Open Competition

Application Process

SCOTTISH RUGBY

Scottish Rugby Open Competition

Evolving the competition

Introduction

The Boys Open Competition was established to provide Scotland's strongest schools and clubs with regular, meaningful fixtures against similar opposition. Its purpose is to raise the standard of boys' schools and club rugby by strengthening the top end of the competition structure and aligning it with targeted development support.

The competition provides high-quality fixtures and creates environments that challenge and accelerate player development across all aspects of the game (on and off the field). It is underpinned by key principles:

- ensuring the quality of opposition to test players technically, tactically, and physically;
- maintaining aligned standards for coaching, conditioning, and medical provision;
- promoting coach and referee development through shared learning and CPD opportunities;
- and fostering a partnership culture that strengthens entire environments rather than focusing solely on individual teams or players.

Now entering its next phase, the Boys Open Competition could be expand to include more clubs and schools for season 2026/27. Since its inception, additional clubs and schools have demonstrated clear progress in coaching quality, medical provision, operational standards, and fixture fulfilment, showing a strong commitment to supporting the development of young players.

Application Process

Application Submission
Interested clubs and schools are asked to submit an application outlining how their rugby environment meets the established assessment criteria.

Applications should demonstrate:

- A clear and evidenced commitment to player-centred development and welfare.
- Strong coaching standards, player support structures, and playing depth.
- Alignment with the values and objectives of the Youth Development Framework.
- A sustainable operational model, including resource management, and competition readiness.

In the first instance, clubs and schools are invited to register their interest in submitting an application by completing the online form [link found here]. Following this, all documentation should be submitted to Scottish Rugby in advance of the stated submission deadline.

Submission deadline
All application documents must be submitted by **Saturday 28 February 2026** to competitions@sru.org.uk. Late submissions may not be considered.

Assessment and Panel Review

All applications will undergo an internal review against the published assessment criteria. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to attend a Panel Assessment to be held in mid March 2026.

During the Panel Assessment, each applicant will be asked to:

- Deliver a concise presentation outlining their rugby environment, structure, and future ambitions.
- Engage in a question-and-answer discussion with the panel.

- Provide any additional evidence requested in support of their application.

In addition, the Panel will pose the following question - How will your club or school environment help to mitigate the impact of player movement to other clubs and schools within your area if you are selected to participate in this competition?

Each applicant will be evaluated and scored against the agreed criteria and Panel Assessment. This process ensures consistency, transparency, and fairness and reflects feedback gathered during previous application phases.

Outcome and Communication

Following the completion of the assessment process, decisions will be communicated to all applicants by **20 March 2026**. Written feedback will be provided to support future development and alignment with national objectives.

Support

For further information or clarification, please contact:
Sam Parlane, Lead Competitions & Compliance Coordinator (Youth Rugby)

sam.parlane@sru.org.uk
Scottish Rugby

Open Competition Assessment Criteria

⊖ Identifies criteria to be examined further during the Panel Assessment.

Leadership, Development and Governance

Player Welfare & Safeguarding

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Safeguarding	Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Policies and best practice must be adhered to at all times	SCRUMS
Child Wellbeing & Protection	Senior Club/School personnel to have completed Child Wellbeing & Protection training	Certificate
Anti-Doping	Annual compliance with UKAD Anti-Doping regulations	Certificate

Governance and Development

		Criteria	Method of Evidence
⊖	**Youth Development Planning**	Clearly defined vision for youth rugby development articulated through an accessible club/school development plan.	Development Plan
⊖	**Player transition and retention**	Club/School demonstrates that they have a specific plan to aid transition and retention from one age group to the next, with key focus on U16 to U18 & U18 to senior.	Development Plan

Facilities

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Facility Development	Facility Development & Maintenance Plan	Development Plan

People

Coaches and Team Managers

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
RugbyRight	ALL Coaches and Team Managers to have a current completed RugbyRight annually	SCRUMS
Coaching Qualifications	Head coaches at U16 and U18 levels of the rugby programme are Coaching Advanced qualified (UKCC L3 equivalent) - demonstrable on SCRUMS	SCRUMS
Physical Development Coaches	Named Physical development coaches supporting U16 & U18 teams (UKSCA accredited preferably)	SCRUMS
Team Managers	Team Managers appointed to support U16 and U18 teams on and off field	SCRUMS
Director of Youth Rugby	Director of Youth Rugby in place to oversee player and coach development.	SCRUMS
Workforce recruitment & development	Club/School have a workforce development plan that demonstrates a commitment to develop their personnel/volunteers (Coaches, Team Managers, Match officials etc)	Submission
CPD engagement	Club/School demonstrates that they deliver their own CPD to coaches/volunteers and engages with Scottish Rugby CPD. - includes ensuring all Coaches (and players by default) are aware of any and all Laws (new or existing)	Submission

Coaches and Team Managers

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
First Aid	A Qualified Level 1 First Aider per age group who has a current first aid certificate (and PVG) - to attend all sessions and all matches	SCRUMS
Physio	A Qualified Level 2 Physio at U16 & U18 age group to attend all training and all matches	SCRUMS

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Medical Emergency Action Plan	Medical Emergency Action Plan ("MEAP") in place for all venues with evidence that this is updated regularly	Submission
Medical Equipment	Suitable medical equipment as per Scottish Rugby guidance	Submission

Match Officials

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Development	Club/School have a minimum of x1 trained Match Official per team youth age group team.	SCRUMS
Engagement	The club/school can demonstrate links and engagement with their local referee society.	Submission/Local Referee Society statement
Development	A commitment to deliver youth match officials programme with support from Scottish Rugby/Referee Societies	Submission

Training and Competition

Training and Preparation

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Team & unit training programme	Club/School delivers a minimum of 2 team/unit rugby training sessions per week for all age groups	Submission
	Minimum of 6hrs per week training (on average) for U16 and U18 teams (2 x Rugby / 2 x Physical Development)	Submission
	Structured annual training and competition plan is in place for all U16 &U18 teams	Submission
	Club/School integrates skill development sessions for all players into their team/unit training.	Submission

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
➔ **Individual player skill and game development**	The club/school have Individual development plans in place for identified Under 16 & Under 18, reviewed regularly.	Submission
➔	Life skills & physiological skills programme in place for players (i.e. nutrition, anti doping, goal setting, resilience etc)	Submission
➔ **Physical Development**	Physical testing process undertaken each season.	Submission
➔	Club/School demonstrates that they deliver Physical Development programmes from a qualified Coach to all age groups (U13 - U18).	Submission
➔ **Video Analysis**	Club/School films games throughout the season, has a license to a video analysis platform agreed by Scottish Rugby.	Submission
➔	Club/School delivers a minimum of x1 video analysis session per week	Submission
➔ **Alignment and understanding of Performance Pathway**	Club/School demonstrates knowledge and understands Scottish Rugby's performance pathway and engages well with Rugby Development Regional Teams.	Submission
➔	Clear programme of positive engagement with parents throughout the season to support the player development process	Submission
➔	Club/School demonstrates alignment to the Blueprint.	Submission

Competition

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
➔ **Fixture fulfilment and performance**	A minimum fixture fulfilment of >95% at all age groups, in full AGLV-aligned competition/fixture Scottish Rugby Conferences and National Cup competitions. Expectation all fixtures played as 15-a-side (13-a-side for U13 in accordance with AGLV)	SCRUMS
➔	Club/School has track record of strong performance within Scottish Rugby National S&Y Youth Competitions from recent seasons. 1. Whole Section Conference/League Results	SCRUMS

| | Finish 1st or 2nd in a results based merit table produced from U15A-U18A matches in a National Schools Conference; or Finish 1st or 2nd in a results based merit table produced from U18 and U16 National 1 Youth Leagues, and U15 Regional Leagues; or Finish 1st or 2nd in a results based merit table produced from U15A-U18A matches in the Borders Town Conference

2. U16 Team Performance / National Cup
As a minimum must reach quarterfinal of the U16 National Cup competition

3. U15 Team Performance
Finish 1st or 2nd in their respective U15 League | |

Active Players

	Criteria	Method of Evidence
Active Players	At least 25 Players regularly training in each squad (U15, U16 and U18) from own club or school. Development plan identifies sustainable active player base across whole programme as key objective with minimum of 20 active players at both U13 and U14 age groups	SCRUMS

Open Competition Application

Recommended Documentation

1. Organisational Overview

- **Summary statement** outlining the club or school's rugby environment, structure, and strategic priorities.

- **Organisational chart** or staffing overview showing coaching, S&C, and medical support roles.

- **Evidence of governance and safeguarding compliance**, including PVG or equivalent certification confirmation.

2. Player and Programme Information

- **Active Player numbers** by age group (U16 and U18 minimum) for the past 2–3 seasons.

- **Retention data** – number/details of players continuing between age grades or seasons.

- **Training schedule and session structure**, including access to S&C or skills development support.

- **Fixture history** – number and type of fixtures played (league, friendlies) and any notable outcomes or improvements.

3. Coaching and Support Staff

- **List of current coaching staff** (names, roles, and qualification levels).

- **Coach development activity** – recent and planned CPD participation or pathway engagement.

- **Medical and welfare provision** – availability of first aid, physio, and concussion management procedures.

4. Facilities and Resources

- **Summary of facilities** (pitches, gym, changing, indoor access) and confirmation of regular availability.

- **Details of partnerships or shared facility agreements** (where relevant).

5. Alignment with Youth Development Framework

- **Statement of alignment** outlining how the club or school meets or supports the principles of the framework (player-centred approach, holistic development, balance of training and match play).

- **Examples of collaboration** with local clubs, schools, or regional programmes to support player development.

6. Strategic and Developmental Intent

- **Club/School Development Plan** – outlining strategic approach to sustaining and improving their rugby environment.

- **Rationale for applying** – how participation would enhance the environment and benefit the wider game locally.

- **Sustainability plan** – evidence of long-term stability (player pipeline, staffing continuity, facilities access).

- **Commitment to community impact** – how inclusion will mitigate disruption to neighbouring clubs/schools and strengthen regional rugby.