

## **Super Series Player Protocol Arrangements Season 2023**

This Protocol arises from the recommendations of the Super6/Premiership Committee made in March 2023 and subsequently endorsed and approved by the Board of Scottish Rugby. It is centred on player welfare and the need to preserve sporting integrity and ensure fair competition.

The Protocol sets out the process by which:

- a) Premiership/National/Regional players may transfer to join a Super Series squad.
- b) Super Series players may play on loan in the Premiership; and
- c) Super Series players may play in the Premiership/National/Regional Leagues following the end of their Super Series contract (and the limitations on them subsequently being eligible to play in Super Series).

This Protocol applies only to the six Super Series licence teams and not to the invitation teams.

Further detail in relation to each of these areas is provided below. Queries in relation to the implementation of the Protocol should be referred in the first instance to the Super Series Tournament Director.

The *Super Series Tournament Rules 2023* ("**Super Series TRs**") and *National Competition Rules* for Season 2023/24 ("**NCRs**") are the main regulations applying - relevant cross-references are also provided in the footnotes.

### **Club Players joining a Super Series Team**

#### ***Players signing a Super Series contract***

1. Recruitment into the Super Series from Scottish clubs would normally be expected to be from the Premiership but may be from any level of the game.
2. There is no Transfer Deadline for players joining a Super Series squad, though Super Series licence teams are reminded of the Super Series *Player Registration Dates* set out in the 2023 Super6 Tournament Rules<sup>(1)</sup>.
  - 2.1 Subject to the NCRs and these Protocol arrangements, players registered to a club may complete the 2022-23 club League or Cup season with their club while also being registered with a Super Series licence team for the Super Sprint and will be eligible to play for both until the completion of the club's League or Cup fixtures. In such cases the players must be dual registered with both teams.
3. Super Series licence teams and Premiership clubs (and where appropriate, National and Regional League clubs) must identify and supply preferred contact details for a principal point of contact authorised to liaise in respect of Super Series player transfers.
4. In respect of contracted Pro Team Academy players
  - 4.1 where considered appropriate for a player's development, contracted Pro Team Academy players shall be drafted to each of the Super Series Squads.
  - 4.2 from the overall pool of drafted 2023/24 season Pro Team Academy players, three players shall be dual drafted to each of the Premiership Teams. Dual drafted players shall, subject to the relevant competition rules, this Protocol and with the appropriate management of the players development / welfare by the relevant Pro Team Academy Coach, be permitted to play in both the 2023 Super Series and the 2023/24 Premiership.
  - 4.3 no more than three 2023 Super Series registered and/or Pro Team Academy players may be listed in any 2023/24 Premiership Match Day Squad.
5. In respect of player transfers, the parties must at all times act in a spirit of co-operation and in the best interests of the player to agree an appropriate date for the transfer to take place. The Super Series head coaches and teams agree to follow the same recruitment protocol as the current Tennent's Premiership, being that the head coach of the Super Series team must initially contact the head coach, or principal point of contact, of the other club before approaching one of their players.

### **Super Series Emergency Loan Players**

6. Participation as a Super Series *Emergency Player* (as defined within the Super Series Tournament Rules) shall not break that player's registration for Premiership/National/Regional League competition purposes nor affect that player's ability to participate in other National Competition Matches. <sup>(2)</sup>
7. Participation as a Super Series Emergency Player shall be subject to those conditions of participation set out within the Super Series Tournament Rules. <sup>(3)</sup>
8. No Premiership/National/Regional League club may agree to a Super Series emergency loan of a front row player (loose head prop, hooker, or tight head prop) if such a loan would risk compromising that club's ability to meet its own Match commitments on the relevant weekend. <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Super Series/Pro Team Academy Players playing on loan for Premiership Clubs**

9. Super Series Championship contracted/registered players (including Scottish Rugby contracted Pro Team Academy players) noted in points 10.1 and 10.2 below may, subject to the "*Super Series/Premiership Player Pool*" outlined below, participate in the 2023/24 Premiership, but not in any other National Competition (as defined within the NCRs including, for the avoidance of doubt, the National, Regional or Reserve Leagues and relevant knock-out Cup competitions). <sup>(5)</sup>

### **Pooling System**

10. Players drafted to Premiership Teams:
  - 10.1 Each Pro Team Academy Player drafted to a Super Series squad will also be drafted to one of the 10 Premiership Teams and will be eligible to play in the 2023/24 Premiership subject to management by the respective Pro Team Academy Coach. In exceptional circumstances and subject to the NCRs (including for the avoidance of doubt NCR 4.13 limiting the number of clubs a player may play for in any one season to two), a Pro Team Academy player may transfer from one Premiership club to another.
  - 10.2 Each Super Series squad will also nominate a further five players who will join the Super Series/Premiership Player Pool and be eligible to participate in the Premiership subject to the NCRs and these Protocol arrangements.
11. Super Series Head Coaches will confirm that players entering the Super Series/Premiership Player Pool are committed to participating in Super Series/Premiership fixtures. At an agreed date the Super Series Tournament Director will request a Register of Players from the Super Series Head Coaches.
12. The Super Series Tournament Director will "Draft" the Super Series players to the Premiership Clubs following the principles below:
  - Numerical equality across all Clubs.
  - Parity across clubs as far as possible considering the age and the developmental stage of the drafted players.
  - Host Club positional priorities.
  - Maximising playing and development opportunities at the host Club.
  - Recognising credible, meaningful, and impactful investment by a Club in a player's development over a significant period of time.
  - Logistical and practical location not having a detrimental impact on players performance; and
  - A Super Series/Premiership Player Pool Project Plan will be provided with indicative dates for each process of Super6/Premiership Player Pool.
13. Players released to the Player Pool may be recalled by their Super Series licence team should that player be required to cover an injury or other withdrawal. In such circumstances any opposing club shall not be required to relinquish the Pool Player(s) that it has been allocated.

14. There shall be no obligation on a Premiership club to accept or to play any Super Series Pool Player, but where it does so that player must at all times be provided with appropriate medical care and insurance cover.
15. The decision of one club not to play any of its allocated Super Series Pool Players shall not affect the other club's ability to field the Pool Players it has been allocated.
16. Super Series contracted players, with the exception of contracted Pro Team Academy players, shall not be allocated to (and are not eligible to play for) a Premiership club in any of its last five league Matches and Play Off matches.<sup>(6)</sup>

### **Super Series players joining a Premiership, National or Regional League Club**

17. When a Super Series Player's contract ends, whether at its intended expiry date or earlier, the player may with immediate effect, subject to applicable competition rules, participate in the Premiership, National or Regional Leagues or in any other National Competition. The player may choose which club will become his Primary Club.<sup>(7)</sup>
18. The player's registration on SCRUMS must be promptly updated to reflect his change of status, with failure to update a player's registration potentially resulting in that player being deemed ineligible to play for his new club.<sup>(8)</sup>
19. A club may name no more than three Super Series players on a team-sheet for any match played in the current club season's competition.<sup>(9)</sup>
20. For the avoidance of doubt, the NCR Transfer Deadline shall apply. In the event of exceptional circumstances, the player's Primary Club may apply to the Championship Committee for an exception to be made to this rule.<sup>(10)</sup>
21. Former Super Series Championship contracted / registered players, other than those either replaced or added to a squad as a result of the Super Series Long Term Injury Replacement Rule, who register and play for a club in the Premiership, National or Regional League or other National Competition shall then not be eligible to be registered to play under a Super Series team playing contract for a period of 12 months commencing from the end of their previous Super6 contract. This restriction does not apply to Super Series Sprint registered players who only play in the Super Series Sprint competition.

### **General**

22. The arrangements set out in this Protocol for 2023 shall replace any and all similar such previous arrangements.
23. For player welfare purposes, Super Series contracted players, including former Super6 contracted players now participating in National Competitions, may participate in no more than 28 matches (in all competitions) during the 12-month period commencing with their first appearance in the Super Series. For the avoidance of doubt, the number of minutes actually played in any match shall not be a relevant consideration.
24. Should any issues arise regarding the *Super Series Player Protocol* arrangements for 2023, the Super Series Tournament Director may determine the issue. Issues or complaints which may involve a breach or an alleged breach of the NCRs or the Super Series TRs will be dealt with under those Rules by the appropriate body (in the case of the NCRs, the Championship Committee; in the case of the Super Series TRs, the Tournament Director).

#### NOTES

- 1 Super Series TR 4.1
- 2 NCR 4.27
- 3 Super Series TR 4.30- 4.35
- 4 NCR 4.29.3
- 5 NCR 4.24
- 6 NCR 4.18
- 7 NCR 4.25
- 8 NCR 4.7
- 9 NCR 4.26
- 10 NCR 4.21