

Schools & Youth Competition Rules 2026/27

Player Eligibility Clarification

The information below is applicable to the competition programme that runs from August – December 2026. Competitions covered include Conferences and League (National & Regional), and all National Cup competitions.

U15, U16 & U18 Players

Each player is limited to participate in one U15, U16, U18 or senior competition fixture each weekend. For the avoidance of doubt fixtures played on Fridays are viewed as part of that weekend's competition schedule.

This rule applies to competition fixtures that are played as Development Matches i.e. fixtures that are played applying Game On principles when one team has insufficient players, or the match can't start with a contested scrum.

U13 - U14 Players

The competition rules don't contain any restrictions so the only consideration for U13 and U14 players is the Game-time Policy that applies to the entirety of schools and youth game i.e. players are limited to 90 minutes gameplay in a 48-hour period.

Dual Registration

The Competition permits dual registration, provided a player's Primary and Secondary Clubs compete in different league competitions. A dual-registered player may not play for their lower-placed club in its final three matches unless at least 50% of their previous matches that season have been for that club, or they have prior written permission from the Competitions Committee. No more than five dual-registered players may be included in a lower-placed club's match squad. After the transfer deadline (28 September), a dual-registered or transferred player may only play for their new club with prior written permission from the Competitions Committee, which will normally only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Regional Youth Leagues

If a team cannot start a match with 15 players, they may borrow up to 5 players — either to bring their numbers up to 15, or to ensure they have enough suitably trained front-row players to start with a contested scrum. The players don't need to be registered to the second club to participate but they must be added to the teamsheet. This is not allowed in a team's final 3 league fixtures.

National Cup Competitions (U16 & U18)

For the avoidance of doubt the term National Cup Competitions refers to all cup competitions that take place in the autumn phase of the season, including Shields, Plates and Bowls.

Each player is limited to participate for one club, or one school, across the entire programme of National Cup competitions.

Any U16 player who plays for their club's U18 team in the cup becomes ineligible to play for the U16 team in the cup. A club may seek dispensation if they are unable to field a full squad (22 players) due to injury or player unavailability.

Players that participate across U18 and senior rugby must have participated in at least three U18 competition fixtures (Conference, League or Cup) in advance of the semifinals to be eligible to take part in the semifinal or final of a National Cup competition.

The Competition Rules can be found [here](#), and if you need further information please contact the Competitions Team at Scottish Rugby.