



RUGBY NOVA SCOTIA

SENIOR LEAGUE GAME REGULATIONS

Board Approved - May 22, 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The following regulations apply to all games of Rugby played in Nova Scotia and sanctioned or approved by Rugby Nova Scotia (RNS) involving one or more members (clubs) and registered participants (coach, athlete and officials) of RNS except where superseded by regulations issued by RNS for specific tournaments and events.
- 1.2. No club shall have two teams competing in the same division.
- 1.3. Barring any league variation laid out in this document (roster size, substitutions, game length, etc) the Game shall be played in accordance with the World Rugby Laws of the Game with any mandatory variations prescribed by Rugby Canada (RC).
- 1.4. RNS member clubs shall obtain the permission of RNS for any fixtures against out of province clubs, schools, or touring sides regardless of whether the game is played in or out of Nova Scotia. This is to be done through the online sanctioning process as outlined for the specific criteria.
- 1.5. For exhibition games against opposition not affiliated with a provincial union, matches will not be sanctioned without Proof of Insurance.
- 1.6. Clubs wishing to hold a tournament shall apply to RNS no less than 30 days in advance of the scheduled date. RNS can deny any application submitted for various reasons. The tournament is not sanctioned until approved by all necessary partners, and an application does not guarantee sanction.



2. SAFETY

- 2.1. The home team shall ensure that the playing field is properly marked out. The field must have flags, poles and other devices in accordance with World Rugby
- 2.2. Law 1. All goalposts shall be protected with padding. All flagpoles shall be flexible. Should this not be done, the match official has the right to delay the game until complete.
- 2.3. Home teams shall ensure that for all games, a playing area is created by roping off the field from goal line to goal line with a minimum of five (5) meters between the rope and the touch line. A technical zone should also be included in field setup for coaches, managers, and replacements. Should this not be done, the match official has the right to not start the game.
- 2.4. The home team or hosting organization shall have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that has been approved by its Executive and submitted to RNS.
- 2.5. Any game shall be immediately suspended if extreme weather conditions (i.e. lightning, hail) exist or threaten.
 - 2.5.1. Rugby Nova Scotia will follow the World Rugby and Rugby Canada guidelines for these weather events:

[World Rugby Lightning Guidelines](#)

[World Rugby Heat Guidelines](#)

It may only be resumed when considered safe by the referee. It should only be considered safe to return to the field of play a minimum of 30 minutes after the final flash of lightning or clap of thunder has been seen/heard.

If it is not possible to resume the game within one hour of the suspension, the referee may abandon the game. If the game is called before seventy-five (75) percent of the game has been completed, a make-up game will be scheduled at a later date. If more than seventy-five (75) percent has elapsed then the team ahead at that point will be declared the winner.

3. GENERAL

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of the referee to ensure games kickoff as scheduled. Any delay to kickoff for the grounds of fairness or player welfare are at the discretion of the referee.
- 3.2. All league games must comply with the league reference table below. Additional players must be agreed upon by captains, and the Technical Director of RNS must be informed via email of the addition at least 24 hours prior to kickoff.

	Div	BP 4 Tries	BP Loss <7	BP Forfeit	Player Restrictions	Substitutions	Roster Min.	Roster Max.
Senior Men	1	No	Yes	No	N/A	8	10	23
Senior Men	2	No	Yes	No	Top 8 - Exempt u23	8	10	23
Senior Women	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	8	10	23
Senior Women	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Top 10	8	10	23
Senior Women	Play-on	Yes	Yes	Yes	Top 10	Unlimited & Rolling	10	23
University Men	1&2-	No	No	No	N/A	8	10	23
Women's Fall	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	8	10	23

- 3.3. When two teams have jerseys of similar colour, the home team shall wear a set of contrasting colour.
- 3.4. Teams shall abide by dates, venues and kick off times set out in the schedule. Requests for changes, must be supported by a written agreement (email) of both teams involved, along with the Request for Game Change Form filled out in full and submitted to the RNS office ninety-six (96) hours prior to kick off by the team requesting the change.



- 3.4.1. Game change requests less than ninety-six (96) hours before kickoff clubs must make their own arrangements and communicate those with RNS and the referee allocator.
- 3.4.2. Game changes may be refused if a field and/or referee is unavailable.
- 3.4.3. The team requesting the Game Change will be invoiced \$25 per Game Change Request.
- 3.5. Prior to kickoff each team must complete the Team Sheet on the National Registration System. The Team Sheet must list all players available for the game, including replacements to be used according to Law 3. All players listed must be registered with RNS as a participant of that club, or have been agreed upon as guest players by both teams.
 - 3.5.1. If a club lists an ineligible player on a game sheet, that club will be considered in default of that match. Player eligibility is addressed in section 7.
 - 3.5.2. Teams who have not submitted their Team Sheet prior to kick-off will be invoiced a \$50 penalty for the infraction.
 - 3.5.2.1. This infraction counts towards any sanctioned Rugby Nova Scotia event including but not limited to league games, exhibition games etc. If Sportlomo is not usable for an exhibition game, digital record of players is acceptable.
- 3.6. Any infraction of 3.1-3.5 may be considered grounds for administrative sanction (fine, forfeit, etc) of the offending team or teams.
- 3.7. A team shall be considered in default of a game if the team, without extenuating circumstances or without having reached agreement with the other team to reschedule the game, fails to present itself ready to play at the scheduled venue prior to kickoff.
- 3.8. For the purpose of calculating league standings, four (4) league points will be deducted from the team that defaulted. The team, which did not default, shall be awarded league points as though the game had been played and won as per the League Reference Table. A score of 0 to 30 against the team, which defaulted, shall be recorded for the purpose of future determination of standings.



- 3.9. The referee shall submit the result on the National Registration System within 24 hours of the completion of the game. This means the number of tries, conversions and penalty goals which make up the total score.

4. DETERMINATION OF STANDINGS

- 4.1. The winner of each league game shall be awarded four (4) league points and the loser shall be awarded zero (0) league points. Each team in a game, which was tied, shall be awarded two (2) league points. In leagues (as per the League Reference Table) where a bonus point system is being used, teams scoring four (4) or more tries in a game will be awarded one (1) bonus point. A team losing by seven (7) or less will be awarded (1) bonus point
- 4.2. Any team in default of a league game shall have four (4) league points deducted from their league total and forfeit a portion of their bond.
- 4.3. Teams in any division shall be ranked so that the team with the most league points is first and so on in descending order.
- 4.4. In the case of two teams having the same number of league points, that team which first satisfies one of the following criteria applied in the given order shall be ranked the higher of the two teams:
- i. The team with the greater number of league points in league games between the two;
 - ii. The team with the greater points differential (points scored less points against; maximum attributable differential 30 points per game) in league games between the two teams.
 - iii. The team with the greater number of wins in league games;
 - iv. The team with the greater overall points differential based on league games played (maximum attributable differential 30 points per game).
 - v. Coin toss.
- 4.5. In the case of a tie between more than two teams, the following criteria shall be applied in the order given until the tie is resolved:
- i. The team with the greater number of league points in league games between the tied teams. (If after the application of (i) there should remain a tie between only two (2) teams, then that tie shall be resolved by the method for breaking ties between the two teams.);
 - ii. The team with the greater overall points differential (points scored less points against; maximum attributable differential 30 points per game) based on league games played.
 - iii. If after the application of (ii) there should remain a tie between only two teams, then that tie shall be resolved by coin toss.



5. **PLAYOFFS**

- 5.1. Playoff format will be confirmed before the commencement of league fixtures.
- 5.2. Each playoff game shall be played at the home field of the team, which placed higher in the final league standings. If the game cannot be played at that field, then the game shall be played at a reasonably located field chosen by the team, which would have had the home field.
- 5.3. If two teams from the same league and club are participating in playoffs on the same day in different locations, the lower division playoff game will arrange kickoff times to allow the club to fulfill both fixtures, or move to the following day (Sunday) if lower division games cannot be fulfilled.
- 5.4. If at the end of a playoff game the score should be tied, then two ten (10) minute periods of overtime shall be played. If at the end of this overtime the score should still be tied, then the teams shall play one ten (10) minute period of sudden death overtime (the team which scores first is the winner). If after sudden death it is still a tie, we will have a kicking competition. Whoever wins that, wins the match.

5.4.1. Kicking Competition Rules

- i. A coin toss decides who kicks first.
- ii. Only players who were on the pitch at the conclusion of the match can kick.
- iii. Five (5) players from each Team will take place kicks from three different areas, all on the 22 metre line, as follows: Position 1: directly in front of the posts; Position 2: on the 15 metre line on the left-hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts); Position 3: on the 15 metre line on the right-hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts)
- iv. The referee will start the competition by calling the first player selected from the Team kicking first to the first kicking position. Once the player has taken the kick, the referee calls a player from the opposing Team to kick from the same position.



- v. If there is an equal number of successful kicks once each team has completed its five kicks, the competition continues on a “sudden death” basis, following the same order of kickers used in the first five kicks.
- vi. Should a player be injured during the kicking competition, they can be replaced – but only by one of the remaining players who was on the field when sudden death in extra time concluded.

6. PROTESTS AND DEFAULTS

- 6.1. Where a Club claims that an opposing team is in default or wishes to protest the result of a game for some other reason, the Club shall submit to the RNS office, with simultaneous copy to the opposing Club, a written explanation of the circumstances including all pertinent information. The representative of the team claiming default shall inform the referee and the opposing team representative at that time the alleged default took place (where possible the game shall be played). To be valid the submission shall be emailed within three (3) days of the scheduled date of the game.
- 6.2. Upon notice of an allegation, the defending Club shall submit to the RNS office a written explanation of the circumstances including all pertinent details. This submission, to be valid, shall be sent by email within seven (7) days of the scheduled game.
- 6.3. Immediately upon receipt of the submission from both Clubs, the Technical Director shall consider the allegations, collect such additional evidence as is considered necessary, review with the Competitions Committee, if the allegations are found to be true, assess such sanctions as are deemed appropriate.
- 6.4. Where a team defaults a game, its Club shall be liable for all reasonable costs incurred by the non-offending team and the referee. The following shall apply:
 - i. Four (4) league points will be deducted from total league points,
 - ii. \$300 financial penalty payable to RNS upon receipt of invoice
 - iii. Loss of home game/club day (if impacted) for following season
- 6.4.1. Where a team defaults 30% or more regular season league games, they shall be required to complete a non-league rebuilding season of exhibition matches, with support from RNS prior to re-entry to a league.
- 6.4.2. A team defaulting a game may be barred from further competition until its obligations and penalties have been fulfilled.



- 6.5. In the event that time or other circumstances do not allow the procedures outlined in 6.1-6.5 to be followed, then the Technical Director shall take such steps as they deem necessary to resolve the dispute in the time available.
- 6.6. All decisions will be emailed to the Clubs and players involved.
- 6.7. Provided that both Clubs involved have had the opportunity to present information as noted above, the decision of the Chair of Competition Committee will be final except as specified under the Appeals Policy.

7. ELIGIBILITY

- 7.1. All players, coaches and match officials, must be registered as members on the National Registration System, prior to training and/or competition.
 - 7.1.1. All players playing Senior Rugby must follow the three (3) year age-banding guidelines. Players who are in the youngest year of a three year age-band must complete a playing-up form and submit to Rugby NS for approval. Submissions made less than 48 hours before competition are not guaranteed to be reviewed in time.
 - 7.1.2. Particular guidelines are set for Front Row Players. All Front Row Players in the middle year of three year age-banding will require exemptions forms. Players born in the youngest year of three year age-banding who are playing Front Row will not be granted exemptions to play Front Row.
- 7.2. A member of a Club in RNS may not join another Club without completing the National Registration System player transfer **completely** (thereby getting the approval of both clubs and RNS).
- 7.3. A player cannot be a playing member of two clubs at the same time, without being a registered Dual Member, or completing the guest player process (seeking permission from the opposing club, notifying RNS, and noting the guest player on the game sheet) each time they wish to play for another club.



- 7.4. If a player plays for another club without first meeting the requirements of 7.2 & 7.3, as appropriate, they are liable to suspension and the Club for which they play shall be considered to be in default for all games in which they played.
- 7.5. In order to be eligible for playoff participation a player must be a registered member one (1) month before the playoffs begin for that league/division. Exceptional circumstances may be submitted (complete with justifications) to the Technical Director for review) by competitions committee approval and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.6. Players who are members of Clubs with teams in multiple Divisions who are not eligible to play in a lower division will be classified as the Top 8 (men) and Top 10 (women).
- 7.7. A club with teams in multiple Divisions shall maintain their list of 8/10 best players available each week, beginning with the first week of Division 2 games. Top 8/10 will be recorded on a shared document provided by RNS that is accessible by all teams.
- 7.8. Players listed to the Top 8/10 must be uninjured and within Nova Scotia to be eligible. In instances where a Top 8/10 player becomes unavailable due to injury or other circumstances for 2 or more games, they must be removed from the Top 8/10 list, and replaced.
- 7.9. Players who are suspended are ineligible to be listed on the Top 8/10.
- 7.10. Men's U23 players may be optionally exempt from the Top 8 list. They may be added to the Top 8 list at the discretion of their Club.
- 7.11. Updates to the Top 8/10 lists shall be submitted through the shared document provided by RNS each Wednesday by 9pm for monitoring. In an instance where a player is not eligible to be on the Top 8/10 list, RNS will communicate to the affected Club within 24 hours.
- 7.12. Any club who lists Top 8/10 players on a roster in the lower Division shall be considered in breach of policy and the game will be considered a default.
- 7.13. In the case of the University Men's First and Second Division, university clubs will enact and enforce their own eligibility requirements, corresponding with their own unique insurance requirements and ability to monitor enrollment status.
- 7.14. Any Club with any doubt concerning the eligibility of a player should contact the office of Rugby NS.



8. DISCIPLINE

- 8.1. Within 24 hours of the end of the game, the referee's report detailing any offenses will be submitted to Rugby Nova Scotia.
- 8.2. Once the referee report has been received, Rugby Nova Scotia will inform the Discipline Committee to start the discipline process.
 - 8.2.1. Rugby Nova Scotia (RNS) will appoint a Chair of the Disciplinary Committee. The Chair will be a non-board member with no close club affiliation.
 - 8.2.2. The committee will consist of three members, including the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee, and two additional members from a larger Discipline Committee Pool.
 - 8.2.3. Any member of the Disciplinary Committee Pool found to have a conflict of interest must not be selected for the respective proceedings. They must identify this prior to starting the process.
- 8.3. Each Wednesday during the season, a Discipline Hearing will be scheduled if required; unless the referee's availability postpones the hearing. If any other party is unavailable, the hearing will proceed as planned.
 - 8.3.1. In the event that the Red Card was a result of two (2) yellow cards given in a game, the player **is not** suspended until this hearing takes place.
 - 8.3.2. In the event that the Red Card was a straight Red Card given, the player **is** suspended until this hearing takes place. If games are missed in different game periods, these games will count towards the player's sanction.
- 8.4. The Executive Director from Rugby NS will inform both clubs involved in the infraction of the hearing date, and the referee's report. The club is responsible for relaying relevant communications to the participant(s).
- 8.5. The club/participant has 24 hours from notification from Rugby Nova Scotia to decide; and the committee will convene accordingly:
 - 8.5.1. To accept the hearing without representation (accept the referee's report as is).



- 8.5.2. To have a full hearing to counter the referee's report
- 8.6. If the club/participant chooses to accept the referee report, the committee will meet to assess the appropriate sanction based on the referee report alone.
- 8.7. If the club/participant chooses to have a full hearing, a hearing will take place via video conference call.
 - 8.7.1. Evidence can be presented by either club, including but not limited to eyewitness accounts, video footage, or any other appropriate evidence. This must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing.
 - 8.7.2. The referee, player, and representatives from both clubs are invited to attend.
 - 8.7.3. After the hearing, the Committee will report the sanction imposed in line with RNS disciplinary procedures. Sanctions range from 0 further games to lifetime bans. The decision will be communicated to the club/participant within 24 hours.
- 8.8. Sanctions will follow the World Rugby Sanctions for Foul Play with adjustments for the Nova Scotia league(s). Note: World Rugby Sanctions are based on a 40 week season.
 - 8.8.1. Penalties of 12 months or fewer are adjusted proportionately based on the length of the season for the specific league, rounded down.
 - 8.8.2. Each game period counts as one game towards suspension. A game period is as follows:
 - i. Friday through Sunday
 - ii. Mon through Thursday

** Please note, these game periods are intended to split the week into two (2) game periods, to ensure that clubs with multiple teams are not at an advantage to expedite the suspension.



- 8.8.3. Suspensions obtained at USport, School Sport and ACAA fixtures are not relevant to club games, and vice versa.
- 8.8.4. A player's senior season ends when their club plays the last game that year for which the player is eligible.
- 8.9. Clubs may Appeal the decision of the Discipline Committee based on:
 - i. New Evidence
 - ii. Length of Sanction.
- 8.9.1. Clubs have seven (7) days from receiving notice of the decision to submit an appeal.
- 8.9.2. The Appeals Committee is chaired by the President of Rugby Nova Scotia and 2 other Discipline Committee Pool members appointed by the Chair. If the committee deems an appeal should be heard, the player's suspension stands until the appeal is heard.
- 8.9.3. A bond of \$200 is required for appeals based on new evidence. This will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.
 - 8.9.3.1. Appeals based on length of sanction do not require a bond.