

SYDNEY JUNIOR RUGBY UNION (SJRU)

2022 Operating Plan



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1. SUMMARY AND KEY DATES

1.1. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to set out the Operating Plan for Sydney Junior Rugby Union (SJR.U) in 2022. Once finalised this is the plan that SJRU will operate to in 2022. The SJRU Board will monitor performance against this plan and provide updates to Clubs and Districts on progress or any appropriate modifications during the year.

This document has been prepared by the 2021 Board and Competition Administrators and reflects their desire to provide all participants in Sydney junior club rugby with greater awareness of how their game will be managed in 2022.

In particular, the Board and Administrators have considered several issues and concerns raised by Clubs and other participants. This document provides SJRU's response to those concerns, including:

- Impact of COVID-19
- Clarity of key dates
- Timely provision of draws
- Transparency and responsiveness when issues are raised
- Size for Age and General Age Dispensations
- Growth and development of the game

1.2. IMPACT OF COVID-19

2020 and 2021 were years unlike any other in living memory. The impact of COVID-19 was significant and wide-reaching on society as a whole. For SJRU the key impacts included:

- Cancellation of some competitions
- Delayed start or early termination of competitions
- Modified protocols for training, playing, and attending matches
- Reduced opportunities for representative rugby

At the time of preparing this 2022 Plan, the Board and Administrators' key assumption is that COVID-19 will continue to have a significant impact in 2022. We are optimistic that the rollout of vaccinations will allow for something close to normal community activities in 2022 but will not be surprised if Covid continues to have an effect. Exactly what that impact will be is not yet known, but we have assumed the following are likely:

- Interregional community sporting competitions will be allowed without restrictions of these activities to regions or zones, enabling Sydney-wide graded competitions to be set up and run by sporting unions
- Organisations must ensure that their activity is delivered in compliance with public health orders
- Community sport activities (including participants, officials and spectators) will be subject to one person per 2m² rule.
- Organisations and spectators must also ensure that physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres is maintained between people who do not come from the same household
- COVID safety plans would apply to Gala events involving more than 1,000 people

As was the case in earlier years, the assumptions upon which this Plan are based may not be the way the 2022 season proceeds. If so we will issue an updated version of this Plan with all necessary changes to reflect conditions at the time.

1.3. KEY DATES

Refer to Appendix One (Calendar) for all key dates, for Season 2022 Competitions and Events



Date	Event	Competition(s)
17 Dec 21	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up	Friday XV's, Sunday XV's, Girls XV's
17 Dec 21	7s Package registration open for Girls & Boys for Season 2022	Sizzling 7s, Frosty 7s, Spring 7s
14 Jan 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues	Sizzling 7s (Girls & Boys)
14 Jan 22	EOI for Host Venues	Minis Gala Day
21 Jan 22	Club Contact online form due	All
4 Feb 22	Team and host venue nominations due, and Clubs to set up Teams on Xplorer	Sizzling 7s
11 Feb 22	Applications to Host Gala Day 1 and 2 due	Sunday XV's
13 Feb 22	Round 1 (Boys)	Sizzling 7s
19 Feb 22	Round 1 (Girls)	Sizzling 7s
25 Feb 22	Team nominations, Special Draw Requests and Ground Availability Online Forms due	Friday XV's, Sunday XV's
18 Mar 22	Deadline for Clubs to set up Teams in Xplorer (based on SJRU naming conventions)	Friday XV's, Sunday XV's
18 Mar 22	Confirmation of venues for Round Gala Day 1	Sunday XV's
21 Mar 22	Round 1-8 Draw published in Xplorer	Friday XV's
20 Mar 22	Final Round (Boys)	Sizzling 7s
21 Mar 22	Gala Day 1 Draw published in Xplorer	Sunday XV's
25 Mar 22	Confirmation of venues for Gala Day 2	Sunday XV's
25 Mar 22	Round 1	Friday XV's
27 Mar 22	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)	Sunday XV's
30 Mar 22	Gala Day 2 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XV's
1 Apr 22	Team nominations and Ground Availability Online Forms due	Girls XV's
1 Apr 22	Round 2	Friday XV's
2 Apr 22	Final Round (Girls)	Sizzling 7s
3 Apr 22	Gala Day 2 (central venues hosting specific age grades)	Sunday XV's
20 Apr 22	Grading finalised	Sunday XV's
22 Apr 22	Round 1-2 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XV's
26 Apr 22	Season Draw published in Xplorer	Girls XV's
30 Apr 22	Round 1	Girls XV's
7 May 22	Venues Confirmed and Team Nominations Due	Minis Gala Day
10 May 22	Round 3-8 Draw published via Xplorer	Sunday XV's



Date	Event	Competition(s)
20 May 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Frosty 7s
4 Jun 22	Final round	Girls XVs
10 Jun 22	Round 9-14 Draw published via Xplorer	Friday XVs
10 Jun 22	Team nominations due.	Frosty 7s
17 Jun 22	Round 9 (then break for holidays)	Friday XVs
18 Jun 22	Inter-District Minis Gala Day	Minis Gala Day
18 Jun 22	Round 1	Frosty 7s
25 Jun 22	Round 2 then holiday break	Frosty 7s
26 Jun 22	Round 8 (then break for holidays)	Sunday XVs
16 Jul 22	Round 3	Frosty 7s
22 Jul 22	Round 10	Friday XVs
24 Jul 22	Round 9	Sunday XVs
5 Aug 22	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
19 Aug 22	Grand Final venues announced	Friday XVs, Sunday XVs
19 Aug 22	Elimination Finals	Friday XVs
20 Aug 22	Finals	Frosty 7s
21 Aug 22	Elimination Finals	Sunday XVs
26 Aug 22	Grand Finals	Friday XVs
28 Aug 22	Grand Finals	Sunday XVs
3 Sep 22	Girls 7s Gala Day	
9 Sep 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues	Spring 7s
7 Oct 22	Team and host venue nominations due.	Spring 7s
15 Oct 22	Round 1 (Girls)	Spring 7s
16 Oct 22	Round 1 (Boys)	Spring 7s
26 Nov 22	Final Round (Girls)	Spring 7s
27 Nov 22	Final Round (Boys)	Spring 7s



2. COMPETITIONS

This section of the Operating Plan sets out the competitions that SJRU intends to run in 2022 and provides specifics about their operation.

2.1. SIZZLING 7s – GIRLS AND BOYS

Sizzling 7s is a Tackle 7s Competition that has historically been run for girls. In 2021, SJRU offered Sizzling 7s for boys for the first time and continued to offer it for girls. We intend to continue both versions of Sizzling 7s in 2022. The major challenge is finding enough suitable fields, but we believe this can be achieved.

Girls Sizzling 7s will run on Saturday afternoons and Boys Sizzling 7s will run on Sunday afternoons. In 2022, we will run the two competitions at slightly different times. The Girls Sizzling 7s will start on Feb 19 and run for seven rounds to Apr 2. The Boys Sizzling 7s will start a week earlier on Feb 13 but only run for six rounds to Mar 20, prior to the Sunday Competition Gala Day rounds.

Games will be played in the same way as in previous years – ie a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings, playing multiple games per round. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams.

SJRU anticipates that with COVID-19 requirements in place as well as the expected growth of Sizzling 7s, we will split each competition into at least two (2) Zones.

For both competitions we will only accept Club teams or Club JVs. Clubs without sufficient 7s players are encouraged to form Joint Venture teams with other clubs in their district.

Subject to the number of teams entered making it viable, in 2022 we intend that all 7s competitions including Sizzling 7s will operate in the following age groups:

Girls	Boys
Under 11 (incl Under 10)	Under 11 (incl Under 10)
Under 12	Under 12
Under 13	Under 13
Under 15 (incl Under 14)	Under 15 (incl Under 14)
Under 17 (incl Under 16)	Under 17 (incl Under 16)
Under 18 (team numbers permitting)	

- The age groups offered allow U10 players to participate in the two-year U11 age group
- Historically, the SJRU competitions have relatively few U18 players but if there are enough numbers, we will create a separate U18 competition. If appropriate, we can dispense, U18s to play down in U17s, noting there are also other options for stronger U18s players to play Senior Rugby.
- There is potential to combine the U17 & U18 age groups in an 'Opens' format which may allow for this cohort to be graded if team numbers warrant.

Generally, these age groups are intended to align with the odd age groups used for 7s representative pathways. In the long term we would like to see 7s grow so that all age groups are viable in one-year windows. For now, there are likely to be enough teams in the U12s and U13s that we can separate this two-year bracket into two one-year brackets. We are also aware that in these age brackets there can be significant disparities in player size so separating into two single year brackets supports player safety.

All proposed age brackets are dependent on registration numbers. If we decide to modify age brackets based on team numbers, we will notify Clubs accordingly. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

The Under 11 and Under 12 age groups will play half-field games. Under 13s will play full field if enough fields are available. Under 15s and Under 17s will play full field. Where we believe there is sufficient depth in age groups, we will also grade teams as appropriate.



All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Sizzling 7s Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	7s Package registration open for Girls & Boys for Season 2022
14 Jan 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and host venues
4 Feb 22	Team and host venue nominations due, and Clubs to set up Teams on Xplorer
13 Feb 22	Round 1 (Boys)
19 Feb 22	Round 1 (Girls)
20 Mar 22	Final Round (Boys)
2 Apr 22	Final Round (Girls)

2.2. FRIDAY XV'S

Friday XV's is a fifteen-aside (modified as required for Pathways) competition run on Friday nights and is open to all clubs to enter teams in U10, U11 and U12 competitions. This competition has traditionally not been graded but in 2020 we introduced a degree of grading in U10s and U11s, which generally worked well but was very much subject to having sufficient team numbers. In 2021, the COVID shortened competition and the team numbers (particularly Under 11s) did not allow for ready grading of teams, and the competition suffered from many one-sided games.

Historically it has been mainly teams from the Randwick District, who have entered teams in this competition (along with a small number of other teams from elsewhere in the Southern Zone). Matches have generally been played at venues connected with the Randwick based clubs.

Subject to the number of teams entered in the competition for 2022, the SJRU will look at grading in the age groups with sufficient depth to support the process. In addition, the SJRU will be working on initiatives with NSW Rugby and the relevant Referee Association which covers the Southern Zone, to expand the number of accredited referees and referee coaches, who will officiate in the Friday XV's competition.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. The Friday XV's competition is run for boys, but girls can play (and are encouraged to do so) in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility requirements.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, score matches and maintain competition tables.

The key dates for Friday XV's mirror those of the Sunday XV's competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
25 Feb 22	Team nominations, Special Draw Requests and Ground Availability Online Forms due
18 Mar 22	Deadline for Clubs to set up Teams in Xplorer (based on SJRU naming conventions)
21 Mar 22	Round 1-10 Draw published in Xplorer
25 Mar 22	Round 1
1 Apr 22	Round 2
10 Jun 22	Round 11-14 Draw published in Xplorer



Date	Event
17 Jun 22	Round 10 (then break for holidays)
22 Jul 22	Round 11
5 Aug 22	Nominations for hosting Grand Finals due
19 Aug 22	Grand Final venues announced
19 Aug 22	Elimination Finals
26 Sep 22	Grand Finals

2.3. SUNDAY XV'S

Sunday XV's is a fifteen-aside (modified as required for Pathways) competition run on Sundays or in some cases on Friday nights. This competition graded and is open to all clubs to enter teams in U10 through to Opens (U18) competitions. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. SJRU confirms that we will again run an Opens Competition in 2022.

The Sunday XV's competition is run for boys, but girls can play (and are encouraged to do so) in accordance with Rugby Australia eligibility requirements.

In 2021 SJRU modified the format of the Sunday XV's competition. Rounds 1 and 2 were run as gala days with a central venue (or venues) used to host each individual age group. Matches in these Rounds were played as shortened matches with no half time, with teams playing five matches across the gala day rounds. We used these gala days to:

- Assess grading for each team
- Assess players in matches under Size for Age dispensation requirements
- Assess players in matches under General Age dispensation requirements

While there were some learnings, we took on board from the first attempt at running these galas in 2021 (including the level of planning and resourcing required), the feedback we received overall was very positive. In addition to the ability to grade teams and assess players, many participants thought it was a great way to kick off the season and it was also useful to see many other teams from the same age group gathered.

SJRU will take on board the learnings and will run the first two rounds as gala rounds again in 2022.

Once the gala days are complete and SJRU has completed its assessments, teams will be graded into competitions for the remainder of the season. To the extent that it is safe and practical to do so under any COVID-19 requirements that apply in 2022, SJRU plans to run graded competitions across all age groups, without limiting competitions to zones. There will be no re-grading unless SJRU is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances.

The gala day rounds to be staged at central venues will be set up as separate competition rounds in Xplorer.

To avoid the possibility of teams choosing not to participate in the two gala rounds, or to participate and not play to the extent of their ability in the hope of being graded into a lower division, SJRU will award all teams who participate to the extent of their ability four Competition Points for each gala round. Any team that does not compete in the gala rounds, or where SJRU is satisfied did compete but inappropriately, will be graded into a division deemed suitable by SJRU and will enter the home and away competition rounds without some or all the eight Competition Point available.

After completion of the gala day rounds, the Sunday XV's competition is run in a Home and Away format with home clubs responsible for venue management. Note that we have changed the naming of the Sunday Competition Rounds in 2022 so that there are two Gala Days, followed by 12 Home and Away Rounds and then Finals.

SJRU will publish the home and away draws for Rounds 1 and 2 initially after the gala rounds are completed, then Rounds 3 to 8, and then the remaining rounds 9-12.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, record team lists and match scores, and maintain competition tables.



The key dates for Sunday XV's are (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
11 Feb 22	Applications to Host Gala Day 1 and 2 due
18 Mar 22	Confirmation of venues for Round 1 Gala Day
21 Mar 22	Gala Day 1 Draw published in Xplorer
25 Mar 22	Confirmation of venues for Round 2 Gala Day
27 Mar 22	Gala Day 1 (central venues hosting specific age grades)
30 Mar 22	Gala Day 2 Draw published via Xplorer
3 Apr 22	Gala Day 2 (central venues hosting specific age grades)
20 Apr 22	Grading finalised
22 Apr 22	Round 1-2 Draw published via Xplorer
10 May 22	Round 3-8 Draw published via Xplorer
26 Jun 22	Round 8 (then break for holidays)
24 Jul 22	Round 9
21 Aug 22	Elimination Finals
28 Aug 22	Grand Finals

2.4. GIRLS XV's

SJR.U had tried a few times before but successfully ran our first Girls XV's competition in 2021, which we hope will build into a bigger competition in 2022.

We proposed in 2021 that we would run 12s to allow teams to form but were pleased there was enough interest to run XV's teams. Our intention in 2022 is to run all age groups as XV's competitions but we can and will modify this to provide the best experience for the girls who play.

For those players intending on playing in the State Championships, we believe this will give them better preparation and a suitable introduction to XV's rugby.

The Competition will be open to all clubs to enter teams or form JVs as necessary. It will be a 5 Round plus Finals (subject to sufficient depth in entries) competition run during May, ie after the finish of Sizzling 7s and prior to the NSW State Championships.

The Girls XV's competition will run in two-year windows for even ages, ie Opens, U16s, U14s and U12s. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group. Over time our aim is to grow the Girls XV's competition so that we have enough teams to play in single year age groups.

Round 1 will commence on Saturday Apr 30 and finish on Saturday June 7.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, record the team lists, scores of matches and (as applicable) maintain competition tables.



Key dates for the Girls XVs Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	Registrations open on Xplorer for players and officials to sign up
1 Apr 22	Team nominations and Ground Availability Online Forms due
26 Apr 22	Season Draw published in Xplorer
30 Apr 22	Round 1
4 Jun 22	Final round

2.5. FROSTY 7s

Frosty 7s is a Tackle 7s Competition for girls. In 2022 it will run as a 9 Rounds + Final (8 week) competition across Term 3, followed by a special gala round. This is longer than in previous years but reflects Frosty 7s being the most competitive of the three girls 7s competitions and allows girls who don't want to play XVs to be able to resume playing sooner in Term 2.

Games will be played in the same way as in previous years – ie a gala format at a central venue (or venues, depending on size of competition) on Saturday afternoons and evenings, playing multiple games per round. Venues are managed by SJRU. All clubs are welcome to enter teams. As noted for Sizzling 7s we will only accept Club teams (not District teams) into Frosty 7s in 2022.

In 2022 all girls' competitions including Frosty 7s will operate in the age brackets described for Sizzling 7s (see Section 2.1).

Round 1 will commence on Saturday Jun 18 running to Round 7 on Saturday Aug 13 with the Finals on Saturday Aug 20 – the same weekend as the Friday and Sunday XVs Elimination Finals. In addition, we will offer a special Gala Round on Sep 3 for girls to form cross-club international teams.

SJRU anticipates that with COVID-19 requirements and the expected growth of the Frosty 7s in 2022 we will split the competition into at least two (2) Zones.

All participants (players and officials) must be registered in Rugby Xplorer to be involved. Xplorer will also be used to publish the draw, record the team lists and scores of matches and maintain competition tables.

Key dates for the Frosty 7s Competition (Please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	7s Package registration open for Girls for Season 2022 (including all Girls 7s comps)
20 May 22	7s Package registration open for Girls for Season 2022 (including all Girls 7s comps)
20 May 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
10 Jun 22	Team nominations due.
18 Jun 22	Round 1
25 Jun 22	Round 2, then holiday break
16 Jul 22	Round 3
20 Aug 22	Finals



2.6. SPRING 7s

Spring 7s is a Tackle 7s competition. SJRU first ran a Boys Spring 7s competition in 2019 but in 2020 offered both Boys and Girls Spring 7s, which we will do again in 2022. Spring 7s runs in Term 4 and is a 7 Round + Final's format. It is run at a central venue(s) on Sunday afternoons. All clubs are encouraged to enter teams.

Spring 7s will operate in the same age brackets specified for Sizzling 7s in Section 2.1 above. Please refer to Appendix 2 for age eligibility for each age group.

Key dates for the Spring 7s Competition are (please refer to Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
17 Dec 21	7s Package registration open for Girls for Season 2022 (including all Girls 7s comps)
9 Sep 22	Expressions of Interest for Teams and Host Venues
9 Sep 22	7s registration open for Spring 7s
7 Oct 22	Team and host venue nominations due.
15 Oct 22	Round 1 (Girls)
16 Oct 22	Round 1 (Boys)
26 Nov 22	Final Round (Girls)
27 Nov 22	Final Round (Boys)

2.7. SCHOOLS COMPETITIONS

SJRU is investigating options for running zone-based school competitions in 2022. These competitions will be targeted at schools not currently playing in other school competitions (eg CAS/GPS/ISA) and will be designed to:

- Give boys and girls the opportunity to play rugby
- Provide competitions with friendly rivalry between local schools
- Potentially provide play-offs between the top teams from different zones
- Allow clubs to be involved, eg with coaching support, to help create a path for more players to join club teams in other SJRU competitions.

2.8. OTHER COMPETITIONS

There are a range of other competitions run by Districts or Clubs affiliated with SJRU. SJRU does not run these competitions but provides support as appropriate. These competitions include:

- The seven district-based Minis competitions who play on Saturday mornings across Sydney
- The Girls U8/9 and U10/11 competition run by Warringah District at Terrey Hills on Saturdays
- The Minis gala days run by various clubs

Refer to Sections 4 and 7 for more details on these competitions.



3. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

3.1. RESOURCING

In 2021 SJRU had three people working as competition administrators. All were employed by NSWRU but the funding for their roles varied

- John Glen, full time, funded by NSWRU from community rugby levies
- Andrew Hutton, contractor for 30 hours pw, funded by NSWRU community rugby levies
- Tina Campbell, two days per week, funded by SJRU. The other three days per week Tina worked for and was funded by the Positive Rugby Foundation.

In 2020 and 2021 we were also able to obtain other support such as having Kerry Brady assist the team.

With the growth of SJRU operational requirements and the increased resourcing requirements facing it, in 2021 the SJRU Board reviewed our requirements and decided that further resources were needed. For 2022 we will introduce a new role of General Manager, managing the competition management team and reporting to the Board. The General Manager will be responsible for the delivery of this Operating Plan and a range of other strategic initiatives to be agreed with the Board.

The existing roles will all be maintained and can be added to as and when appropriate. SJRU and NSWRU are collaborating on the funding of these roles.

SJRU has been intent on building up the operational capability of its competition resources over the last few years. With a suitable team of administrators in place, the team can support each other and provide backup as needed.

3.2. DRAWS

SJRU accepts that the timeliness of draws is important for clubs, volunteers, parents, and players to be able to plan with some confidence. Noting the above resources and an expectation that clubs will be reasonable with regrading and other scheduling requests, we are confident that we have the capability to produce draws in a timely manner.

In recent years SJRU has enhanced its ability to produce draws, including having our competition managers trained on draw management software and developing an improved ability to load draws into Xplorer. The single biggest challenge we face in producing draws is the constant requests for team changes from clubs.

3.3. GRADING AND REGRADING

The only competition in which grading has been a significant issue is the Sunday XV's competition. We remain committed (subject to team numbers) to a type of grading in the Friday XV's and Girls 7s competitions to make matches more competitive, but we note that in the Sunday XV's competition grading has been a major source of concern for clubs each year. Grading is, by its nature, an inexact science. While results from previous years are very relevant to which Division a team is best suited in the current year, there are other variables in play, including:

- Player departure and movements
- Club strength and support
- Number of teams and strength of different Divisions

Historically SJRU has made its best estimate of a suitable Division for each team to be initially graded based on its knowledge of the above factors and input from Clubs. In an ideal (but unrealistic) world grading would result in every team winning half their games by 5 points and losing half their games by 5 points, so all games are competitive at the level of the teams in that Division. The purpose of regrading is to address any major inconsistencies in the initial grading.

We acknowledge that in some cases this is difficult and there are instances when clubs genuinely request a team be graded or regraded differently because they are clearly in the wrong Division. However, we are also aware that in many cases there is a strong desire from clubs to push teams down Divisions so their teams can enjoy winning many games and possibly even a championship in a lower division. Very few clubs want to have teams in A Division! Clearly the mathematics of this do not work – in every Division, from A to G, one team must come last just as one team has to come first, and that is a part of playing in a competitive sport.

In 2021, the two gala rounds were very helpful for getting to grade as reliable as possible. In addition, SJRU also decided in some older age groups, where there were only a small number of teams willing or able to play A grade, to



have those teams play up in a higher age group. With some modification during the season this generally worked well for all involved.

In 2022 we will adopt the same basic approach to grading as occurred in 2021, with the caveat that all grading assessments depend on the circumstances and merits of the teams involved.

3.4. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

SJR.U acknowledges that on many occasions' clubs raised issues with the Competition Manager, or issues arose during the competition (game being postponed, etc) and a response was not immediately forthcoming from the Competition Manager. This was usually because the Competition Manager and Administrator were swamped with the combination of dealing with draws, dispensations, judiciary and all the other issues that take up their time and did not reflect a lack of intent to respond to clubs about issues.

However, SJRU agrees with the concerns raised by many clubs about the difficulty of not knowing the status of various issues. In practice, the Competition Manager and Administrator receive a flood of emails and calls early in the week about various issues. SJRU has decided that using email to manage and monitor all the various issues that arise is not as effective as it should be.

Therefore, for the 2022 season SJRU is investigating alternative systems for issue management to ensure one can be deployed for use in 2022 onwards. There are various online systems where issues or cases can be logged, managed, and tracked. These systems could also give the Board better oversight of the status of these issues and the overall workload of the administrators, giving the Board a better ability to aid as needed. SJRU is currently investigating these options with intent of choosing a suitable system for all 2022 competitions. Once the system is chosen, all Clubs will be informed and provided with any necessary instructions/protocols for how the system will function.

3.5. REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Rugby Xplorer will continue to be the registration and competition management system used in 2022. For all competition in 2022:

- Every player must be registered
- A separate registration is required for each competition in which a player participates
- Every volunteer must be registered (including club officials, coaches, managers, Assistant Referees and Ground Marshalls, noting there is zero cost to register as a volunteer)
- All draws will be published in Xplorer
- All matches will be scored in Xplorer
- All competitions will be managed in Xplorer

In 2022, for teams to be submitted to play a match, Xplorer to require that every team in every competition has nominated a Coach, Manager, Assistant Referee and a Ground Marshall for every match. Without their inclusion, team lists will not be able to be submitted and matches will not be able to start. The default position in this circumstance will be a forfeit to the team who has their officials and team lists properly loaded on the Match Day App.

Further, the SJRU is working with Rugby AU to ensure that Xplorer will have the functionality to check the accreditation of the team officials (e.g. ensuring that Coaches have minimum Smart Rugby accreditation, Assistant Referees are suitably qualified for the age group they are officiating).

3.6. JOINT VENTURES

Following extensive consultation and engagement with clubs over the last few years, SJRU has made its position very clear on the formation of teams:

1. Clubs are the foundation of junior rugby, and we will always support them in recruiting new players and retaining existing players, subject to the Import Rule. First and foremost, we want clubs to be able to form their own teams, including where players of mixed ability are playing together.
2. SJRU also acknowledges that in some cases there may become less opportunity for players of all abilities to find suitable teams to play in because of limited playing numbers. This is more apparent in older age groups. Where this occurs, SJRU supports the formation of Joint Venture teams. SJR.U has amended the Competition Rules so that all proposed joint ventures require the relevant District President(s) to apply to the SJRU Board for approval of the JV. No JV team will be permitted to play without Board approval.



3. To encourage confidence about team formation, SJRU will commit to responding to all joint venture applications within 7 days of receiving a Joint Venture proposal.
4. For ages U12 and below, SJRU expects that clubs will do all they can to retain their own players and play them in their existing club teams. SJRU will generally not permit joint ventures where more than two clubs are involved or where more than one JV team is proposed (eg an A and a D team).
5. For ages U13 and above, other than as noted below, SJRU will not generally support the formation of joint ventures involving more than two clubs and involving the formation of more than one team. For any such proposed arrangements, the relevant District President(s) will have to make a compelling case for the Board to consider.
6. SJRU will continue to recognise the formal approval that was provided by Clubs and Districts at prior AGMs for “District Clubs” such as Randwick Warriors, Easts Junior Beasties and Manly Savers.
7. SJRU will continue to approve certain former joint venture teams that were “grandfathered” at the end of 2019. This is limited to JV teams who existed as U13 or older teams in 2019.
8. The Import Rule will be always applied as outlined in the Competition Rules.
9. The Board reserves the right to apply its own discretion in these matters in whatever way it deems suitable for the overall benefit of junior rugby in Sydney.

3.7. IMPORTS

SJRU has had an Import Rule for many years. The purpose of it is to support clubs in retaining players and to prevent inappropriate behaviours, for example where coaches or other club officials try to poach players from other clubs to strengthen their own team.

SJRU’s position for 2022 is that the existing Import Rule is appropriate and will be enforced. All clubs should take note that the Import Rule is actively managed by SJRU and will continue to be actively managed. Any attempts to transfer any player from another club must result in the club applying for approval.

One variation to this position is that SJRU will allow some flexibility for clubs wishing to form teams in 7s competitions, ie players will be able to play outside of their regular XVs club in the interest of making teams. However, SJRU will not accept playing in a 7s teams is a basis for transferring clubs the following year for XVs rugby.



4. GIRLS

4.1. OVERVIEW

For an overview of the Girls' competitions SJRU intends to run in 2022 please refer to Sections 2.1, 2.4 and 2.6 above.

Generally speaking, SJRU is committed to growing the game of rugby for girls and providing them with meaningful options to play. This includes:

- offering three 7s competitions and one XVs competition in 2022, with a paid administrator managing these competitions
- supporting pathways for girls to play Representative Rugby for XVs and 7s
- supporting girls who wish to play mixed gender rugby in Minis and Junior Rugby in accordance with the Rugby Australia gender eligibility requirements.

As noted in the Competition outlines above, subject to registrations, all Girls' competitions in 2022 will be played in the following age groups:

- 7s competitions will be played in odd age groups to align with 7s representative pathways (U17s, U15s, U13s, etc) but where we have enough numbers (eg U12s) we will break out single-year age groups.
- XVs competitions will be played in even age groups to align with XVs representative pathways (Opens, U16s, U14s, U12s).

SJRU align our Girls Age Groups with Rugby AU pathways. This is why 7s Rugby is focused on odd year age groups and XVs Rugby is focused on even year age groups.

- Rugby AU hold Under 17 Rugby7s nationals. At Under 18, representative/elite standard girls can play in the AON University 7s comp.
- Within XVs, Rugby AU is looking to develop a Super W U18s, although COVID has curtailed this development.

Until such time as Rugby AU standardise the pathway age groups across the formats, SJRU (and NSW Rugby) will align with those pathways.

Our long-term aim for all girls' competitions is to grow them so we play all age groups in single year windows.

4.2. SCHOOLS

SJRU notes that there are now Girls School rugby competitions forming. While this is generally a good thing, in previous years there were instances where the girls school competition clashed with SJRU's 7s competitions.

In 2022, SJRU will continue to work with the school administrators to avoid such clashes and ideally find ways that the school system and SJRU can engage more closely with each other.

4.3. PATHWAYS

SJRU supports girls playing representative rugby for District Representative Teams and higher teams. In 2022, SJRU will support for girls:

- Districts entering girls Opens, U16 and U14 teams at the NSWJRU XVs State Championships in June
- Sydney XVs teams in U17, U15 and U13 to play at NSWJRU Regionals in July, City v Country in August and against Brisbane
- Districts entering girls U17, U15 and U13 teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October, with further NSW 7s teams selected from there.



5. SEVENS

5.1. OVERVIEW

In addition to the three Girls 7s competitions noted above (Sizzling 7s, Frosty 7s and Spring 7s) in 2022 SJRU will offer two Boys 7s competitions – Sizzling 7s and Spring 7s.

5.2. PATHWAYS

SJRU supports representative rugby for District 7s Representative Teams. In 2022, SJRU will support Districts entering Boys and Girls 7s Representative Teams at the NSW 7s State Championships in October.



6. REPRESENTATIVE RUGBY

6.1. OVERVIEW

SJR.U's primary commitment is to provide all players within the Sydney basin with suitable opportunities for them to play rugby at a level that is appropriate for them, with clubs as the foundation of junior rugby. This includes giving all players the opportunity to play with their friends in their club teams which in many cases means playing in teams of mixed ability. This is one of the core elements of the values and culture of rugby and SJRU is committed to it.

SJR.U does not support representative rugby being the primary focus for players or any other participants, nor does it support representative rugby being a distraction from club rugby. SJRU will continue to work with NSWJRU to provide guidance to Districts on the appropriate balance of club and representative rugby.

While NSWJRU was able to run the 2022 State Championships for U12s to Open in 2021, we note that due to COVID-19 there was no other representative rugby offered in 2021 and unfortunately the U10 and U11 State Gala was cancelled.

Beyond that primary commitment, SJRU will support the provision of higher pathways options for players of suitable ability. This includes support for:

- Districts entering representative teams at the NSWJRU XV's State Championships in June (U12-Opens) and July (U10-11)
- Sydney Regional Teams (U14 Possibles and Probables, U15 Northern, Southern, Western and Barbarians, U16 Sydney, and Opens Sydney) to play at the NSWJRU Regionals in July
- Sydney XV's teams in U14s to Opens to play at City v Country in August

For Girls' pathways teams please refer to Section 4.3. For 7s pathway teams please refer to Section 5.2.



7. MINIS

7.1. OVERVIEW

There are eight different Mini's competitions run in the Sydney area:

- Northern Beaches Minis (Manly and Warringah)
- Gordon/Norths Minis
- Eastwood Minis
- Western Sydney Minis (Two Blues and Penrith)
- Inner West Minis (West Harbour, Uni)
- Southern Minis
- Randwick/Easts Minis
- Northern Sydney Girls Minis and U10/11

SJRU does not run these competitions – they are run by the respective districts (or as a standalone competition for Inner West Minis) with support as required by SJRU.

7.2. INTER-DISTRICT MINIS GALA DAY

COVID-19, impacted on the Inter-District Gala Day in 2020, we were unable to run the event, but pleasingly it went ahead successfully (mostly) in 2021.

The Gala Day is a chance for all Minis teams to play in a gala format against clubs they do not normally play in their regular Minis competition. One or two clubs in each district act as a host venue so that other clubs from outside their regular competition travel to the host clubs and play in a gala format. The Gala Day is a non-competitive gala for all Minis age groups with the emphasis on fun and participation.

SJRU runs the gala day in conjunction with District Minis Coordinators and host clubs. SJRU manages the selection of host clubs, allocation of visiting teams and prepares the draw. SJRU also provides funding support for fun activities. With the support of The Rugby Club Foundation, SJRU also paid for professional photography at several venues. In addition, SJRU arranges with NSWRU for Tah Man and fun activities at the venues. Waratahs player appearances have been problematic in the last two COVID impacted seasons, however we are hopeful in Season 2022 that player appearances can be successfully arranged

Provisional key dates for the Inter-District Minis Gala Day (Refer Appendix One - Calendar):

Date	Event
14 Jan 22	EOI for Host Venues
7 May 22	Venues Confirmed and Team Nominations Due
18 Jun 22	Inter-District Minis Gala Day

7.3. OTHER MINIS GALA DAYS

Apart from the Inter-District Minis Gala Day there are other Minis Gala Days run in Sydney. These are generally run by a host club with some support as required by SJRU. They include:

- King of the Hills (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Hills)
- Harbord Harlequins Cup (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Harbord)
- Dufficy Cup (U9 playing U10 rules, competitive, run by Hunters Hill)
- Chatswood Challenge Cup (U8 and U9, competitive, run by Chatswood)
- Tiger Cup (U6 and U7, non-competitive, run by Wahroonga)

Sadly, these were all cancelled in 2021 due to COVID, but SJRU will continue to support these and other Minis Gala Days in 2022.

Clubs should note that where they have teams that wish to travel to Minis Gala Days or tournaments outside Sydney, they need to confirm that the event has been sanctioned by NSWRU and that only registered players play.



8. SUPPORTING DISTRICTS AND CLUBS

SJR.U regards Clubs as the foundation of junior rugby and Districts as having an important role in helping administer rugby.

With that in mind SJRU proposes the following arrangements for 2022:

8.1. SUPPORT FOR CLUBS

Well, run and well governed clubs make a significant difference to the success of rugby. SJRU acknowledges and appreciates the work and efforts of all the volunteers who help run clubs – without their support there would be no junior rugby!

There are varying degrees of strength amongst clubs in Sydney. Some are well-resourced with dozens of volunteers who actively support the club while others struggle with little in the way of resources and only a few people holding the club together.

SJR.U continues to work with NSWRU to provide a support structure for clubs and volunteers. Details are still be worked on but the areas we are looking at include:

- A set of documents that provide the framework for a well-run club, aka a “Club in a Box”. These could include a model constitution, role descriptions, commercial resources, and fundraising/sponsorship resources.
- Funding development and support role(s) to assist clubs with administration and operations
- Technology solutions
- Recognition and appreciation of the work that volunteers do

8.2. SUPPORT FOR DISTRICTS

The role of Districts (and particularly District Presidents) is one that SJRU has noted can vary. SJRU regards Districts as more than just a representative team management function. Districts have an important role to play in coordinating and assisting clubs as well as helping resolve issues between clubs within the district.

SJR.U has begun to require District Presidents to become actively involved in resolving some issues. For example, District Presidents must now be involved in dealing with Imports and the SJRU has modified the Competition Rules for joint ventures so that District Presidents must be involved.

SJR.U will also undertake a review of District Constitutions (in accordance with the SJRU Constitution) in Season 2022 to support Districts having proper governance and procedures in place.



APPENDIX ONE – DRAFT NSWJRU 2022 CALENDAR

The 2022 NSWJRU calendar v7.6 on the next page is current at 24 November 2021. Further updates may be implemented.

Please check the NSWJRU website (www.nswjuniors.com.au) for updates. *Note the calendar option is unavailable on mobile App versions of the website.



2022 NSW JUNIORS EVENTS SCHEDULE (v7.6)



Month	KEY:		SJR/JRU							Juniors Reprs							Schools		SJR Meetings		Girls Events		Warabaks (Home)		Warabaks (Away)		Wahabaks		Shute Shields		Private School Hols		Public Holidays		School Holidays		ASRU / Nels		JOC		Special Events		PSSA		Minis																																																																																																																											
	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun																																																																																																																												
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FEB	School Holidays																																										IRAA Camps (Narabeen)																																										Aust Day																																																																																			
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APPENDIX TWO – AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPETITIONS IN 2022

The general rule for all age groups is the age a player turns during the calendar year is the age group to which they belong. For example, if a player turns 12 at any time during 2022, he or she will be an Under 12.

Most SJRU competitions play in one year age windows. Some (Girls and Spring 7s) play in two year windows.

If for any reason a player in any competition wishes to play in a different age group than the one they naturally belong to, they must comply with the requirements of SJRU Competition Rule 3.14. Players may be required to play in a different age group under SJRU Rule 3.14.4.

The tables in this Appendix show the default age groups a player belongs to before any dispensation is applied.

ALL 7s COMPETITIONS

All 7s competitions will operate in the age brackets set out in Section 2.1 of this Plan. Where these are two year age windows, players who turn an even age (eg 10) during 2022 will play up one year in the higher age group (eg Under 11s).

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2011	31 December 2012	Under 11 (incl U10)
1 January 2010	31 December 2010	Under 12
1 January 2009	31 December 2009	Under 13
1 January 2007	31 December 2008	Under 15 (incl U14)
1 January 2005	31 December 2006	Under 17 (incl U16)
1 January 2004	31 December 2004	Under 18

FRIDAY XV's AND SUNDAY XV's

The Friday XV's competition in 2022 will operate for U10, U11 and U12 age groups.

The Sunday XV's competition in 2022 will operate all age groups from U10 to U16 and then Opens (U18s).

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2012	31 December 2012	Under 10
1 January 2011	31 December 2011	Under 11
1 January 2010	31 December 2010	Under 12
1 January 2009	31 December 2009	Under 13
1 January 2008	31 December 2008	Under 14
1 January 2007	31 December 2007	Under 15
1 January 2006	31 December 2006	Under 16
1 January 2004	31 December 2005	Opens (Under 18)



GIRLS XV's

The Girls XV's competition in 2022 will operate for U12, U14, U16 and Open age groups, unless there is sufficient growth in numbers to offer competitions in single year age groups.

Subject to Rule 3.14, players will be eligible for each age group as follows:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2010	31 December 2011	Under 12
1 January 2008	31 December 2009	Under 14
1 January 2006	31 December 2007	Under 16
1 January 2004	31 December 2005	Opens (Under 18)

MINIS

Although Minis competitions are run by Districts, the following table provides guidance on appropriate age brackets for Minis:

Born on or after	Born on or before	Age Group
1 January 2016	31 December 2017	Under 6
1 January 2015	31 December 2015	Under 7
1 January 2014	31 December 2014	Under 8
1 January 2013	31 December 2013	Under 9