be one coach's box and one bench zone designated for each team and one administrative area positioned between both teams.
- c. Coach boxes may be from the 10 meter line back to the 22 meter line, and must be 2m (6.5ft) away from the touch line. Each coach box must be marked so that it can be clearly seen by the referee, touch judges or assistant referees, and fourth official, and for safety purposes.
- d. Team bench areas must be located behind the coach box, with no required minimum or maximum amount of space between the two.
- e. No players may leave the bench zone during the game other than at half time, or in the event of a substitution. Players preparing for a substitution may warm up outside of the bench zone with the permission of the 4th official/field monitor.
- f. The administrative area is between the two team areas (coach box and bench zone) located at midfield between both 10 meter lines. This area will be sectioned off for the fourth official, field monitor(s) and medical personnel. This area should be no deeper than 10m, and will be 2m from the touch line.
- g. A 5m barrier must be set up by the home team prior to every game. This barrier may be rope, barricades, etc., the barrier is for the sideline not being occupied by the teams as well as behind the technical zone.

24. Guidelines for the Updated Field Requirements

- a. The technical zone is the term for the entire area containing the three separate and distinctive regions: coach boxes, bench zones, and the admin zone.
- b. All coaches in the coach box MUST be a CURRENT Level 200 certified coach with USA Rugby.
- c. All club coaches must remain in the technical zones, whether they are in the coach box or bench zone, and not wander out of the coach box or bench zone toward the try zone or the opposing team technical area, and must not huddle with their team on the field after points are scored.
- d. Only coaches registered and certified with USA Rugby are allowed in the technical area. All remaining coaches for the team must stay in the bench zone. Coaches may substitute out of the bench zone and into the coach's box at any time during the match, but the one coach rule in the coach's box remains.
- e. Chairs may be set up in the administrative area for disciplinary purposes.
- f. Coaches and players may enter the administrative area only when making a substitution.

- g. Fans and spectators must stand on the side of the field opposite the player benches and will not be permitted to watch from behind the bench area unless there is stadium seating.

25. Warm-Up Guidelines

- a. Teams may not warm up within 5m of the field of play when another game is ongoing.
- b. Players warming up must wear a pinny/bib of a contrasting color to the players on the field. Players warming up preparing for a substitution must stay behind the rope that runs the length of the field behind the bench zones and may only warm up on their team's bench zone side of the field, and not encroach past the administrative area. They should also remain away from the spectator area.
- c. No equipment is allowed for any players warming up, i.e. cones, balls, ruck pads, etc.

26. Field Monitor Requirements:

- a. Each team must assign at least one field monitor during every home game. This person may be an assistant coach, parent, volunteer, etc.
- b. The field monitor must wear a visibility vest or bright color so they can be easily seen by the referee.
- c. The field monitor is required to enforce the rules as they pertain to the fans and crowds around the field.
- d. The field monitor may be called on by the referee to control rowdy fans, move obstructing items, or reposition fans/coaches that may be viewing from an unauthorized location.
- e. This may include but is not limited to; anything inside of the 5m barrier (baby strollers, pets, chairs, etc.).

27. Water Carrier Requirements

- a. Required to wear a visibility vest or pinny/bib of contrasting color to both teams on the field.
- b. When not on the field, water carriers must stay in the administrative area, unless they are refilling water bottles.
- c. Water carriers must only enter the playing area when match officials signal.
- d. Coaches may not serve as water carriers.

28. Spectators

- a. Spectators are only allowed to be on the opposite sideline from the teams before and during games.
- b. Spectators are ONLY allowed behind the technical zone side of the field when the game is being held in a stadium type facility with permanent bench seating and a permanent barrier, such as a chain link fence, that separates the stands from the playing enclosure.
- c. Spectators are never allowed on the field of play for any reason and are subject to dismissal from the playing grounds. Please refer to the RNC Disciplinary Policies to review sanctions for such events.

29. Filming of Games

RNC requires that every boys and girls Varsity and Junior Varsity match be filmed for the following reasons:

- i. For any disciplinary issue, it provides video evidence that can be submitted to the Disciplinary Committee if necessary.
- ii. It ensures that every home team is abiding by RNC policies and procedures regarding field requirements and can also monitor the behavior of spectators on the sideline.
- iii. Any complaints about a referee must be accompanied by video evidence to support the claim.
- iv. It provides the opportunity for RNC to actively market its best players to Regional Academies and to High School All-American programs.
- v. Clubs who do not properly film games are subject to disciplinary action on a case by case basis.

30. Drone Policy

Drones are not to be flown anywhere inside the field of play or the technical zone around the field of play during a scheduled regular season match. This includes the coaching boxes, administrative area, team bench area and 5-meter perimeter around the field of play. Drones should also not be flown above any teams warming up on an adjacent field. Drones are not to be flown at any Rugby NorCal tournament or jamboree, except for drones flown by a Rugby NorCal hired professional operator. Any drone operator must obey by local drone laws regarding the flying of drones in any park, field, school, facility, etc. Drone operators must abide by home team or tournament organizer requests of discontinuing the use of drones at such events.

31. Match Results

It is the responsibility of the home team to properly input Conference Match Results within forty-eight (48) hours of a Conference Match. It is also the responsibility of the referee to scan and e-mail, fax, or utilize a mobile device (photo and text/email) the Match Report page, with the referee and coach's signatures and verification plus team rosters and pregame checklist, to RNC within forty-eight hours (48) hours of a Conference Match. Red and Yellow Card violations must be included in the Match Report page. RNC will input all Red and Yellow Card violations into the Match Apt. Referees who do not submit these documents or who submit a match report that is not fully and properly filled out will not be paid referee fees by RNC.

32. Safety Policy

It is RNC Policy that every school, club, team or other party with any responsibility for a rugby activity or event (organizers), shall take reasonable steps to safeguard the safety of players, coaches, referees and spectators (participants) who participate in or attend the game. In the event that any organizer determines that there is a foreseeable risk of harm to a participant in a rugby activity or event, it is the responsibility of that organizer to promptly eliminate or guard against such risk or, if necessary, terminate the activity or event. RNC shall only be responsible for safety at those events for which it specifically assumes organizational responsibility. The Code of Conduct form must be signed and submitted to RNC by the President/Chairman of each Club prior to the season. Code of Conduct can be found at the link in Section 4.

33. Safety and Medical Professional Requirements

It is vitally important that rugby programs provide the tools necessary to create a safe environment for all athletes. USA Rugby has developed a guide to explain what is needed to help prevent injuries and improve medical coverage at local events, league competition, and all other development activities.

- a. RNC will attempt to assign a Certified Athletic Trainer or medical personnel to every match. In the event that RNC is unable to assign medical personnel to that match, it is the responsibility of the home team to provide, at minimum, one Certified Athletic Trainer and/or EMT.
- b. It is mandatory that the Athletic Trainer stay within the administrative area for the duration of the game, unless there is a medical emergency on field, and the referee signals they may enter the field.
- c. Athletic Trainer must examine players removed from the game due to injury within the administrative area, unless they deem the area is unfit to properly evaluate the injured player.
- d. Both team's coaches and the referee must meet with the RNC assigned Athletic Trainer prior to the start of the match, who will identify themselves. In the event that RNC cannot assign an Athletic Trainer, the home team coaches must identify the medical personnel to the referee before the start of the game.
- e. If RNC did not assign an athletic trainer and there is not an athletic trainer or EMT provided by the home team on site at the scheduled start time, the referee must not start the game, which may result in a home team forfeit.
 - a. In cases where the athletic trainer was assigned by RNC and the athletic trainer did not show up, despite proper correspondence with the home team/ATC, the home club MUST immediately contact the assigned ATC and RNC. If no contact is made, and there is alternate means of medical staff, which

both teams and the referee deem fit, the match may be played. Please notify RNC of the individual providing medical care. If there is not sufficient medical staff, the match may be postponed/rescheduled, and the home team will not be responsible for reschedule fees, ATC or Referee fees.

- f. Every home team should be prepared on the field with a fully stocked medical kit.
- g. Every home team is required to have an Emergency Action Plan in case of a life-threatening emergency or injury that requires additional means of attention for each home facility where games/practices occur.

34. Lightning Concerns

In case of lightning everyone must evacuate the area to a safe location. A large building is the best location while sheds, dugouts and bleachers are to be avoided. If a sturdy building is not available, a vehicle with closed windows will work instead. Activity must be stopped for at least 30 minutes if lightning strikes within 10 miles of the playing field. Each time lightning is seen, or thunder is heard, and the strike is within 10 miles, the 30-minute delay restarts.

35. Concussion Policy

I. Athlete Evaluation and Return to Play

If an athlete is suspected to have suffered a concussion, s/he will be ineligible to practice or play until the full process below has been completed – this is for the safety and benefit of the athlete and his/her developing brain! During this period, the athlete will appear as “Medically Ineligible” in MatchApt (cannot be placed on a Match Report) and must not be allowed to practice, play in matches, or engage in any other physical activity.

1. At a Match:

- a. The athletic trainer (ATC) will remove from the match any athlete they suspect may have sustained a concussion and will complete an evaluation
- b. If an athlete is suspected by anyone present (teammate, coach, parent, etc) to have suffered a concussion during a match, they must communicate immediately with the athletic trainer (ATC), who must remove the athlete from the match.
- c. The athletic trainer will give recommendations to parent/guardian (if present) and coach on whether immediate referral to a health care provider or emergency services are necessary and will provide a filled out Physician Concussion Clearance form.
- d. After the match, the ATC will submit an online injury report describing the injury, any actions taken by the ATC, and the ATC’s recommendations regarding further assessment or treatment of the injury.
- e. If an ATC is not present, any Coach, ref or team admin who suspects an athlete has sustained a concussion must remove that athlete from participation, refer the athlete for immediate evaluation by a health care provider and immediately contact Rugby NorCal.

2. At a Practice:

- a. If a suspected concussion occurs at practice when an ATC is not present, the coach must remove the athlete from play immediately, notify the parent/guardian and contact Rugby NorCal to report the suspected concussion.

3. After the Match

- a. Upon receipt of the electronic injury report, Rugby NorCal will contact the parent/guardian and coach listed in the athlete's MatchApt profile to notify them of the suspected concussion and to communicate next steps.
- b. It is vital that Parent contact information is updated and accurate in the athlete's profile in MatchApt.

4. Physician Evaluation

- a. The athlete must be evaluated by a physician licensed in the state of California and working within their scope of practice (MD or DO) to officially diagnose a concussion or to be cleared as to not having sustained a concussion.
 - i. It is recommended that the athlete be evaluated within 48 - 72 hours of the initial injury.
 - ii. It is required that the athlete have been evaluated by the physician at least 2 days prior to beginning the GRTP protocol (see below).
- b. If the initial physicians visit results in a diagnosis of no concussion, the written diagnosis must be submitted to RNC using the Physician Concussion Clearance Form & the athlete will be cleared.

5. Required Rest Period

- a. Following a concussion diagnosis, the athlete must complete a full 2 weeks (14 day) rest and recovery period followed by a 7 day GRTP protocol before the athlete will be cleared to play - this is absolutely critical to the athlete's health and safety!
- b. World Rugby and USA Rugby require that children ages 18 and under must have complete physical rest for a minimum of two weeks following a concussion or suspected concussion.
- c. During this period the athlete cannot partake in any rugby or other physical activity other than rehab prescribed by a physician, physical therapist or athletic trainer.

6. Graduated Return to Play (GRTP)

- a. If the athlete has been symptom-free for two full days at the end of the two weeks rest period, they may begin the Graduated Return To Play (GRTP) protocol.
- b. The athlete must also have been evaluated by a physician at least two days prior to beginning the GRTP protocol and have their approval to begin the GRTP.
- c. The GRTP incorporates a progressive exercise program to re-introduce athletes to sport following concussion. 24 hours is required between each step and the athlete must remain symptom free in order to progress to the next level of activity.

7. Physician's Clearance

- a. Once the GRTP is completed, the athlete must return to the doctor to obtain a signed Physician Concussion Clearance Form clearing him/her to return to playing rugby.
- b. The parent/guardian must submit this physician's clearance letter along with the completed GRTP sheet to Rugby NorCal.
- c. Once all documentation is submitted and verified, the athlete will be cleared to play in RNC MatchApt system and on all match reports.
- d. Athletes are not permitted to compete until Rugby NorCal has removed "Medical Ineligible" from their MatchApt profile.

II. Concussion Training Requirements

The State of California passed new legislation (AB2007) in late September 2016 requiring all youth sports organizations to annually provide & document concussion education for athletes, parents, coaches and administrators. RNC has adopted the following requirements to ensure compliance and the greatest possible level of concussion awareness and responsible action by everyone involved in youth rugby in Northern California. Completion & compliance will be tracked and reported.

1. During the RNC registration process, **ALL Parents and Athletes** must annually read, sign and submit a concussion education document prior to athlete participation. Athletes must report symptoms of concussion.
 - a. The document can be signed electronically within the athlete's profile in MatchApt or can be downloaded from the website.
2. **ALL Coaches** must annually complete an online concussion training module prior to coaching and complete a concussion education document.
 - a. The document can be downloaded from the website, signed electronically and uploaded to their profile in MatchApt or InjureFree.
3. **ALL Administrators and Referees** must annually read, sign and submit a concussion education document prior to participation.
 - a. The document can be downloaded from the website, signed electronically and uploaded to their profile in MatchApt or InjureFree.

III. Additional Items

1. Non-rugby concussion – what to do? Non-rugby concussions suffered either prior to or during the rugby season must be reported to Rugby NorCal. Additional impacts can be extremely dangerous for athletes and particularly for children. RNC athletes who have suffered a non-rugby concussion during the rugby season must still enter the RNC concussion protocol for their continued safety.
2. Obligation to report concussion symptoms Everyone involved with youth rugby – athletes, parents, coaches, administrators, etc. - has an obligation to be aware of the symptoms of concussion (through their required form of annual training, see Section II) and to report any suspected concussion symptoms. Symptoms should be reported to an athletic trainer (ATC) if present or to Rugby NorCal if an ATC is not present.