



2017 CLUB CONTEST BY-LAWS

These By-Laws were revised in December 2016 and are effective for the 2017 MRU Club Competition.

These By-Laws are to be read in conjunction with the Laws of the game of Rugby Union as framed by the World Rugby (formerly IRB), New Zealand Rugby's Domestic Safety Law Variations, and the MRU published competition formats for each grade.

CLUB COLOURS

1. Each Club shall first obtain the approval of the MRU to its colours and such colours shall then upon application by the Club be registered by the Union and thereafter such Club shall have the exclusive right to play in such colours. In the event there are two sides which will may have a potential clash of jerseys the AWAY side will be required to wear an alternate jersey. Teams should make contact with the opposition if there is to be any potential clash of jersey colour/design. The referee will have the final say in determining if in fact there is a clash of jersey colour.
2. Each player shall play in the registered colours for that (for 'his / her') Club.
3. Sponsorship branding on new or replacement kit must adhere to official MRU guidelines.

COMPETITIONS

4. All matches shall be played under the control of the MRU and all entries shall be subject to its approval.
5. The MRU may establish such classes of contests as from time to time appear desirable.
6. *The Secretaries of Clubs shall when required, notify the MRU what contests they desire to enter teams for. Entry will be at the discretion of the MRU, which may refuse entry if:*
 - a. *It considers a team is unlikely to be competitive in a particular contest;*
 - b. *It considers entry into a particular contest may put a team's players at an elevated risk of injury or otherwise harm their wellbeing;*
 - c. *It believes that a team may not complete a contest; or*
 - d. *It believes, in its sole judgement that participation of a team in a particular contest is not in the best interests of the game of Rugby in the territory.*

7. The MRU shall arrange all matches, dates and grounds reserving itself the right to transfer any match from one date to another and from one ground to another when necessary, such transfers to be notified by the MRU to the Clubs concerned.
8. The MRU reserves the sole right to postpone or cancel matches in any grade as appropriate. All matches shall commence at the time appointed by the MRU.
9. The MRU will provide each club team with scorecards prior to commencement of the season and Team Managers will provide team sheets and game results as follows:
 - The Home Team will be responsible for completing the match scorecard (ie they fill out their playing squad and get the visiting team to do the same pre-game). The Home Team retains the scorecard until the conclusion of the match.
 - The referee will have their own scorecard for recording the score during the match.
 - At the end of the match, the following will take place:
 - Both teams' representatives sign the scorecard, confirming the players' names (ie people who sign are responsible for its accuracy)
 - The referee signs the scorecard, confirming the score and indicating any Red and/or Yellow cards issued
 - The WINNING team is responsible for submitting the scorecard to the MRU. Competition points will not be officially awarded until the MRU has the match scorecard.
 - The scorecard can be submitted to the MRU by one of the following mean:

MRU Email:	info@manawaturugby.co.nz
MRU Ops Phone:	021 0240 6335
MRU Picture Message:	021 0240 6335
MRU Post:	P O Box 1729, Palmerston North

The deadline for scorecards to be submitted to the MRU is Monday 5pm following the Saturday fixture.

10. In any 15-a-side competition game of rugby played under the control of the Manawatu Rugby Union the maximum number of players allowed to be stripped to play is 22 for each team. The exception to this rule is the following grades: Colts, Women and Presidents (see bylaw 29). Any team contravening this rule shall forfeit the match to their opponents.
 - (a) Except for specified games that may be arranged from time to time by the Union, the minimum number of players required to take the field in a 15-a-side game of Rugby shall be 15 players. Any team unable to take the field with 15 players 10 minutes after the scheduled commencement time of the game shall forfeit the match to the opponents.
11. Any Club unable to keep its engagement in any match or any competition under the control of the Union must give notice of default to the MRU, to the Secretary of the Club against which it is drawn to play, and to the Secretary of the Manawatu Rugby Referees' Association at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the fixture to allow such bodies to avoid any expenses incidental to the playing of such match.

12. Clubs may request permission from the MRU to 'Hold Over' a game or games, such game/s are to be played at least 48 hours prior to the final scheduled games of that particular round. Any team failing to comply with this By-Law shall be liable to concede winning points (4 points) to the non-offending team. In the event of a match being stopped and not restarted due to light failure in a night match, serious injury or other natural external cause ie flooding, severe thunderstorm then the match should be replayed. In the event of a match being stopped and not restarted due to light failure in a night match or natural external cause ie flooding, severe thunderstorm, then the match should be replayed at a later date.

During the season and in the event of ground closures due to wet weather

- When possible, and in liaison with relevant councils, identify on the Thursday before the scheduled game which grounds are closed/unavailable.
- Where not possible to make a firm decision on Thursday all clubs to be advised that this wet weather policy will apply for that weekend.
- Re-schedule games to be played at weather affected or closed grounds to the nearest suitable alternate location.
- Games can be relocated at any point until 10am on the morning of the scheduled fixture with notification sent to relevant and affected club personnel via SMS, email and notified on the MRU website. Clubs are required to acknowledge receipt of the change and confirm their attendance no later than 10.30am.
- In the event of a change of venue the named home team may have to forego home advantage.
- If a team chooses not to play at the revised venue then they will be considered to have defaulted and be liable to the sanctions as per competition by-law 14
- If both teams independent of each other chose not to play and advise the MRU then the game will be recorded as 0-0 as per by-law 15 (penalties)
- In the event of a change of venue Clubs cannot seek to re-arrange the fixture to a midweek game without the prior consent of the MRU Community Rugby Manager.
- In the event that insufficient grounds are available then the grades will be prioritised accordingly: (Highest to lowest)
 1. Senior 1 and Women
 2. Senior 2
 3. Senior 3
 4. Colts
 5. Presidents

In the event that fixtures within a grade are unable to be played due to insufficient grounds then that round to be cancelled and a 'no result' to be recorded.

13. The Captains of opposing Clubs shall arrange for the provision of MRU approved match balls (2 by the home team, 1 by the away team), to also be approved by the referee for the matches in which their teams are engaged.

14. In a Club Competition game (excluding grading rounds in the Colts and Senior 3 grades, and in the Presidents grade) a win shall count for four points, a draw two points and a loss nothing. A team ending a match within seven points or less of its opponents shall be awarded one competition point, and in all grades with the exception of Presidents Grade, any team scoring four or more tries shall also be awarded one competition point. Four try bonus points will only be recorded if this is accurately reflected on the competition score card. In the Presidents grade results will be recorded as 'win', 'draw' or 'loss' only. A default win will be recorded as a win (4 points) by the score 0-0. Two (2) points will be deducted from the defaulting team, in the Presidents Grade, one point will be deducted from the defaulting team. The MRU shall before the commencement of each competition, decide the method of determining the winners of that championship.
- Clubs will be fined \$200 (GST inclusive) when a team fails to give reasonable notice of a default (24 hours prior to the scheduled match) and the non-offending club incurs costs (ie travel or hosting). Clubs will be fined when the non-offending team is either at the ground or is in transit to the ground for the fixture. The \$200 will be collected by the MRU and passed onto the non-offending club.

REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS, COACHES & ASSOCIATE REFEREES

- 15a. The Union shall keep a register of players in its district in which shall be entered: Name of player; Date of birth; Date of registration; Club and grade of player; Contact details.

Clubs are responsible for the registration of all players for the current season. A player is deemed to be registered if they have completed a NZ Rugby registration form via the www.sporty.co.nz online registration system prior to taking the field of play. A player must be registered to the club that they take the field for.

Any team/club playing a player that is considered unregistered shall be liable to the following penalties:

- 15b. The Union shall keep a register of coaches in its district in which shall be entered: Name of coach; Date of birth; Date of registration; Club and grade of coach; Contact details.

Any person actively fulfilling the role of Head Coach or Assistant Coach during a MRU Club Rugby competition fixture must have attended a Rugby Smart Injury Prevention Workshop for the current season and be registered for that current season.

Any team/club appointing a Head Coach or Assistant Coach to a fixture that has not attended Rugby Smart and therefore considered unregistered shall be liable to the following penalties:

Penalties:

Points deduction, and/or the offending player and/or team shall be liable to suspension by the MRU, and/or to forfeit the match, and that winning points be awarded to the non-offending team. If a win is recorded then it stands, minus any points accrued by the offending team. If not, a 0-0 (4 points) win will be recorded.

OVERSEAS CLEARANCES, CLUB TRANSFERS AND UNREGISTERED / NEW PLAYERS

16. A player returning to Manawatu having played rugby overseas must complete full international clearance: that is, outgoing clearance from the overseas National Rugby Union and incoming clearance from the NZR prior to registering with a Manawatu Club and playing in any MRU Club Rugby Competition.

Full completion of overseas clearance must be received by the MRU from NZ Rugby no later than 5:00pm on the Friday prior to the playing of any game of rugby union under the control of the Manawatu Rugby Union Inc.

Any team playing a player who fails to provide an overseas clearance in accordance with this NZR shall be liable to the penalties outlined in paragraph 15.

17. No player who has taken part in a 2017 season competition fixture for a Club (by being named on a team scorecard) shall be allowed to play in a competition fixture for another Club unless that player has first been transferred to the new club (and this transfer approved by their former Club) using the NZR on-line player transfer system.

Any player that has been declared to MRU as owing fees or gear to their existing club from the 2016 season by 31st December 2016 shall not be able to play for a new Club until the issue of debt is resolved. Clubs can advise the MRU from 31st August onwards each year of outstanding debtors, at which points names can be published.

A transfer policy will apply, where a player has played for their club (by being named on a team scorecard) and then transfers to another MRU Club, that the player will undergo a two-week stand down (2 competition fixtures) from the MRU Club Rugby Competition prior to that player taking the field for his new Club. The Union will consider an exemption to this policy on application to the MRU with regards to extenuating circumstances such as a player moving to a new area, or where both clubs mutually agree to the two-week stand down being waived. The two-week stand down period commences on the date the online transfer request is made via the NZ Rugby Registration database. A player is able to play for the new club after all outstanding obligations are met and when he or she has served the stand down period.

Any team playing a player who has not been consented to by the MRU in accordance with this rule shall be liable to the penalties outlined in paragraph 15.

18. A player new to a club cannot join that club and play for a team during or immediately prior to that club team's involvement in the competition play-offs. That player must have joined and played for that club team at least three weeks prior to the completion of the competition round(s). There is an exemption to this By-Law for MRU Turbos contracted players, this exemption is at the discretion of the MRU Community Rugby Manager.

A player is considered a 'new player' if he or she has not been registered with that club via the NZ Rugby Registration database in the current season prior to the three-week deadline.

Any team playing a player who has not been consented to by the MRU in accordance with this rule shall be liable to the penalties outlined in paragraph 15.

19. A new or unregistered player is deemed to be registered if they have completed a NZR online registration form prior to taking the field of play and this registration has been approved/confirmed by the club administrator via the online registration system prior to that player taking the field. Manawatu's Super Rugby players are

exempt from this bylaw should they play for another club in that current year in their home Super Region franchise Union.

CLASSIFICATION OF TEAMS AND PLAYERS

20. The MRU shall have the power to classify the various clubs' teams and players.
21. For Senior 1 status criteria will be:
 - i. To play Senior 1 rugby a club must be affiliated to the Manawatu Rugby Union,
 - ii. A club can only have one team competing in the Senior 1 grade.
22. For the purpose of classification where a player has participated in games in more than one grade, that player will be classified in the higher grade unless they have participated in (and their name is shown on the team scorecard for each game) at least 50% of the scorecards the MRU has in its possession for the competition round fixtures in the lower grade in the current season. In order of grades, seniority shall be Senior 1, Senior 2, Senior 3, Colts Premier, Colts A, Under 19 and Presidents grades.

Proviso: Prior to the competition play-offs, a player may be reclassified to a lower grade by application to the MRU where they have not met the above criteria due to extenuating circumstances such as long-term injury. Written applications for such reclassification must be lodged with the MRU at least forty-eight hours before the proposed action.

23. On application to the Union, dispensation may be sought to reclassify players in a side if they are under/over the required age on 1st January of that season. In general terms, teams may be granted up to 3 reclassifications although this may be increased at the discretion of the Union. Such reclassifications should be applied for to the MRU no later than 48hrs prior to an average player taking the field in a competition fixture. The Union will consider any applications made after this time with regards to newly registered players.

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF PLAYERS

24. During Competition Rounds, players are interchangeable between teams as follows:
 - Senior 1 – Senior 2
 - Senior 1 – Senior 3 (where that club does not have a Senior 2 team)
 - Senior 2 – Senior 3
 - Senior 1, Senior 2, Senior 3 – Age Grade Teams – Presidents
(Where players meet the requirements for that age grade)
 - Age Grade Team – Age Grade Team
 - (Where players meet the requirements for that age grade)
25. Any Club playing two or more teams in one grade (eg. A & B teams) shall not, under any circumstances, transfer players from one team to the other without first obtaining the consent of the MRU. Any such offence is liable to the penalties outlined in paragraph 15.

26. Inter-changeability shall not be permitted when players of a higher grade have completed their competition or have a bye, or the lower grade is playing a game for grading purposes or a play-off fixture. In these cases the classification criteria outlined in Paragraph 22 shall apply, unless the prior consent of the MRU has been obtained. At the discretion of the MRU Community Rugby Manager, Manawatu Turbos players (or MRU Contracted players) may be exempt from by-law point 26.

Any such offence is liable to the penalties outlined in paragraph 15.

GRADE SPECIFICATIONS

27. To be eligible to play in the Presidents grade players must be 30 years or older as at the 1st January 2017. Violation of this bylaw the club/team will be subject to penalties outlined in point 15.
28. To be eligible to play in the Colts grades players must be either:
1. Under the age of 21 as at 1st January 2017, or
 2. Under the age of 23 as at 1st January 2017 and under 85kgs
- Violation of this bylaw the club/team will be subject to penalties outlined in point 15.
29. Substitution rules relating to the colts, women's and presidents grades:
1. A team is permitted up to 10 interchanges per match, regardless of the number of substitutes available (up to a maximum of 10)
 2. Any player may take the field twice
 3. A front row player may take the field on a third occasion, if necessary, in the event of an injury to a front row player
 4. All players must be named on the team card
 5. An interchange can only be made during a stoppage in play, by informing the referee

REFEREES

30. All Clubs competing must accept the referees appointed to the respective matches.
31. It shall be a definite instruction to referees officiating in matches that no spectator shall be allowed inside the boundary set apart until the match is completed. Clubs are required to rope off the playing enclosure for all Senior 1 matches, clubs are encouraged to rope fields for other fields where possible. Also if necessary, the referee shall have the power to terminate any match in which they are officiating if the ground cannot be clear. It shall be a duty of the assistant referees to call the attention of the referee to any encroachment within the playing area. Failure to rope a field would result in a warning and should it occur again the club would forfeit any future home game(s) until the field is roped.
32. The referee and the MRU shall be sole judge of the fitness of any ground to be played upon on any particular day. If he decides that it is unfit he may remove the game to any unoccupied ground that is conveniently situated or may declare the match postponed, the date of playing off to be fixed by the MRU.

GROUNDS

33. All playing grounds shall be approved by the MRU who reserve the right of cancelling the approval if necessary.

TROPHIES

34. All cups, shields and trophies are the property of the Manawatu Rugby Union, they must be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer of the Union no later than the 30th April in each year by the Secretary of the Club to whom such trophies were presented at the conclusion of the previous season.

PROTESTS & COMPLAINTS

35. A Club wishing to make a protest against an opposition player, team, coach, manager etc. must do so in writing, by email or by fax to the MRU. (This does not include citing complaints against players – this is covered under the judicial rules). The correspondence must be received by the MRU no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of the fixture and must be signed by an official of the Club. Correspondence must be addressed to the attention of:

Community Rugby Manager
Manawatu Rugby Union
PO Box 1729
Palmerston North
Fax: (06) 354 1670
Email: info@manawaturugby.co.nz

RANKING OF TEAMS

36. In the event there are two teams on the same number of competition points at the conclusion of the competition, the highest ranked team shall be determined by the following steps in order;

- The winner of the game between the two teams
- If drawn or two games played ; the team with the highest positive points differential (for/against)
- If even; the team with the highest overall points scored shall be the winner
- If even; a coin toss will take place

In the event there are three teams on the same number of competition points at the conclusion of the competition, the highest ranked team shall be determined by the following steps in order.

- The team with the highest positive points differential (for/against)
- If even; the team with the highest overall points scored shall be the winner
- A random draw to determine the winner will take place

PLAY-OFF GAMES, SEMI-FINALS & FINALS

37. Should a play-off game, semi-final or final game finish normal time with the scores tied, a further ten minutes each way will take place with teams changing ends at the start of extra time, and after the first ten minutes. If the score is still tied at the end of extra time, the teams shall change ends and play until a team scores first (golden point) and that team shall be declared the winner of the match.

The venue for all semifinals in all grades is to be played at the higher ranked team's home ground. The venue for all finals in all grades is to be at a neutral venue.

SERIOUS INJURY REPORTING AND PLAYER SAFETY

38. Clubs are asked to ensure that all their team managers are made aware of the following procedure for reporting serious injuries:
1. Team manager submits a report to MRU using this form
 2. MRU contacts the team manager within 24 hours of receiving the report to get an update.
 3. MRU then reports the injury to NZ Rugby.

A serious injury report is to be made any time a player is required to go to hospital, when an ambulance has to be called or when a player suffers concussion.

On returning a team scorecard (or any revision to a team scorecard), a representative of the club must certify that the club is not on notice of any injury or other factor that places any player names on the team scorecard at any elevated risk of serious harm or injury through his or her participation in the game in question.

The MRU may, at its sole discretion and at any time:

- a. Require that a player not participate or cease to participate in a game if the MRU determines that such player may be at an elevated risk of serious harm through his or her participation in the game;
- b. Require a club to procure a suitably qualified medical professional to certify that a player will not be at an elevated risk of serious harm through his or her participation in a game;
- c. Require a club to procure a second certification by a qualified medical professional of the MRU's choosing to verify that a player will not be at an elevated risk of serious harm through his or her participation in a game.

39. Manawatu Rugby Union will implement the Blue Card concussion initiative to all Senior rugby officiated by a MRRA match official who has completed the appropriate concussion assessment workshop.

Senior Rugby includes: Senior 1, Senior 2, Senior 3, Women, Presidents, Colts U21.

- Any player who is identified by the referee as presenting symptoms of a concussion or a suspected concussion shall be issued with a blue card by the referee only.
- The player must then leave the field for the remainder of the match. This player can be replaced in that game. There is no opportunity for a player or club to challenge the issue of a Blue Card.
- The Coach/Manager/Referee shall record on the team sheet that the player has been issued a Blue Card
- The player is advised to seek medical assessment from a doctor within 24 hours of receiving the Blue Card.

- The Club and player will receive a letter from MRU advising of a compulsory stand down period of 21 days (if 19 years and older) or 23 days (if 18 years and younger).
- The player must complete the Graduated Return to Play Protocol.
- The player must receive written medical approval on the MRU letter provided before returning to game play after the minimum required stand down period has been observed and the player is symptom free. This medical certificate must be presented to the MRU 24 hours prior to the start of the scheduled match the player intends to play in.

Sanction: Any club who permits a player to return to the field prior completing the required stand-down or receiving medical certification and this being submitted to the MRU, will incur a deduction of 10 competition points.

PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

40. A: Senior 1 and Senior 2. Automatic promotion of the winner of the Senior 2 grade and relegation of the lowest ranked team in the Senior 1 grade where:

- The winner of the Senior 2 grade is the play-off winner of that grade.
- The winner of the Senior 2 grade does not already have a club team participating in the Senior 1 grade.
- The winner of the Senior 2 grade can meet the criteria for Senior 1 status outlined in Paragraph 21 for the following season.
- The lowest ranked team in the Senior 1 grade is the team ranked lowest at the conclusion of the competition round(s).
- Should a team withdraw from a grade once the competition has started this will be deemed to have finished lowest on the competition table. The purpose of this rule is to protect a team which fulfils its requirements and remains in the competition.

B: Senior 2 and Senior 3. Automatic promotion of the winner of the Senior 3 grade and relegation of the lowest ranked team in the Senior 2 grade where:

- The winner of the Senior 3 grade is the play-off winner of that grade, or if play-offs are not a part of the competition format, the winner of that grade by being ranked highest following the competition round(s).
- The winner of the Senior 3 grade does not already have a club team participating in the Senior 2 grade.
- The lowest ranked team in the Senior 2 grade is the team ranked lowest at the conclusion of the competition round(s).
- Should a team withdraw from a grade once the competition has started there will be no relegation in that particular grade. The purpose of this rule is to protect a team which fulfils its requirements and remains in the competition.

BYLAWS FOR SEVENS RUGBY

The following points apply to Sevens Rugby:

41. Registrations – Players are permitted to play 15's for one club and 7's for a different club provided the player completes the appropriate registration forms for the

respective versions of the game. For the avoidance of doubt, registration forms must be completed for both in order for a player to play both.

42. Interchangeability – Once any player competes in either a 7's competition or tournament that player can only play for that team in that grade. No interchangeability is permitted.
43. Colts Variation rule – The Manawatu Rugby Union Colts variation rules will apply, where any player who is Under 23 years of age as at January 1 in the competition year, may play in the colts grade provided they are Under 85 kilograms in weight at the competition start date.
44. Overarching rules – New Zealand Rugby Tournament rules will apply to MRU 7's tournaments.