



## 2019/2020 Changes to the the U8-U14 Youngers Playing Structure

### Introduction

Player Welfare and Safety, along with growing the game, are the top priorities for Southern California Youth Rugby. Through our Player Welfare Program, SCYR has continually been at the forefront of driving safety in youth rugby in the United States. Enhancing this focus and in collaboration with our member clubs', Southern California Youth Rugby has adopted Age/Weight parameters in the U10, U12 and U14 divisions for the upcoming 2019-2020 season.

The adoption of Age/weight categories is designed to create a safe and equitable playing environment for our young athletes. At the U10 and U12 age division, a maximum cap will be placed on the upper weight limit allowance for the divisions. In the U14 division, there will be two divisions, namely an "open" and a weight limited "light" division.

In Addition, the U8's will move from two handed touch to Flag Rugby. Flag rugby will provide clarity in the playing rules and a safer environment for the players to be introduced to the game at the U8 level.

### U8-U14 Playing Structure

#### Flag Rugby

##### U8

- Flag Rugby will be implemented.
- Full Playing rules are located on Page 3 of this document
- **Weight:** No weight limits
- Older/lighter waiver available for those wishing to still play touch/flag and turned 8 before August 31, 2019

#### Age/Weight Divisions:

##### U10

- Weight: Maximum Cap limit of 120 lbs
  - **Older/lighter waiver** available - less than 85 lbs and turned 10 before August 31, 2019
  - **Max Cap Waiver** - if an athlete is heavier than 120 lbs, but has an extenuating circumstance, a waiver can be submitted to remain in this bracket

## U12

- Weight: Maximum Cap limit of 145 lbs
  - **Older/lighter waiver** available- less than 105 lbs and turned 12 before August 31, 2019
  - **Max Cap Waiver** - if an athlete is heavier than 145 lbs, but has an extenuating circumstance, a waiver can be submitted to remain in this bracket

## BU14

- **Light division:** limit of 180 lbs
  - **Older/lighter waiver** available - less than 125 lbs and turned 14 before August 31, 2019
  - **Max Cap Waiver** - if athlete is heavier than 180 lbs, but has an extenuating circumstance, a waiver can be submitted to remain in this bracket
- **Open division:** No weight limits

## Implementation Procedures

Athletes that will be competing in U10; U12 and U14 light divisions will weigh-in annually on the designated Weigh-In Day, which will take place on **Saturday, December 14th, 2019** between 10:00am-4:00pm. Weigh-ins will occur in each region and be standardized to ensure there will be no variation between regions. SCYR will designate specific locations and Weight Program Officers that will coordinate the weigh in days for each region (Tri-counties, LA, OC & SD).

The Minimum registration deadline is Friday, December 13th, 2019. All clubs registration minimums will be expected to be met on this date to ensure a smooth weigh-in and scheduling process that will follow. For players that register after the weigh-in date, the club will need to contact SCYR to be weighed in accordingly. Players will not be permitted to compete until they have completed the weigh-in procedure.

## Weight Program Officers

The weigh-in day and data recording will be handled only by specific SCYR Weight Program Officers. These Officers are the SCYR Board of Directors, SCYR staff, and other designated officials for the program -- all of whom will be made public prior to the weigh-in. All weigh-ins will occur on a specific scale and in a specific standard (such as on level concrete, not on grass, etc.).

## Game Day Procedures

- As per normal policy, each club must provide a match report prior to the match. The host team is responsible for upholding SCYR Policies & Procedures. Those not obliging are curtailing the safety measures created for their athletes and subsequent sanctions will occur.
  - Maximum Cap Waivers (for athletes beyond the age division's weight limit, but have approval to remain due to extenuating circumstances) and Older/Lighter Waivers (for athletes wishing to play down and meeting the requirements) are pre approved via submittal to SCYR. If these waivers are not denoted, then they have not been approved and therefore not allowed to play. No exceptions! The Match Report will denote next to the athlete the approved "Older/Lighter Waiver" or "Max Cap Waiver"

- Any Match Report disputes must be noted on the Match Report with both coaches signatures and the referee.
- Any agreed upon match day changes that don't break SCYR Policies, must be denoted on the Match Report with both coach's signatures.
- Any disputes that may occur must be submitted to SCYR via hosting club officials.

#### **Waivers:**

- **Max Cap waivers** - Players that are over the maximum weight limit but have physical or cognitive disabilities, and/or are over the weight limit but have not developed the playing skills to play at a higher level age group (i.e playing rugby for the first time) are candidates for the max cap waivers. The player will need to:
  - 1.) Register – be fully SRO registered
  - 2.) Complete the Max Weight Cap waiver
  - 3.) Be observed - Players applying will be watched as part of the approval process. Ideally this should occur on the first weekend of the season.
  - 4.) Play in designated weight division until waiver has been approved/denied.
- **O/L Waivers** - Current process and parameters will still apply with the exception that girls will no longer receive an additional year of eligibility.

#### **Club Reporting/Monitoring Procedures -**

- Host Clubs are responsible for checking Match Reports and ensuring player eligibility.
- Players that are NOT on the Match Report MUST NOT be allowed to play.
- If a players weight is disputed, a note should be made on the Match Report and turned into SCYR Staff so the appropriate action can be taken.

## **U8 - Flag Rugby**

These Under 8s Rules of Play set out below will be adopted for the 2020 Southern California Youth Rugby "Youngers" season beginning in January. The adoption of flag provides clarity in the playing rules. Additionally, flag provides a safer playing environment as it eliminates players having the opportunity shove or push with two handed touch.

#### **Key elements of the playing rules:**

- Team Numbers: 7 v 7
- Co-Ed
- Playing time: 2 x 15 minute halves
- Ball: Size 3
- No Kicking
- No scrums - Free pass is awarded to opposing team at the spot of the infraction
- No Lineouts - Free pass is used to restart play at the point where the ball has gone out
- Six flag pulls in row leads to a turnover in possession.

### **1. Field size**

- a. 40-50 meters x 25 meters is recommended for U8. The try zone should be 5 meters deep from the try line and clearly marked with cones.

### **2. Playing Numbers**

- a. U8 will play 7 a side.
- b. Where a team has less numbers, opponents should match numbers as best as possible.
- c. Substitutions are unlimited.

### **3. The Flag**

- d. All players must wear a flag belt around their waist with two tags attached by velcro over the hips.
- e. The flags must be worn outside the clothing, shirts tucked into the belt so the flags are free to be pulled.

### **4. Flag Pull**

While the offensive team attempts to move the ball forward, the defensive team will attempt to "pull" the ball carrier's flag, simulating a tackle.

- a. Once a Defender pulls a flag, they hold it up and yell "FLAG!" The defender is now out of play and should stand still.
- b. Once the ball carrier's flag is removed, the ball carrier must make a pass within **2** steps.
- c. He or she does not stop: does not return to the mark or does not roll the ball between their legs.
- d. If the pass takes longer than 2 seconds or the player takes more than approximately 2 strides a free pass is awarded to the non-offending team at the place where the tag occurred.
- e. While play continues, the defender must return the flag to the offensive player before they can return to play. The defender must hand the flag to the offensive player.
- f. The player whose flag was removed must replace their flag on their belt before returning to play.
- g. If a player's flag is pulled before the try line and doesn't pass before they get over the line, they restart play five meters out from the try line with a free pass.
- h. Six flag pulls in row leads to a turnover in possession.
- i. Restarting the flag count occurs when there is a turnover or when either team is penalized.

### **5. Free Pass**

5.1. A free pass is an uncontested pass allowed from one player to a teammate. To make a free pass, the referee calls "Play" and the player passes the ball backwards to a member of the player's own team. A free pass is used for the following:

- a. Each half of the match at the center of the field.
- b. Restart after a try is scored. The non-scoring team restarts play from the center of the half way line.

- c. Restart after the ball goes out of play, and is awarded against the team who the ball last came off of before going out of play. Free pass will occur at the point where the pass has gone out of play.
- d. After the sixth flag pull by the defense.
- e. Restart after turnover or a penalty offense, from the spot of the infraction, including:
  - i. Kicking.
  - ii. Contact of any kind (pushing, tackling, fending, pushing away a defender's attempt to pull a flag)
  - iii. Offside.
  - iv. Obstruction.
  - v. Failing to pass the ball after 2 steps or 2 seconds.
  - vi. Dangerous play - includes diving to score a try or to retrieve a ball on the ground.
  - vii. Any act that is against the spirit of good sportsmanship and SCYR Culture and Values.

5.2. The opposition team must remain five yards back from the free pass until the ball leaves the passer's hands.

4.3. If a free pass would otherwise occur within five yards of the try line, move the free pass five yards away from the try line.

## **6. Offside**

- a. The offside line is drawn across the field where the ball carrier stops after the flag pull. Not where the flag is pulled, so that players are not in the passing lane.
- b. Failure to do so will result in a Free Pass for the attacking team and the flag pull count will be reset.
- c. Defenders must not prevent the pass from being made.
- d. Offensive Offside, passes can only be made laterally or backwards, offensive offsides occur when teammates are in front of the ball carrier. Penalties only occur if the offensive offside player receives the ball.
- e. Defensive offside: An imaginary line is drawn through the ball once the ball carrier has had their flag pulled. The defense must retreat behind this line in order to play the ball.

## **7. Starting Play**

- a. One team starts each half of the game from the centre of the field with a free pass.
- b. When a try is scored, the non-scoring team starts at the centre of the field with a free pass.

## **8. Attackers/Defenders**

- a. Ball carriers are not allowed to fend off opponents or guard their flags in anyway.
- b. Ball carriers must not intentionally go to ground.
- c. Players may not dive on a ball on the ground.
- d. There is no contact in flag rugby.