

NATIONAL SMALL COLLEGE RUGBY ORGANIZATION LLC

In Support of the Best Student-Athletes Playing the Best Sport in the World

www.nscro.org

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY POLICY – EFFECTIVE SEPT. 1, 2013

ISSUED: AUGUST 2013

Introduction

In keeping with its goal to raise the profile of small college rugby as well as helping its growth and development, the NSCRO has prepared its Player Eligibility Policy to insure fairness in competitive league and playoff matches and to allow flexible participation of student-athletes (also referred to as players), including non-traditional students. NSCRO recognizes the presence of non-traditional students attending small colleges and the need for their inclusion. Traditional students are those who typically graduate high school who then start college and attend for four to five years full-time earning a bachelor's degree. Non-traditional students include those who start college right after high school and may have to stop attending or who start years after finishing high school. Generally this happens due to military service, meeting family needs, etc. and such students attend college often part-time, may hold a job and also may commute to school daily from home. NSCRO believes that the inclusion of non-traditional full-time students reflects the realities of college life and is similar to the rules of other college sporting bodies such as the NCAA. Similar to both USA Rugby and NCAA eligibility policies, NSCRO provides each student-athlete with 5 years of eligibility to play collegiate rugby.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the governing Conference/Union to insure student-athlete compliance of this Policy for matches directly under their control. Compliance verification shall be performed in both semesters and before the spring quarter and after the winter quarter, as applicable, of the school year (starting in August or September).

Eligibility at all NSCRO Playoff Matches shall be verified for compliance by an appointed Representative and shall be done in accordance with NSCRO's "Regulations for Playoff Matches".

Each Conference/Union and member club is deemed to have full knowledge of the content of this Policy.

Each Conference/Union and member club must ensure that it complies with this Policy and must further ensure that it takes appropriate action to inform each and every one of its members of the terms of this Policy and the obligation to comply with the same.

A Conference/Union may not impose any more stringent regulations than identified by this Policy.

Definitions

Academic Year – An annual period during which a student attends a college or university beginning with the first day of the fall semester or quarter and ending at the conclusion of the NSCRO national championship event.

Academic Term – An academic session that is a division of the Academic Year. This includes a quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) and a semester (Fall, Spring, Summer).

Qualifying Match – any match in which the result is used to determine official competition standings and/or to determine qualification for the NSCRO playoffs leading to the national championship.

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Policy Regulations - Players

In order to participate in any Qualifying Match and the NSCRO Playoffs, the student-athlete **must meet all of the following eligibility regulations at the time of match:**

1. The student-athlete must be a CIPP-registered member of USA Rugby.
2. The student-athlete must be within five (5) years from the date the student-athlete first enrolled in a university or college. Any college courses that are taken during high school do not start the eligibility clock. The student-athlete is eligible to receive up to two (2) additional years of eligibility under these specific instances that must be verified with written and/or printed documentation:
 - a. During the academic year under review, the student-athlete was not enrolled in any school.
 - b. The student-athlete was enrolled at a school that did not have a recognized rugby team and that school has postsecondary institutional accreditation as listed with the US Department of Education.
 - c. Time spent in the armed services, on official church missions or with recognized foreign aid services of the US government. For foreign students, service in the armed forces or an official church mission of the student's home country is considered equivalent to such service in the United States.
3. The student-athlete must be enrolled full-time and in good standing, as defined by the university or college Registrar, and an undergraduate student-athlete seeking his/her first bachelor's degree.

Exceptions:

 - a. A student-athlete within his/her final two Academic Terms may carry less than a full-time academic load and still maintain eligibility. This is only permitted if the student-athlete is a graduating senior and a letter from the Registrar confirming such status is obtained.
 - b. A student-athlete within five (5) years of collegiate eligibility may maintain eligibility for one (1) year after completing and/or receiving an undergraduate degree if that student-athlete is enrolled full time in post-graduate studies (graduate school or pursuance of an additional Bachelor's Degree) provided the student-athlete is attending the same institution they received their first undergraduate degree from and falls within all other collegiate eligibility regulations, as applicable.
 - c. A student-athlete competing for a university or college during the Fall semester in league matches is eligible through the National Championships of that *Academic Year* if he/she graduated no earlier than the end of the Fall semester. This is only permitted if a letter from an authorized school official is provided giving permission for this person to participate with their rugby club and that the school accepts liability for this person.
 - d. A student-athlete who is enrolled part-time is eligible if he/she is within five (5) years of collegiate eligibility and is also permitted to participate on the rugby club as determined by their school.

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Policy Regulations – Players (cont'd)

4. The student-athlete must be play on the team representing the school in which he/she is enrolled.

Exception:

- a. Full-time student-athletes attending a “nearby” college or university that does not have a rugby club whose enrollment meets the NSCRO Team Eligibility Policy are eligible to participate if both schools provide written documentation providing permission to play rugby for the school with the rugby club.

Both schools must verify this agreement along with acceptance of liability for the student-athletes participation with the rugby club, as provided for its own students. Verification of such must be submitted in writing to both the governing Conference/Union who in turn will send to NSCRO for review and acceptance.

5. A student-athlete must not have played in a Qualifying Match for any other collegiate team or senior club at any level during the current Academic Year. Transfer students may appeal for a waiver.
6. Players who are 23 years of age or older as of September 1 of the start of the competition cycle, who otherwise meet these Regulations, may participate in any Qualifying Match and the NSCRO Playoffs subject to the following:
- a. A club may have an unlimited number of such players are on their team roster.
- b. No more than five (5) such players are permitted on a match roster up to the 23 players allowed by The Laws of the Game.

Student-Athlete Under the Age of 19

Any student-athlete under the age of nineteen (Under 19) should not play in any college rugby match unless they are in compliance with USA Rugby’s “Policy for Under 18s and Under 19s Playing Community (Adult or College) Rugby”.

Policy Compliance - Enforcement

Compliance with this Policy at all Qualifying Matches played under the jurisdiction of the Conference/Union shall be enforced by said Conference/Union with the use of the NSCRO “Player Eligibility Verification (PEV) Form” and any other related Conference/Union documents. The Conference/Union must establish a “Game Day Protocol” to insure compliance accordingly.

For players who are eligible under any of the Exceptions identified in this Policy, additional documentation (dated letter signed by an authorized school official) from their school is required to verify compliance as follows:

If a part-time undergraduate student, compliance with NSCRO Regulation 3, Exception a.

If a full-time post-graduate student, compliance with NSCRO Regulation 3, Exception b.

If student has graduated, compliance with NSCRO Regulation 3, Exception c.

If the student is not enrolled in the school for which they are playing for, compliance with NSCRO Regulation 4, Exception a.

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Policy Compliance – Enforcement (cont'd)

For Conference/Union league play, the above verification documentation shall be submitted to the Conference/Union as instructed by them, such as via email with a scan of the original letter.

The original signed PEV Form(s) and letter(s) shall be maintained by the club and be available at Conference/Union league and playoffs matches prior to the start of the match as instructed by the Conference/Union and for presentation to the NSCRO Representative during the Eligibility Check-In at all NSCRO playoff matches in accordance with the NSCRO “Regulations for Playoff Matches”.

After the Fall season, once the school's new semester (or Spring quarter) begins this verification process will need to start over as students may no longer be enrolled or their enrollment status may have changed impacting their eligibility.

Appeals

The aforementioned Policy Compliance process is solely for student-athletes who are in compliance with this Policy included stated Exceptions.

For players who are not in compliance with this Policy that a club feels should there is a basis for their eligibility, an appeal may be submitted to NSCRO. In such cases, the club coach or President shall contact the NSCRO Eligibility Director to determine if the case is appealable. If the case is determined to have merit, NSCRO will advise what specific information and documentation is required to be submitted to NSCRO with a copy sent to the club's Conference/Union. NSCRO will advise if the appeal is accepted or not and if it is accepted, a Waiver shall be granted allowing the player's participation in matches governed by this Policy. The Waiver must presented as part of the governing Conference/Union Game Day Protocol as well as during Check-In at an NSCRO playoff match.

Failure to Comply

NSCRO reserves the right to take disciplinary action, as it deems appropriate, which may include penalties against the student-athlete, his/her club and the governing Conference/Union for any violation of this Policy.