

IRFU Age Grade Rugby Mini and Leprechaun Rugby (LTPD Stage 1)- “Growing from 6 to 6 Nations”

Mini and Leprechaun Rugby Mission Statement

“The ethos of Mini and Leprechaun Rugby is to foster and develop young players (boys & girls) of all ability in the game of rugby in a safe, ***non-competition**, enjoyable environment through activities which ensure progressive skill development for all participants in line with the IRFU LTPD (Long Term Player Development) pathway, Child Welfare Policy and Traditions of Rugby Union”

**** non-competition meaning no Leagues/Cups and Blitzes and/or events resulting in play-off matches or finals. Streaming of players is not allowed.***

Safeguarding

All those working **regularly and continuously** with young people should complete the necessary vetting checks. For those who are supervised and/or assist occasional, they should complete the [Declaration of Intent](#).

Full list of Downloadable Vetting documents can be found here:

www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/recruitment.php

Code of Conduct

All participants in Mini Rugby are to adhere to all aspects of the **IRFU Code of Conduct** for Players/ Coaches/ Parents/ Spectators and Referees

Download Code of Conduct document here: [Code of Conduct](#)

Download Referee Code of Conduct document here: [Referee Code of Conduct](#)

Match Officials

Any form of abuse towards match officials is not allowed and coaches, players or spectators breaching this regulation will be removed from the playing area.

Correspondence

Any correspondence from a club, school or individual regarding Mini Rugby must be directed to the relevant Provincial Branch contact.

Procedure to report issues relating to Codes of Conduct

Internal:

Report to Mini Rugby Coordinator & Club Child Welfare Officer – liaise with relevant provincial branch welfare officer.

Issues of Significant harm:

Report to Club Welfare Officer who in turn will report to mandated person within the IRFU.

Maximum playing time

Consideration must be given to clubs/teams with small numbers and or no reserves to prevent/avoid exhaustion and or the risk of injuries.

Wearing of glasses/ Sports goggles

World Rugby has approved an amendment to the laws of the game that will allow the wearing of Raleri goggles at all levels of the game.

The IRFU reminds all players, coaches, referees and parents that only the Raleri goggle is allowed to be worn, and in accordance with the laws of the game, no other eyewear will be permitted, for health and safety reasons, in contact forms of the game.

Anyone wishing to purchase the goggles should go to www.raleri.com. There is a link to a local (based in Ireland) supplier on this website.

Fixtures

Competitions (meaning Leagues/ cups & Blitzes ending with play-off matches or finals) are not allowed and Festivals / Events must be arranged according to the National Festival Day format. These must be registered with the respective Branch prior to taking place and all Festivals/Events including matches involving teams from other Unions, must adhere to the IRFU Mini and Leprechaun Rugby regulations.

Festival Guidelines can be downloaded here: Festival Guidelines 2020/2021

Registration

It is the responsibility of Clubs/ Schools to ensure all their players are properly registered with the Club/ School, Branch and IRFU.

Eligibility

- Mini Rugby is a participation sport - any boy or girl registered with a club and/or school may take part in line with IRFU health and safety regulations.
- Date of eligibility for participants is that which is approved by the IRFU Rugby Committee (currently, the 1st January).
- Where Mini and Leprechaun rugby are part of the school curriculum, eligibility is based the year/ class the player is in.
- Concerns regarding eligibility must be raised through the Club/School to the Branch or if required the IRFU.
- In Festival settings, National age regulations will apply.

Date of Eligibility

Age Groups	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Under 6	Born in:2015	Born in: 2016	Born in: 2017
Under 7	2014	2015	2016
Under 8	2013	2014	2015
Under 9	2012	2013	2014
Under 10	2011	2012	2013
Under 11	2010	2011	2012
Under 12	2009	2010	2011

Players playing at a higher age category

In the event of clubs not having sufficient numbers, players can play in two age categories – the year a players is eligible for and one year up e.g. U10 playing also at U11, it is the club's responsibility to ensure all players get the opportunity to participate in mini rugby. Best practice is to play in their own age grade. No U11 player is allowed to play up if the U12 team are playing Stage 4 mini rugby.

Procedure for allowing U12 players to play at U13

- (Only) in instances where clubs have a concern regarding numbers e.g. not enough U13 players in the club, a club may apply to their Branch Youth Committee with supporting documents explaining the reason(s) to allow this. This to only apply to players who are U12 - no U11 player playing at U12 allowed to play up.
- Branch Youth Committee to ensure that the decision does not affect playing opportunities of the U12 team(s).
- Girls Mini Rugby teams play in a two year age band i.e. U8, U10 & U12. The next available age band is U14. It is not permissible for a player in the U12 age band to play at the U14 age band.

**RugbyPrime / Intro To Mini
Mini Rugby**

U6 - U7 or P1 to P3 (Ulster)
U8/ U9/ U10/ U11 and U12 or P4; P5; P6; P7 and Year 8 (Ulster)

Regulations and Laws regarding Mini Rugby (LTPD Stage 1)

Due to variations in the physical, mental, social and emotional developments of young children, **players under the age of 7 are not allowed to play full contact games.** Players in this age group should be introduced to Rugby Union through the non-contact game of Leprechaun Rugby.

Mini and Leprechaun Rugby have been broken down into distinct stages which progressively introduce and develop the fundamental skills of Rugby Union.

- No limit on number of players to play in club days or events – emphasis on enjoyment and participation for all. For safety reasons, players should play within their own age group and may not play for a lower age group.
- Leprechaun Rugby and Mini 1 – one coach per team allowed on the pitch, coach must stay behind players

Age group(s) - Age on 1st January

Leprechaun Rugby

Under 6/ Under 7 or P1 to P3

Mini Rugby 1

Under 8's or Ulster P4

Mini Rugby 2

Under 9 / U10 or P5 & P6

Mini Rugby 3

Under 11/U12 or P7

Mini Rugby 4

Under 12 or Year 8. All players must be U12 and have progressed through the mini rugby stages.

Community Games

Given the competitive ethos and structure of National Community Games, there is no affinity with mini rugby played within this structure.

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