This document establishes guidelines, regulations and laws of the game and is intended as requirements for participants of the Youth Division in RugbyPA competition.

These regulations are for use for all rugby matches played under the jurisdiction of the RugbyPA for the Youth division

Please address any comments or suggestions for improvement to the RugbyPA Competition Committee at competition@rugbypa.org
RUGBYPA YOUTH DIVISION HANDBOOK

**Safety Policy**
Rugby is a contact sport with inherent risks. In coaching and developing players it is imperative that safety is at the forefront. It is the responsibility and duty of coaches to teach proper techniques including but not limited to tackling, rucking, fending and all contact situations in a rugby match. Coaches also have the obligation to monitor their players during a match and remove any player that is continually engaging in dangerous play.

The RugbyPA Laws and Regulations are designed to provide an enjoyable and safe rugby experience for all participants and to develop and maintain a strong, well organized and enduring Youth rugby program for players in Pennsylvania and to provide players of all ages, sexes and socio-economic status an opportunity to participate in a positive, rewarding and safe athletic experience.

**Competition Structure**
Youth Division:
   Grade Levels: 5th, 6th and 7th grade

This structure is for the RugbyPA calendar beginning September 1st of the current school year

**Eligibility**
Eligible players must be both:
   a. Currently enrolled in 5th, 6th and 7th grade
   b. And 13 years of age or under as of Sept 1st of the current school year.

All players must be enrolled in a school (or home schooled in an appropriate program) and be a fulltime student

A player who is expelled from school shall be ineligible while expelled.

All players must complete the registration process through Rugby Pennsylvania before they are eligible to practice or play. This process can be found at www.RugbyPA.org. Rugby Pennsylvania will complete all Team, Coach and Player registration with USA Rugby and their CIPP coverage process.

**Competition Regulations**
Youth players may play on a Junior team with their coaches' discretion. A player can only be registered with one RugbyPA team at a given time. A player can only participate in one divisional match per week.

Junior eligible players are not permitted to play on a Youth team, no exceptions will be granted.
If a team uses (or found to have used) any ineligible player(s), the match is automatically forfeited to the opposition for league standing purposes, the offended team will also be accessed a -1 point penalty in league standings. If both teams use an ineligible player(s), both team are awarded a loss and a -1 point penalty in league standings.

**Player Transfers:**
RugbyPA prohibits all team representatives including coaches, team administrators and parents from recruiting or “poaching” players from another club during the season and during the off-season. Coaches, team administrators and parents cannot encourage their players to recruit or poach a player(s) from another club as well, at any time.

Poaching is considered any attempt by a club representative, coach or parent to coerce or lure a player away from their current club, either directly or through a current player.

Once any player registers with a team, any transfer would be considered a transfer.

If a player does request a transfer during after registration with RugbyPA and during the season, they will not be allowed to transfer simply because they “want to.” There must be a compelling reason or a definitive hardship. For example: a change in the player’s home location, the players Initial Club has folded or been disassociated, an extraordinary event that compels them to want to leave, such as for safety concerns.

Players must submit a request to transfer to The RugbyPA competition committee. The request must include written permission from the head coach of both teams, the current team and new team coach, parent approval and reason for transfer. RugbyPA will consider requests without the current coach permission only under compelling and hardship reasons.

Under no circumstances can a transferred player compete in RugbyPA Playoffs or Championships if the initial request is received after April 1\textsuperscript{st} for spring fifteens competition and October 1\textsuperscript{st} for fall sevens competition.

Off Season: Players are not bound to a team after the USA CIPP period ends on Aug 31. However team representatives including coaches, team administrators and parents cannot recruit or lure players from a team in the off season either directly or through a current player. Players still must notify RugbyPA of all off season transfers.

Summer Sevens: If a team offers summer sevens than all above policies apply, coaches cannot recruit players and players cannot transfer without both coaches permission. If a team does not offer summer sevens, players may play for another team during the summer. Players must notify their current coach and RugbyPA of
the summer transfer. However coaches cannot recruit summer players to change teams permanently.

Should instances of poaching/raiding be alleged and found to have occurred by RugbyPA. The offending club will be deemed as not in good standing and will be barred from participating in RugbyPA sanctioned activities until a time RugbyPA determines the situation resolved. If a coach or club representative is found guilty of poaching, or encouraging their players to poach, said party will be subject to a suspension levied by the RugbyPA Disciplinary Committee. Suspension length and determination is at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee.

Season.
The competitive 15’s regular season will typically begin in March and will end with the RugbyPA State Championship Tournament in May. Teams are permitted to arrange fixtures outside the league schedule.

The competitive 7’s season will begin on September and will end with the RugbyPA State 7’s Championship Tournament in October. Teams are permitted to arrange fixtures outside the league schedule

Schedules, Match Cancellation and Postponements
Once a division schedule is released and agreed upon, all teams must abide by the finalized schedule

Teams must not reschedule a game due to lack of player numbers, lack of field availability, or any other controllable situation, the team requesting a reschedule within 48 hrs of the match shall be issued a forfeit.

No match is to be canceled without the authorization of the RugbyPA Competition Committee with the exception of weather related postponements. A reschedule request must be made no less than 1 week (7 days) in advance of the scheduled game

If a match is canceled for reasons not weather related and without RugbyPA authorization, the cancelling will be issued a forfeit loss as well as -1 point in league standings. The non-cancelling team will be awarded a forfeit win for standing purposes.

All postponed or canceled matches must be reported to the RugbyPA competition committee within twenty four (24) hours.

If a match is postponed due to weather, the home team is required to present a makeup date options to the opposition within five (5) days. If the match cannot be played due to scheduling difficulties then a draw is to be awarded to both teams. If a team does not reasonable attempt to replay the match, the competition committee will award a forfeit to the opposition.

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.

**Folding teams:**
If a team folds prior to the start of the season, RugbyPA will revised the schedule prior to the first week of matches. If revising the schedule is not possible and an unbalanced schedule of game is the result, the standings will be determined by Avg League Points.

If a team folds and disbands after the start of the season, all matches played by the teams will count in the standings for both teams involved including forfeits. RugbyPA will attempt to revise the schedule with minimal disruption to the league schedule. If revising the schedule is not possible all the teams scheduled matches will be declared a forfeit and schedule opposition will be awarded a forfeit win.

**Match Protests**
Match protests, including league and playoff matches, should be filed with RugbyPA as soon as possible after the match, preferably by 6 pm of the second day following the match.

**Reasons for Protests**
Protests may be made for one or more of the following reasons (this list is not meant to be all-inclusive):
- Ineligible player(s)
- Improper or unsafe field
- Unqualified referee (appointed by other than a recognized referee society)

**Team Definition for Youth Division**
An official team for Youth rugby competition consists of a minimum of twelve (12) players who start the match plus any authorized replacements or substitutes.

A regular season match should initially be played with a minimum of fifteen (15) players per side. The match results will be official in regards to standings purposes.

In an official regular season league match, if a team has fewer than fifteen (15) players than the opposition must field and play with the equal amount number of players down to the minimum of twelve (12) players. If during the match a team is forced to play with fewer than fifteen (15) players due to injury or player safety, the opposition is required to match the number of players. If a team is forced to play shorthanded due to discipline reason by the referee, the opposition is not required to match and remove a player.

Teams are not required to play with equal number of players in RugbyPA playoff matches and competition. Teams still must have a minimum of twelve players to participate in a playoff match.

If a team has less than twelve (12) players than the match is forfeited, the team with official number of players is awarded the match and a non-league match may be...
played. If both teams have less than twelve (12) players, the match is a draw for standing purposes and a non-league match may be played.

If a team has twelve (12) or more players and accepts temporary players from the opposing coach, the match is still an official match for league standings purposes. If a team has less than twelve (12) and accepts temporary players from the opposing coach, the match is still forfeited per above regulation and a non league match may be played.

When a match is played with fewer than fifteen players in each team all the Laws of the Game apply except that each team must have at least five players in the scrum at all times, except when there are less than ten (10) players on the field.

Players Nominated as Substitutes
In Youth play; teams may nominate unlimited replacements/substitutes. Substitutions may only be made when the ball is dead and with the permission of the referee. This applies to all regular season and RugbyPA playoff tournament matches.

Substituted players may rejoin the match at any time, without limit. This applies to all regular season and RugbyPA tournament playoff matches.

Playing Time - Game
The playing time restrictions are in place for players’ safety and are to be strictly enforced.

Each half of a match lasts a maximum of thirty (30) minutes playing time. Play in a match is to last no longer than sixty (60) minutes total. After a total of sixty (60) minutes playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a league season match. The match results are official for standing purposes after sixty (60) minutes.

“B” Games or secondary time may be played with a maximum of twenty (20) minutes halves. Reduced time is permitted with the agreement of both coaches and the match referee.

Extra Time:
In RugbyPA playoffs matches through the State Championship Finals the following extra time procedure will apply in the event of a drawn match.

- One (10) ten minute sudden death period will be played. In sudden death, the first team to score by any scoring method wins the match.
- Under no circumstances may a match, including extra time, exceed:
  - Seventy (60) minutes for Youth Rugby
- If the match is still not decided after the extra time, the winner will be determined by a penalty kick shoot-out between the two teams to take
place as follows:

- The kicks at goal should be part of the match and be the responsibility of the referee. The touch judges and RugbyPA officials may assist the referee if requested to do so. Before the kicks at goals, the two captains shall toss a coin to elect whether or not to kick first or second in rotation. The RugbyPA official may move the penalty shoot-out to another field if necessary to accommodate the competition schedule.

- The first series will consist of five placed kicks taken on the 22 meter line in front of the posts.

- The kicks at goal will be taken, for each Team, by each of the five players, nominated by the captains. Only players who were on the field of play at the end of that match are eligible to be nominated. In the event of an injury a player initially nominated to kick may be replaced however his replacement shall be a player who was on the field of play at the end of that match.

- The five nominated players shall take turns to kick at goal. Teams will alternate: Team A, Team B, Team A, Team B, etc.

- In the event of a tie after the first series of kicks at goal, additional kicks shall be taken, still from the 22 meter line in front of the posts, alternatively by each Team, until one Team has an advantage for the same number of kicks taken. Each of these additional kicks shall be taken by a different player who did not participate in the first series of kicks.

**Playing Time – Player**
Under no circumstances may a Youth Rugby players’ total playing time in one day exceed eighty (60) minutes, including extra time, multiple games and tournaments:

**Discipline**
The referee decides that a player must cease to participate in a match as follows

If a yellow card offense, the player should go to the sin bin and may rejoin the game after 10 minutes.

Following a red card, that player is to take no further part in that match or tournament. A red card will result in a seven day or at least one match suspension for the offending player.

The match referee is to report all yellow and red cards per RugbyPA disciplinary procedure via the RugbyPA website.
Appeal Process, a coach may appeal a red card suspension with the RugbyPA discipline officer.

**Coach Certification**
All teams must have at least one coach certified with a minimum level 200 certification. All coaches, including assistant coaches, of a contact must have a RugbyPA Level 100 certification as a minimum requirement for coaching.

**Equipment.**
Youth Rugby should use a size four (4) ball
Players may use only studs, clothing, and padding during matches that are in accordance with IRB Laws of the Game and associated Regulations.
Sports Goggles that are IRB approved may be used
Mouthpieces are required in a tackle game.

**Medical**
RugbyPA recommends having a medical kit and medically-trained personnel (such as a Certified Athletic Trainer) at all matches. RugbyPA recommends having a medical kit and medically-trained personnel (such as a Certified Athletic Trainer) at all practices. At each match, there must be a person designated as the team medical person who is to promptly enter the playing area whenever a player is injured to attend the player, whether or not the referee has seen this injured player and stopped play.

**Emergency Action Plan**
Each home team must develop an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and present the EAP to the opposing coach prior to match kick off.

**Field Size**
The recommended minimum dimensions for the field-of-play are 70m long and 45m wide. If both coaches do not agree on the safety of a field then it is a decision of the match referee if a field is not adequate for playing

**Match Results**
It is the responsibility of the home team to properly input Conference Match Results within seventy-two (72)

**Rules of Play**
All matches shall be played in accordance with World Rugby and USA Rugby laws of the game, Under 19 Variations shall apply to all contact rugby matches but where USA Rugby provides latitude for choice of law variations for various age groups the following exceptions will be adhered to in RugbyPA competition.

**Methods of Scoring**
In RugbyPA Youth matches all scoring methods permitted including tries, penalty tries, conversions, penalty kicks and drop goals.

Try Conversion Kicks – the kick at goal for tries inside the fifteen-meter line will be attempted at point of which the ball is downed. For tries outside the fifteen-meter line the ball may be place on the fifteen-meter line

Play Variations – Youth:

Dangerous Tackle
High tackles, no-wrap tackles, scrag tackles, spear tackles, and pile-drivers are dangerous and shall not be tolerated. Referee shall immediately stop play and call a penalty. No advantage. Offending player cautioned, possibly temporarily suspended (yellow card).

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

Note 1: Any contact, including fend-off, level with or above the armpit is to be considered a high tackle.

Note 2: The scrag-type tackle (i.e. swinging the player round by the shirt) must be considered dangerous play and must be penalized.

Note 3: The piledriver-type tackle (i.e. lifting the ball carrier off the ground and then slamming the ball-carrier to the ground violently) must be considered dangerous play and penalized.

Fending
Fending Players will be permitted to fend off, however the arm must be presented prior to contact and must be below the armpit. No contact above the arm pit is allowed

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

Touch and Lineouts
All forward must participate in the lineout, short Lineouts are not permitted. Quick throw in’s will not be permitted Youth rugby

A coach may request uncontested lineouts and at any time prior to or during a match and it must be honored – no exceptions

Scrum

**Number of players:** Eight. A standard scrum must have eight players from each team. All eight players must stay bound to the scrum until it ends. Each front row must have three players in it, no more and no less.

If 15 players are participating in the match, the scrum formation must be 3-4-1 with the single player (Number 8) shoving on the two locks.

**Front rows coming together.** The scrum engagement sequence per IRB laws will be
implemented. Any player at any stage in a scrum who has or causes an opponent to have, the shoulders lower than the hips must immediately be penalized.

**Penalty:** Penalty Kick

**Maximum push:**
A team in a scrum must not push the scrum more than 1 meter towards their opponents' goal line.

**Penalty:** Free Kick

**Wheeling:** Wheeling of the scrum is not permitted in Youth rugby
A team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.

**Penalty:** Free Kick

An unintentional wheeled scrum will be stopped and restarted by the referee

**Additional Variation**
If playing in a scrum formation without flankers, the 8 man and/or scrumhalf will not be permitted to pick-and-go – the ball must be presented to the offensive backs.

**Penalty:** Re-Scrum

**Uncontested Scrums**
A coach may request uncontested scrums at any time prior to or during a match and it must be honored, no exceptions

**Kicking**
Kicking is permitting with the exception that a player cannot kick the ball off the ground when an opponent is attempting to pick up the ball or in the vicinity of other players, no deliberate fly hacking

**Penalty:** Free Kick

**Squeezeball**
No player shall use the technique known or referred to as ‘Squeezeball’ and no person involved in the teaching or coaching of U-13/U-15 Rugby may teach, coach or encourage players to use the ‘Squeezeball’ technique.

**Points Standings and Seasonal Ranking (for 15 per side) – Youth Division**

Points Standings Values

The Point Standings and Ranking values are as follows:

- **Base Standings Point Values:**
  - Four (4) for a win
  - Two (2) for a tie
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- Zero (0) for a loss

- Bonus Standing Point Values:
  - One (1) point for 4 or more tries scored in a game
  - One (1) point for a loss by 7 points or less

- Forfeit Values:
  - Five (5) Standing Points awarded to winning teams

All RugbyPA league matches will be count for standing purposes

End-of-Season Ranking Order:

End-of-Season rankings are based on the following criteria for fair competition-based Championship Tournament seeding. The order for ranking and seeding is as follows:

First Criteria: Earned Standings Points

Second Criteria: Tie-breaker Order
1. Head-to-Head play.
2. Strength of Schedule

Third Criteria: Random Pull:
1. Team are assigned a colored chip (poker chip) by the Executive Director or Commission Chair
2. Teams are notified via email of their color assignment, provided a conference call-in number and time for a live, random drawing for final ranking.
3. The Executive Director and the Commission Chair will be present on the call. If a team representative cannot attend, teams may choose any Rugby Commissioner as their proxy.
4. The Commission Chair will:
   i. Review teams involved in the drawing
   ii. Confirm the names of coach on the call
   iii. Confirm the color chip assigned to each team
   iv. Place the chips into a container and mix the chips
   v. The chip is drawn at random
   vi. The chip color is announced and documented
   vii. Final ranking results are sent to each involved team and to the Commission for final record and posting

At no time will scoring be used as a tie breaker in Youth rugby competition.

RugbyPA Playoff Eligibility
In order for a player to participate in the RugbyPA Youth division playoff match the following Eligibility Rules must be met as defined in the RugbyPA eligibility regulations which include, but are not limited to:

a. Players are eligible if they are currently enrolled in seventh grade or below and thirteen (13) years of age and under as of September 1st prior to the start of the current season.

b. Player must have played for the team in at least three (3) qualifying matches during the competitive season to participate in a RugbyPA championship playoffs or invitational event. A qualifying match is defined as regular season league match as defined through RugbyPA competition structure.

c. Players must not had participated in a qualifying match for any other club or division in a fifteens match, including a junior club side, high school side or U-19 club side, college club, or senior club competitions, while those players’ Youth qualifying match season is in progress.

d. Players must registered with RugbyPA and on the teams RugbyPA roster