



DISABILITY DISPENSATION PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND

Rugby Australia recognises that encouraging people to participate in sporting events and activities is beneficial for their health, wellbeing and involvement in community life. Whilst players may often prefer to play sports with those of the same age, Rugby Australia believes that it is very important would like to provide the opportunity for players with a physical and/or intellectual disability to play in an age grade that is appropriate to their physical development, ability and experience so long as it is safe for them and others to do so.

WITH DISABILITY DISPENSATION – WHERE CAN A PLAYER PLAY?

The Rugby Australia Participation Policy and Rugby Australia Age Grade Dispensation Procedure set out the process for providing dispensation outside of a player's eligible age grades (as defined in those documents).

Players with a physical and/or intellectual disability that meet the requirements of the Disability Dispensation Procedure can play down either one or two age groups. Rugby Australia's view is that in most cases, players with a physical and /or intellectual disability will normally play down one age group below their actual age grade but there may be circumstances where it is appropriate for a player to be given dispensation to play two age groups below their actual age grade.

It is not envisaged that a player with a physical and/or intellectual disability will play above their eligible age grades.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all Coaches, Club Officials, Unions and Affiliates and Parents / Guardians to follow this procedure to ensure inclusion for all those who wish to play rugby, whilst having primary regard to the requirements of the Rugby Australia Safety Policy.

This procedure is applicable to all registered players participating in an age grade competition except the non-contact form of rugby, Touch7s.

Dispensation will only be given in circumstances of a genuine disability and shall **NOT** be granted for the following:

- A player is physically smaller than the other players in their age group; or
- A player is new to the game; or
- A player wants to play with friends in a lower age group; or
- The club does not have a team or the State Union or Affiliate does not offer a competition for the eligible age group of that player; or
- The player is not eligible to participate in junior rugby due to their current age.

Once dispensation is given it is valid for the relevant competition season of the proposed age group. Dispensation shall be applied for at the commencement of each competition season irrespective of previously approved dispensation applications.



STEP BY STEP PROCEDURE

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	NOTES
1	<p>A player with a disability wishes to play Rugby outside of their eligible age grades</p> <p>A Club/Union requests an assessment due to safety concerns</p>	Accredited Coach / Club or School Official / Parent or Guardian	A player with an intellectual and/or a physical disability expresses a desire to participate in an age grade competition outside their eligible age grades or outside the age grades allowed for under the Rugby Australia Age Grade Dispensation Procedure.
2	The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is obtained	Club / School or Parent / Guardian	The Club / School provides the Parent / Guardian with the Disability Dispensation Consent Form or it is obtained from the Rugby Australia website
3	The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is completed	Parent / Guardian	The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is completed accepting the associated risks.
4	<p>The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is completed by a Medical Specialist</p> <p>*A Medical Specialist for the purpose of this procedure, is defined as a doctor specialising in the area most related to the player's disability</p>	Medical Specialist known to the player	<p>The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is completed by a Medical Specialist with an understanding of the demands of contact sport.</p> <p>The Medical Specialist should recommend that the player's physical development, coordination and motor skills are appropriate, and that the player can compete safely and on an equal basis with players in the proposed age group.</p> <p>The safety and wellbeing of other players in the competition also needs to be considered.</p>
5	The Disability Dispensation Consent Form is submitted to the Competition Manager	Parent / Guardian	The Disability Dispensation Consent Form and any written material from the Medical Specialist is submitted to the Competition Manager.

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	NOTES
6	<p>The Independent Qualified Assessing Coach undertakes an assessment of the player</p>	<p>Independent Qualified Assessing Coach</p>	<p>Assessment is undertaken with the player’s physical development, physical fitness[#], skill development and player safety being considered and recorded as prescribed in the Disability Dispensation Assessing Coach Report.</p> <p>An Independent Qualified Assessing Coach must hold a minimum Level 2 Accreditation, current Smart Rugby and have completed the Assessing Coach Module in the Rugby Learning Centre.</p> <p><i>[#]physical fitness can be utilised by the Independent Qualified Assessing Coach to ascertain how the player with a disability relates to the available age groups.</i></p>
7	<p>The Disability Dispensation Assessing Coach Report is submitted</p>	<p>Independent Qualified Assessing Coach</p>	<p>The Assessing Coach Report is returned to the Competition Manager with a recommendation on whether to approve the Dispensation and specifying the appropriate age grade for the player.</p>
8	<p>All the material is reviewed, and the Disability Dispensation recommendation is approved or declined.</p>	<p>Competition Manager (or designated Union representative)</p>	<p>The competition manager (or other designated State or Territory Union representative) will review the assessment before deciding to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve or decline the application for dispensation; OR • request a further independent assessment in line with the Rugby Australia Safety Policy; OR • make a recommendation to the player (or their parent/guardian) as to the appropriate age grade or competition for that player based on the initial assessment or the subsequent independent assessment.
9	<p>Changes made to competition management system and parties notified.</p>	<p>Competition Manager</p>	<p>Appropriate changes are made in the Competition Management System (Rugby Xplorer) to enable</p>

			participation in the approved competition. The Club / School is notified along with the Parent / Guardian.
--	--	--	--



OTHER INFORMATION

Please note that any intentional or reckless disregard for the *Rugby Australia Safety Policy*, *Rugby Australia Participation* or this procedure may result in disciplinary action under the *Rugby Australia Code of Conduct* or the *Rugby Australia Member Protection Policy* (see links below).

Any complaint made by players (or their parents/guardians) regarding decisions made by the competition managers pursuant to this Procedure must be dealt with pursuant to the grievance procedure of the relevant Union with jurisdiction for the competition.

Rugby Australia has the discretion to review a decision or conduct any investigation as deemed necessary and appropriate.

An Independent Qualified Assessing Coach must hold a minimum Level 2 Coach Accreditation, current Smart Rugby qualification and have completed the Assessing Coach Module within the Rugby Learning Centre.

The following definition of an Independent Coach outlines the minimum criteria that must be met to conduct an official player assessment. Member Unions and Competition Managers are permitted to add criteria that is appropriate for their jurisdiction.

A Qualified Assessing Coach is defined as being Independent if they are not registered to the same Club or School as the player being assessed.

OR

In the event a Qualified Assessing Coach is registered with the same Club or School as the player being assessed they must meet the following criteria to be defined as Independent.

- Do not coach the specific age-grade of the player being assessed.
- Do not coach the specific age-grade that the player participated in the previous season, if applicable.
- Do not coach the specific age-grade that the player wishes to participate in, if applicable.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [*Rugby Australia Code of Conduct*](#)
- [*Disability Dispensation Consent Form*](#)
- [*Disability Dispensation Assessing Coach Report*](#)
- [*Rugby Australia Safety Policy*](#)
- [*Rugby Australia Participation Policy*](#)

