

Florida Youth Rugby Union

FYRU Disciplinary Process & Age Eligibility
2024-2025





Disciplinary Process (2 Phases – Assessment & Appeals)

Overview

- The FYRU Disciplinary policies and procedures are intended to be inline with USA Rugby Disciplinary Procedures and following World Rugby's Regulation 17, 18 & 20
- Process time **commitment** end-to-end is expected to **be 14 days from the time of red card**
- All **Yellow** and **Red** Cards will be posted on the new Website in the "Results" section
- **U14s** to be included in the process, not just High School

FYRU Disciplinary Committee

- **Discipline Officers (DO)** – Cristian Krossler (FYRU Board Member & President Key Biscayne) & Aaron Church (Jacksonville Rugby)
- Additional support and oversight by the Chairman of the FYRU – Alan Lawson
- All disciplinary matters are to be handled by **(6)** member **Disciplinary Committee (DC) (Board + DC Reviewer)**

Appeals Committee

- Up to 3 other **DC** members not involved in the original adjudication
- **FRDC** and **FYRU Board** also appoints further members to Appeals Committee from the FYRU Coach/Management membership. Ensuring that conflicts of interest and/or availability



Yellow/Red Key Information – Reminders

Multiple Yellow Cards will Lead to a Red Card Game Suspension

- Any two Yellow cards (Professional Foul excluded) in a game leads to a Red Card and player is not eligible to play in the next match; **not eligible for Appeal**
- Any three Yellow cards during a season; third Yellow card leads to a Red Card and player is not eligible to play in the next match ; **not eligible for Appeal**
- ***There are no appeal process for Yellow nor will there be in the future***

Red Card Issued in a Match is an Automatic Game Suspension

- Any player who receives a **Red** Card will sit out the next game “No Exceptions”
- Red Card review process determines if the more games should be added due to the infraction & then the Club Appeal Process can start

(Please note...these are the rules to be followed by the Union, Coaches and Players. This has not been changed but enforcement of the rule will be implemented this Season)



Disciplinary Process (2 Phases)

(The intent of the timeline is help facilitate a quick process & what should be expected to finalize Red Card issued. It is NOT a definitive timeline)

Red Card Case Assessment & Resolution

1. A player (1) receiving a straight Red Card or (2) deemed to have received a Red Card is suspended from all play until there is a resolution of the matter.
2. The Player/Club should be notified of the sanction/suspension within **1 day** of completing the decision (submission from the Referee)
3. The **Referee** is expected to complete the Florida Rugby Referee report which includes a red card report. Report is expected to be due **3 days** after the disciplinary event.
4. The FRDC assigns the case to a DO. The FRDC might request further information from the club/player about the incident
5. The **DO** reviews all of the documentation completes decision within **3 days** of receiving the original report from the match
6. Appeal, if any, must be logged within 3 days of the original written notification of the suspension, stating reasons for appeal & further consideration

7 days
max.

Appeal

1. All decisions of a DO and/or DC are subject to a single appeal. During the appeal, player remains under whatever sanction, if any, originally imposed. (Meaning; player is not eligible to play in the next game)
2. Appeal Officer (one of Appeal Committee Members) considers appeal reasoning and determines if the appeal has grounds to be presented before the appeal committee
3. Written notification or an appeal hearing time, location, conference call line and/or denial of hearing the appeal is sent within **3 days**
4. The appellate procedures/hearing shall comply with World Rugby Regulation 17, especially 17.22.I.
5. The Appeal Committee may affirm, cancel, alter, diminish, or increase any sanction imposed by the DO/DC, following the provisions of World Rugby Regulation 17. The Appeal Committee shall render a written decision within **7 days** of the receipt of the appeal to all involved

7 days
max.



Rule & Rule Reminders

Approved (Agreement made by the Union Presidents @ AGM)

- **Team leading by 42 Points**, the game is officially called. No exceptions. In the interest of safety for both teams, the game is to be stopped and Referee has full control of next steps. The only allowed going forward is a “development game”. Winning team must do a field roster change and free subs rule must be utilized.



Rule, Rule Reminders and Updates

- **Players playing down:** There is to be NO players playing down a level (except approved female player) i.e. U16s playing in U14s, U14s playing U12 etc. If rule is broken and verified; the head coach of that club's division will be suspended for 1 game. There are exceptions made at the u16 level only and discussed by the coaches before the game and the Referee is to be notified. Note age cut-off is 9/1/2024 for age groups...meaning, a player who turns 14 before 9/1/2024 is **ineligible** to play u14s, must play u16s in their age appropriate division. The "u" means "under" i.e. u14s = under 14, u16s = under 16
 - Only exception to this rule: a player with special needs where it is deemed a risk to play in their age bracket, can play down but only "in-year age" cap or girl approved by the FYRU. Meaning, the player is 12 and can play U12, missed the cutoff, not a 13 year old
- **Players playing up (Covered more in Dept in Section 6):** Club and parent decision but a waiver must be signed and sent to the FYRU @ FloridaYouthRugby@yahoo.com This should not be considered until the player is in High School
 - It is the prerogative of the club make this decision, a word of caution...please note that if a player has played all year for u14s and come State Championship time, that player can play in their age-appropriate division. The club will need to be prepared to deal with upset parents when this occurs.
- **Forfeits:** It is the obligation of the team who missed the original game to take the lead to make the game happen. If this team is not proactive; FYRU Chairman will have a conference call with both teams and make a determination. Forfeits are worth 25-0 Win for Standings purposes
- **Medical Professionals @ All Games:** It is a requirement in order to host a rugby match at any youth level, there must be a registered medical professional. Failure to do so, will require home games to be moved to a new site



Code of Conduct & Abuse of Referees

Reminders (World Rugby Code of Conduct to be Followed by All) Click on link <https://laws.worldrugby.org/?law=9>

- **Spirit of Rugby Needs to Stay Alive in All of US:** In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior and fair play. We all need to start doing our part and maintaining the charter. 1st Step in this charter is our interactions with the Referees.

Florida Rugby Referees Interaction with Clubs

- **Abuse of Referees:** Coaches and Administrators are to take the high road in dealing with Referees, and if there is documented abuse of a referee by a team's players, parents or club staff, it will result in a Head Coach's suspension for a least one game and will follow the Disciplinary Process from the preceding pages. Multiple offenses in a season could lead to full expulsion. **Clubs are responsible for the safety of all referees. We own it!**
- **Coaches Interacting with Referees:** Interaction with referees should be minimal, not wrong with pointing out issues with the appropriate..."Sir, please help with the offsides", "Sir, that is another high tackle". This should be extent of the contact during a game.
 - Players and Parents feed off Administrators and Coaches
 - No one is perfect
 - If we ever want more referees, the future refs are on the field and sidelines. Who wants to be a referee when they see the abuse they receive every week for \$1 per Hour
- **New Relationship between FRRA (Florida Rugby Referee Association):** This new board is in the process of developing a new relationship with the referees of this state to help grow numbers. Main focus is how we treat referees.



Age & Grade Discussion

U6 Division

- Touch Rugby or Flag

U8s & U10s

- Age requirements need to be strictly enforced
- Females can play down after FYRU Ruling

U12s

- Age requirements to be strictly enforced
- Females can play down after FYRU Ruling

U14s

- Age requirements to be strictly enforced
- Female can play down after FYRU Ruling
- No U14s is allowed to play High School

High School Eligibility

- Only High school enrolled individuals are allowed to play rugby per USAR
- Player must be 18 years of age as of 8/31/2023 or still enrolled in High School to be eligible to play U19s. Player is eligible to only play if he/she fit the age requirements and is enrolled in high school. Players may be required to provide proof of enrollment
- No female can play with U19 boys division. Strictly prohibited



Eligibility (cont'd)

Additional Clarification for High School Boys and Girls:

- **Age-appropriate play still needs to be enforced**
- **Adult or Professional Play** – Any high school boy or girl who plays in a Collegiate, Adult or Professional League immediately becomes ineligible for the rest of the season. Any team caught with a collegiate, adult or professional player on their roster and/or played in a game for a club, this club will immediately forfeit all games that specific player participated in during the season. This is a guideline per USA Rugby
- **PLEASE NOTE** – this does excludes non-contact or THUD practices...Meaning if an Adult or Professional players goes to a practice, it does not make them ineligible or if reverse happens. ALL HS players are not allowed to participate in contact games, scrimmages or contact drills vs Adults or Professional players. Evidence of such an infraction could led to game suspensions and ineligibility
- **U19s** – No more than 3 on a game day roster for an athlete that is out of high school and goes to a college that does NOT have a Rugby Club.
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Fight Red Communication April 4th to Union

- **Red Cards and Future Game Fighting Incidents for Balance of Season (Note...language will be harsh so please assume positive intent)**
- **Red Cards** are games served NOT weeks out and players are not allowed to be at practice until all games have been served. If a player is found to be at practice, another game suspension will be given and to the Head coach as well (hopefully no confusion here)
- **Fighting Issues:** over the past several weeks there have been fights between clubs and for the balance of the season; the discipline committee will be applying the full World Rugby Law for fighting and additional sanctions may be levied
 - **3 Game Minimum** - is the current World Rugby standard and FYRU has been applying 1 or 2 game suspensions. Going forward, this will be a minimum 3 games; which means this player **will be out the rest of the season** and could carry into next season depending on the severity
 - If a player receives a Red for Fighting, next game they are out **but the appeal process will kick in due to 3 game suspension** and all the information has been provided will be reviewed for a final ruling as quickly as possible
- Additional alignment information:
 - **3 game suspension minimums:**
 - Player comes off the bench or sideline and strikes a player in any fashion (No player should leave the bench or sideline during a melee and suspensions could be levied if seen on video)
 - Any player who punches or strikes a blow to a player's face, head or high upper torso (neck and above) and is seen on tape during a melee or otherwise (strike can be with a forearm elbow etc)
 - Any player who deliberately headbutts a blow to a player's face, head or high upper torso (neck and above) and is seen on tape
 - Any form of a physical strike to a player's face, head or high upper torso (neck and above) and is seen on tape.
 - Any form of a physical strike to another player; stomach, groin, ribs etc
 - **Coaches:** This is for field safety - Minimum 1 Game suspension
 - Coaches or individuals who are associated at a leadership level with any club should NOT grab an opposing player during a melee
 - Unless a player is in desperate situation, then it can happen. Coaches should be pulling and grabbing their players out of a melee and doing all they can to separate
 - These individuals should only grab their team's player. In today's world, this is a safety issue as you have no idea how a parent, uncle, cousin or friend could interpret the action. This can only escalate the issue and create a severe situation.
 - If it is seen on video or social media that an opposing team's leadership individual comes into contact with an opposing team player, suspensions and other sanctions will be levied
 - **Striking a defenseless player** - if a player strikes a defenseless player and it means in any form considered defenseless, this will be reviewed separately and harshly. (Do not expect a 3 game minimum suspension). Street term is "Cheap Shot"
 - Striking a player being held down or hold up
 - Striking a player in the back of the head or high upper torso (neck and above)
 - Striking a player where the player does not see the strike coming due to their attention elsewhere
 - **Targeting Players, Taunting and Verbal abuse** - if a player is seen targeting, taunting or verbal abuse to another player and it creates a fight, this person will be handed down a 3 game suspension. This is not bound by English only, in any language. This goes for talking to Referees as well
- **Right to Defend:**
 - Players have a right to defend themselves. If a player is struck in the face, head or high upper torso (neck and above) and defends themselves, this is a mitigation action and video significantly helps the perspective and it has been used in the past to mitigate a Red.
 - The player who strikes first will be dealt with harshly. This is not a **GREEN LIGHT** for a player to strike another. Note it is only a mitigation factor and does not absolve action of the player struck.
- **Video Evidence:** All video evidence is to be turned over to the FYRU regardless of who paid for it etc. If video evidence is withheld, the team will forfeit the next game and additional sanctions may be handed down. This has been an issue in the past and it should be clear that clubs are a part of the union and should help to make things right regardless who may or may not be a fault. (This has been great this year)
- **Guidance on Red Timeline Table for the Disciplinary Committee**
- Please be mindful that the timeline table given regarding Reds (see website), is merely just that, a guidance. The reason a timeline was communicated was due to the prior leadership taking significant amount of time for REDs and impacting players.
- Each red situation is different and depending upon the severity could go outside the time table. In addition, do not expect that a player is excused from their actions simply because a 72 hour window been met or contact communicated etc. There are many circumstances that could impact the time table i.e. Ref report, video evidence, interviews with those involved all take time.
- Over the next week, we will have a meeting to discuss and align on the playoff scenarios specifically for the U12s, U14s and U16s. Look for the Zoom invite for this coming Thursday at 9pm.
- **Please note FTL is having a Festival April 13th for all Youth including u14s. In addition, they will be hosting another Festival April 27th and it is the intent to have them host u12s and u14s playoffs that weekend before States.**
- As always, if there is any confusion or you feel the need for clarification, my contact info is below. Talk to you all on Thursday.