



HUNTER JUNIOR RUGBY UNION

REPRESENTATIVE BY-LAWS / RULES

Consolidated Edition

Final Edition

Final Edition - 28 September 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
By-Law 1 – Eligibility & Selection Criteria (General – All Programs).....	3
By-Law 1A – Additional Eligibility: XVs & Development (Season-Based).....	4
By-Law 1B – Additional Eligibility: Sevens (Carnival-Based).....	5
By-Law 2 – Representative Team Structure (General – All Programs).....	5
By-Law 2A – XVs Structure.....	6
By-Law 2B – Sevens Structure.....	6
By-Law 2C – Development Structure.....	6
By-Law 3 – Representative Player Conduct.....	7
By-Law 4 – Player Transfers & Club Registrations.....	7
By-Law 5 – Coaching & Development.....	7
By-Law 6 – Representative Fee.....	8
By-Law 7 – Discipline & Judiciary.....	8
By-Law 8 – Safety & Welfare.....	8
By-Law 9 – Administration & Appeals.....	8
By-Law 10 – Amendments & Review.....	9
Definitions.....	9
Schedule 1: Minimum Rounds Required	10

Introduction

These By-Laws govern all aspects of Representative Level Rugby within the Hunter Junior Rugby Union (HJRU) and must be adhered to by all players, coaches, officials, and affiliated clubs. This includes Wildfires XV's teams, Development Teams, Sevens teams and other teams that would normally fall under a Representative banner.

These By-Laws are to be read in conjunction with Rugby Australia (RA), NSW Junior Rugby Union (NSWJRU) and NSW Country Junior Rugby Union (NSWCJRU) regulations.

Reward

The HJRU Wildfires program aims to reward those players who have shown a true commitment to our game and their respective clubs, and not just those committed to playing the mandatory number of games under "club participation rules" and then made themselves unavailable.

This is a pre-emptive measure by the HJRU Wildfires to select players who have demonstrated commitment to the game of rugby, aimed at club players playing week in, week out and being recognised for their commitment to the game, and rewarded with an opportunity to be selected in a Wildfires Squad.

This approach allows players to be observed in 'real time' as to on-field performance and gamesmanship.

By-Law 1 – Eligibility & Selection Criteria (General – All Programs)

The following clauses apply to all Representative programs — XV's, Sevens and Development — unless a program-specific By-Law states otherwise.

- 1.1** The Representative Coordinator, Competition Manager or HJRU Executive may arrange Representative Selection Day/s as required or select players from an Expression of Interest form by observing them over a number of weeks in competition games or at an Academy.
- 1.2** All players must have a Primary Player Registration with an HJRU-affiliated club in the current season before they are able to nominate for, or attend, selection days for XV's, Sevens or a Development Team.
- 1.3** Registration or selection in one Representative program does not carry over to another. A player must actually play Sevens to be eligible for Sevens selection — a Primary Registration or selection for XV's does not count towards Sevens eligibility. Likewise, a player who has only played Sevens is not eligible for selection in an XV's team unless they have also played XV's.
- 1.4** All players, across all Representative programs (XV's, Sevens and Development), must submit a Nomination for Consideration on the prescribed online nomination form (collected over the nomination period) — including terms and conditions, name, date of birth, club and current team — before being permitted to attend any trial, training session or selection day. HJRU uses this form to check the player's eligibility and registration status before granting access to trials.
- 1.5** Players must meet age-grade requirements as per Rugby Australia's Participation Policy.
- 1.6** A player granted an Age Dispensation to play in a younger age group is not eligible for selection in any Representative or Development Team. A player who has already been selected forfeits their position in that team.
- 1.7** Where a player is injured or ill and cannot fulfil the game requirement for the Selection Day, or cannot attend a Selection Day, trial day, trial match or training session, the player may apply for a Dispensation. Applications relating to the game requirement, Selection Days and trial days are reviewed by the HJRU Competition manager. Applications relating to training sessions and trial matches are approved under By-Law 2.1. A medical certificate, specifying the period the player was unable to play and relating to a consultation at or around the time the injury or illness occurred, is the only document that will be accepted; a letter from a parent will not be considered. Players are still expected to attend the selection day/s even if unable to participate. The Dispensation form is available under Resources on the website.

1.8 A player whose injury or illness is expected to prevent them from training or playing for six or more Scheduled Training Weeks of their team's Representative program will not be considered for selection. A Scheduled Training Week is a week in which the team has training or matches scheduled. Breaks when the team is not training, such as school holidays or the Christmas period, are not counted. A player who has already been selected and sustains an injury or illness expected to prevent them from training or playing for six or more Scheduled Training Weeks forfeits their position, unless the Head Coach submits a request for special consideration to the competition Manager and Representative Coordinator and the request is approved. The expected recovery period must be supported by a medical certificate. All injured players must obtain a return-to-contact-sport letter from their medical practitioner before returning to training.

1.10 Players must be available for all trial games and competition games as required, and attend all days for the duration of the carnival.

1.11 The HJRU Executive may, by majority vote, approve the selection of a player who does not fully meet the eligibility criteria where special circumstances apply. Any such decision, and the reasons for it, must be recorded in the meeting minutes. This discretion does not extend to players who did not play rugby in the previous year, other than under By-Law 1A.4.

1.12 A player who attends boarding school is not eligible for selection in, or participation in, an HJRU Wildfires Representative XVs Team, Development Team or Sevens Team in that year they are at boarding school.

By-Law 1A – Additional Eligibility: XVs & Development (Season-Based)

These clauses apply in addition to By-Law 1, and reflect the season-long, club-competition nature of the XVs and Development pathways.

1A.1 To be eligible for selection in a Wildfires XVs or Development Team, a player must, in the year before selection:

- (a) hold a Primary Player Registration with an HJRU-affiliated club;
- (b) participate for their Regular Team in 75% or more of that team's regular season rounds played before the June Long Weekend; and
- (c) participate for their Regular Team in 75% or more of that team's regular season rounds played after the June Long Weekend.

1A.2 For the purposes of By-Law 1A.1:

- (a) Only rounds played for the player's Regular Team (see Definitions) are counted.
- (b) A player participates in a round if they take the field for their Regular Team in that round's fixture.
- (c) Matches played for any other team, whether in the same age group or another age division, do not count, except as provided in (e).
- (d) Playing more than one match in a round counts as participation in one round only.
- (e) Rounds where the Regular Team has a bye are not counted, except where the player, with the club's approval, plays for another team of the same club in the same age division or an older age division in that round. That round is then counted and treated as participation for that player. The same-age-division option does not apply to a player selected in a Representative team or squad for the current season, as those players are not permitted to play for another side in their age division. Where a round is cancelled and not replayed, it is counted as a round and treated as participation by every player registered to that team.
- (f) Finals Series matches are not counted.
- (g) The number of rounds required is set out in Schedule 1, based on each percentage being rounded up to the nearest 5%.
- (h) Where the Regular Team forfeits a match, that round is counted, but it is not treated as participation by any player, regardless of attendance on the day. Where the opposition forfeits to the Regular Team, the round is counted and treated as participation by every player registered to the Regular Team.

- (i) Where a player holds an Age Dispensation, their Regular Team is the team they play for under that dispensation, and rounds played for that team count under By-Law 1A.1. The exception in (e) applies to such a player only for another team in the same age division as their Regular Team, as a dispensed player may not play in an older age group that season.
- (j) Matches played by an HJRU-affiliated Club's Regular Team in an approved competition administered by another Zone are treated as Club competition matches for the purposes of By-Law 1A.1 and counted in accordance with this By-Law.

1A.3 Players are expected to prioritise their HJRU club and make themselves available for the HJRU Finals Series where their team qualifies. Failure to meet the participation requirements in By-Law 1A.1, or failure to prioritise the Finals Series without an approved reason, will make the player ineligible for selection in the following year's Wildfires XVs or Development Team, unless a Dispensation is approved by the HJRU Executive under By-Law 1.7 or 1.10.

1A.4 A player who has moved into the HJRU area may be considered for selection, with HJRU Executive approval, if in the previous year they:

- (a) held a player registration with a club affiliated with Rugby Australia, either in another NSW Zone or in another state or territory; and
- (b) met the representative eligibility requirements of that Zone or state body, to a standard comparable to By-Law 1A.1.

The player must provide evidence of their previous year's registration and participation, such as a letter from their previous club, Zone or state body.

1A.5 Transitional provision: Selection for 2027 teams will be made under the By-Laws in force before this revision. The requirements of By-Laws 1A.1 to 1A.4 first apply to the 2027 season for selection in 2028 teams.

By-Law 1B – Additional Eligibility: Sevens (Carnival-Based)

Sevens selection is carnival- and gala-day based rather than tied to a season-long fixture list, so the season-match-count test in By-Law 1A does not apply. Selection is based on participation in the Hunter Wildfires Sevens Gala Weekend(s) rather than a trial day.

1B.1 In addition to the general nomination requirement under By-Law 1.4, players must submit the Hunter Wildfires Sevens nomination form to receive further information on the program and to have their eligibility checked.

1B.2 To be eligible for selection in a Hunter Wildfires Sevens Team, a player must participate in the relevant Hunter Sevens competition gala(s) for that year. These gala(s) will also serve as the selection trial for the Hunter Wildfires Sevens Team, and there will be no separate Sevens trial. Players selected must participate in the Hunter Wildfires Sevens Gala Weekend(s).

1B.5 Players unable to participate in a required Sevens Gala Weekend due to injury or illness may apply for Dispensation under By-Law 1.7, in the same manner as XVs and Development players.

By-Law 2 – Representative Team Structure (General – All Programs)

2.1 All training sessions and trial matches are mandatory. Where a player cannot attend, they must submit a Dispensation on the prescribed form stating the reason, before the session where the absence is known in advance, or as soon as practicable afterwards. Dispersations for training sessions and trial matches are approved by the Head Coach and Representative Coordinator.

2.2 Players must attend a minimum of 80% of all training sessions. Sessions missed under an approved Dispensation, whether medical or non-medical (By-Law 2.3), are counted as attended, subject to By-Law 1.8.

2.3 A non-medical Dispensation may be approved for unavoidable circumstances, including but not limited to school camps or compulsory school activities, funerals and pre-booked family holidays. A Dispensation may also be approved for trials or selections in a sport whose season does not generally overlap with rugby union, such as early-season crossover with cricket. Dispersations will not generally be approved for sports that share the rugby union season, such as rugby league or AFL. A player's first non-medical Dispensation in a program will be accepted, provided it is submitted on the prescribed form and the reason falls within the circumstances listed in this By-Law. Any further non-medical Dispensation in the same program is subject to the approval of the Head Coach and Representative Coordinator.

2.4 Where a player is absent without a Dispensation, or a Dispensation is declined:

- (a) each such absence counts against the player's 80% attendance;
- (b) the first such absence results in a written warning from the Representative Coordinator; and
- (c) where the player falls below 80% attendance, or can no longer reach it, the Representative Coordinator will issue a written notice asking the player to show cause, within three days, why they should remain in the team. The Head Coach and Representative Coordinator will consider the response and decide whether the player remains or is replaced. The player may appeal under By-Law 9.

2.5 Team officials, including coaches and managers, must be accredited through Rugby Australia's Rugby Learning Centre and comply with all safety and coaching requirements.

2.6 Players must wear official HJRU Representative Team jerseys and uniforms, as provided by HJRU, and adhere to team conduct guidelines.

2.7 Injured players who are replaced in a squad are not permitted to travel with the team to a representative championship or carnival unless accompanied by an adult.

2.8 A player unavailable for a representative game, even where dispensation has been granted, is not eligible to play in club matches or club trials on that weekend. A player who does play in a club match or trial in these circumstances, and their club, will be subject to sanction by the Executive.

By-Law 2A – XVs Structure

2A.1 HJRU XVs Representative Teams span age groups U12s to U18s.

By-Law 2B – Sevens Structure

2B.1 HJRU Sevens Representative teams operate across U11s, U13s, U15s and U17s age groups, as part of the Hunter Wildfires Sevens program, drawing on the Hunter Spring Sevens and Hunter Winter competitions (see By-Law 1B for eligibility).

By-Law 2C – Development Structure

2C.1 HJRU Development Teams primarily cover the U10s and U11s age groups. HJRU may also form Development Teams in the U12s and U13s age groups.

2C.2 HJRU may form U10s, U11s, U12s and U13s Development Squads to participate in the NSW State Championship Gala Days. A player selection day or days will be held for these age groups on a date set by the HJRU Executive or Representative Coordinator.

2C.3 A player selected in the final team of a Wildfires XVs side for the current season is not eligible for selection in a Development Team in that season. Squad members who are not selected in the final team remain eligible. A player who was not selected by HJRU and played for another Zone at the XVs State Championships through the NSWJRU player pool, under By-Law 4.3, also remains eligible for an HJRU Development Team later in that season.

By-Law 3 – Representative Player Conduct

3.1 Players selected in a Representative Squad must sign a commitment agreement outlining their availability for training and matches, and adherence to HJRU's Code of Conduct.

3.2 Red cards within the current season for a breach of the Code of Conduct or player misconduct may preclude a player from inclusion in squads, or as a 'Coaches Consideration' player. While not possible to provide a definitive and exhaustive list of inappropriate behaviours, acts of violence, intimidation and other forms of abuse will not be tolerated and are in no case acceptable. Any player bringing the game into disrepute through misconduct or a breach of the Code of Conduct will be required to show cause for consideration.

3.4 Lodging a false Dispensation, whether medical or non-medical, is a serious offence. Where the HJRU Executive determines that a Dispensation is false, the absence is treated as an absence without a Dispensation under By-Law 2.4. A first breach results in a formal breach notice and written warning from the HJRU Executive. A second breach results in expulsion from the Wildfires Program, subject to the player's right to appeal under By-Law 9.

3.5 Wildfires players are expected to prioritise their HJRU club commitments, including the HJRU Finals Series where their team qualifies. This requirement supports the program's purpose of rewarding genuine and ongoing commitment to club rugby.

By-Law 4 – Player Transfers & Club Registrations

4.1 A player registered with an HJRU-affiliated club is eligible for selection in the Representative Squad.

4.2 A player's Representative Zone eligibility is determined by the Zone affiliation of the Club with which the player holds their Primary Player Registration, rather than solely by the competition in which their Club team participates. Where an HJRU-affiliated Club team participates in an approved competition administered by another Zone, players registered with that HJRU Club remain eligible to nominate and trial for HJRU Wildfires, subject to these By-Laws. Such players must complete the HJRU trial and selection process before seeking selection with another Zone. If not selected in a final Wildfires squad, they may proceed through the applicable NSWJRU player pool and clearance process under By-Law 4.3. Conversely, players registered with a Club affiliated with another Zone remain subject to that Zone's Representative pathway, even where their Club team participates in an HJRU competition. Participation in an HJRU competition does not, of itself, establish eligibility to trial for HJRU Wildfires.

4.3 A player may trial with another Zone only if they have completed the HJRU trial process and were not selected in a final Wildfires squad. The Competition Manager and Representative Coordinator will confirm whether a player meets this requirement. Clearances will not be granted until all Wildfires trials and training sessions are completed, and only where the player has nominated for the NSWJRU player pool.

4.4 A player transferring mid-season between clubs must obtain clearance from their original club and approval from the HJRU Executive before being considered for Representative selection.

4.5 Representative players must notify HJRU in writing of any club transfer before the start of the Representative season.

By-Law 5 – Coaching & Development

5.1 Applications for Representative positions are to be received by HJRU on the prescribed form as distributed by the Office of the HJRU. All applicants must be suitably qualified. Selections are made yearly. A Head Coach may hold the position for a maximum of three consecutive years. After that, they may reapply, but other suitable applicants will be given preference. Applications will not be considered unless the applicant holds the following qualifications:

- Coaches: Smart Rugby, Season Ready, Level 1 Coaching qualification (or higher) and Staff Integrity Level 1.
- Assistant Coach: Smart Rugby, Season Ready and Staff Integrity Level 1.

- Managers: Smart Rugby, Rugby Xplorer Team Manager Program accreditation and Staff Integrity Level 1.
- Trainers: a current First Aid Certificate (or Level 1 Sports Trainer qualification) and Staff Integrity Level 1.
- All team staff must have completed and passed a Working with Children Check, verified by HJRU, before participating in any team training.

5.2 No person shall undertake any position or role, official or unofficial, associated with an HJRU Representative Team without the approval of the HJRU Executive.

5.3 HJRU shall facilitate additional development programs, including strength and conditioning sessions and specialist coaching clinics.

5.4 A structured feedback process shall be implemented for players, with individual performance evaluations provided post-competition.

By-Law 6 – Representative Fee

6.1 Representative Squad members will pay a representative levy, set each year by the HJRU Executive. This must be paid by the date set by the HJRU Executive, or via an approved payment plan, or the player will not be eligible to participate in the Representative Program.

6.2 Where a player's Representative levy, or other monies owing to HJRU, are not paid in full by the end of the regular season, and no payment arrangement has been approved by the HJRU Executive, the player is not eligible for selection in any HJRU Representative or Development Team the following season until the outstanding amount is paid in full.

By-Law 7 – Discipline & Judiciary

7.1 Representative players and officials must adhere to the Rugby Australia Code of Conduct.

7.2 Any player receiving a red card in a Representative match shall be subject to automatic review by the HJRU Judiciary Committee, where the matter was not already heard and determined at the representative match.

7.3 Judiciary matters shall be handled in accordance with Rugby Australia disciplinary processes.

7.4 Any misconduct during Representative duties that brings HJRU into disrepute may result in suspension or removal from the squad.

By-Law 8 – Safety & Welfare

8.1 All Representative matches must comply with Rugby Australia's safety policies, including concussion management and first aid protocols. Managers must report all suspected cases of concussion through the correct protocols.

8.2 A designated first aid officer must be present at all matches, trials and trial games. The team trainer is responsible for first aid at training sessions.

8.3 Players suspected of concussion must follow Rugby Australia's 'Blue Card' protocol and obtain medical clearance before returning to play.

By-Law 9 – Administration & Appeals

9.1 The HJRU Competition Manager shall oversee the administration of Representative Level Rugby.

9.3 Any disputes regarding selection, discipline or eligibility — including expulsion under By-Law 3.4 — may be appealed in writing to the HJRU Representative Coordinator and Competition Manager within 48 hours of notification.

9.4 Appeals shall be reviewed by an independent panel comprising members of the HJRU Executive who were not involved in the original decision.

By-Law 10 – Amendments & Review

10.1 These By-Laws shall be reviewed annually by the HJRU Executive Committee to ensure alignment with Rugby Australia, NSWJRU and NSWCJRU policies.

10.2 Amendments shall be communicated to all clubs, players and officials before the commencement of the Representative season.

Definitions

Age Dispensation: formal approval, under Rugby Australia's Participation Policy, for a player to play in an age group younger than their own.

Coaches Consideration player: a player retained on a coach's watch-list for potential selection, without a guaranteed squad position.

Dispensation: formal approval excusing a player from a specific requirement (for example, attendance) on medical or other approved grounds, supported by the prescribed form and evidence.

Hunter Wildfires Sevens: HJRU's representative Sevens program (U11s, U13s, U15s, U17s), selected under By-Law 1B and By-Law 2B, drawing on the Hunter Spring Sevens and Hunter Winter competitions.

Playing down: a player participating in an age group younger than their own registered age grade.

Regular Team: the single club team a player is registered to play for at the start of the regular season, and plays for week to week. A player has only one Regular Team at any time. Games played for any other side, including a second team in the same age group or a team in another age division, are not played for the player's Regular Team, except as provided in By-Law 1A.2(e). If the club permanently moves a player to another team during the season, that team becomes their Regular Team from the date of the move.

Representative Coordinator: the person or persons appointed by the HJRU Executive to coordinate the Representative program, which may include the Wildfires Coordinator and the Director of Rugby.

Show cause: a written request for the player to explain why action should not be taken.

Zone: a NSWJRU/NSWCJRU administrative region (of which HJRU is one) used for representative pathway and clearance purposes.

Schedule 1: Minimum Rounds Required

Applies to By-Law 1A.1(b) and (c). Each period (before and after the June Long Weekend) is assessed separately. Percentages are rounded up to the nearest 5%, so a player must participate in more than 70% of counted rounds.

Rounds in the period	Rounds required
3	3
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	5
8	6
9	7
10	8
11	8
12	9
13	10
14	10