



Age Banding FAQ'S

Have the new policies changed or the date of eligibility for the season changed?

Eligible age grade is determined for the Scottish rugby season by the player's age as of 1st September.

Date of eligibility and playing across 2 age grades will remain unchanged.

Further information on age band and the age grade calculator for eligible age grade can be found here (<https://scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/player-welfare/age-banding/>)

How do players apply to play in a different age band?

Application forms are available to download from the Scottish Rugby website. All sections of the application form must be completed and tackle assessment video (if required), uploaded with the application.

I want a player to play down an age band, but they don't meet both the height and weight triggers, can we still apply?

It may be possible for a player to still to apply if their height and weight are close to the trigger values and their coach, parent/guardian agrees that their physical size and skill level is suitable to play in the lower age grade. The player will still need to undergo a physical maturity assessment.

Why do players need to complete a tackle assessment as part of the play up applications?

Injury data shows that the tackle area is the phase of the game where most injuries occur. The assessment aims to look at both ability to tackle as well as ability to maintain form when under fatigue. Elements of performance in this test will be graded against a standardised framework.

A Scottish Rugby representative will make an independent assessment of the tackle assessment video submitted. Should a player be unsuccessful in this assessment, they will receive feedback to work on with their coaching team.

What evidence is required to demonstrate that a player is part of a structured Strength & Conditioning programme?

The application form will ask for the name of the person who is responsible for overseeing the programme and a space for details of what this programme consists of. For example, players who are on a structured programme will have details of their individualised programmes.

What happens during the physical maturity assessment?

A suitably qualified representative from Scottish Rugby will measure the players height and weight to confirm the values. They will then have some measurements taken using a piece of equipment called SonicBone. This equipment measures the bones in the player's hand and wrist, which will allow skeletal age/physical maturation to be calculated. Typically, players who wish to play in an age group that is different to their age group will need to have a skeletal age similar to their proposed age band.

How quickly will results of an application be provided?

All elements of the application and assessments need to be completed before an answer can be given. We anticipate that applications for 17-year-old to play in Adult Rugby should receive approval if successful with 14 days of a completed application being received. For 15-year-old into U18 rugby, playing into a younger age group and applications requiring a neck strength test, we anticipate that these will be processed within 1 month.

Can an unsuccessful application be appealed?

There is no appeal process currently, however, in some circumstances, it may be possible to send in another application (see FAQ below).

Can I resubmit an application in the same season?

If an application is unsuccessful, feedback will be sent as to which element(s) the player didn't achieve the required standard in. If the tackle assessment was unsuccessful, they will receive feedback on the areas to work on and can resubmit an application when the player's tackle technique has improved sufficiently. If the physical maturity assessment indicates that it isn't appropriate to play down, the player will not be able to resubmit during the same season. If a 15 year old into U18 rugby physical maturity assessment indicates that it isn't appropriate to play up, the player can be re-assessed after 2 months.

How long is permission to play in a different age band for?

When dispensation is granted, it will last for the current season and expire at the end of the season. Should a coach feel that the player should play in a different age band than the eligible one the following season, a new application for that season would need to be submitted.

What if the player changes club or school teams?

If a player moves to another school and/or club and have had dispensation awarded to play in a different age band already granted for the season, this will be transferrable to your new club or school providing the coach(es) feel this is still appropriate and the club has risk assessed this proposal.

What if I change my mind?

If you feel that playing in your new age band isn't helping to develop your rugby skills in a positive way, it is possible to return to your actual age band. You should discuss this with your coach in the first instance, to get some additional support in making this decision. If you are under 16 years old, your parents should also be involved in discussions.

Are there any situations that a player may not need to apply for dispensation?

The new policy documents allow for U16 and U17 to mix and play together as an U17 group. The 15-year-old players in this instance would not require dispensation as long as the 2-year age banding is adhered to.

Players with birthdays in June, July and August (i.e. will be eligible to move to older age band as of 1st September) can mix and play with players in the older age band during pre-season training provided 2-year age banding is adhered to. For example, a player who turns 16 years old on 23rd August may train in the U18 age group from 1st June without needing dispensation, but a player turning 16 years old in October would require to apply for dispensation.

Can you apply to play down if you are 18 years old?

If you are 18 years old from the 1st September, you are deemed an adult and unfortunately outwith the remit of the Age Banding policies. Therefore we cannot accept applications for 18 year olds to play down.