



**2022 16s & 18s NATIONAL DISTRICT NINES
RULES & REGULATIONS**

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2022 NATIONAL 16s AND 18s DISTRICT NINES

1. RULES AND REGULATIONS BINDING:

These Rules and Regulations will have effect for the duration of the 2022 National 16s and 18s District Nines Rugby League Tournament, unless amended or replaced by the NZRL.

2. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT:

The NZRL will appoint a Competition Organiser who will be responsible for the management of all aspects of the competition and shall be the reference point for all matters of disputes and acts of on and off field misconduct and shall act as chairperson of the Competitions Dispute Panel.

3. THE TOURNAMENT:

There are three (3) tiers of competition to the National 16s and 18s District Nines.

1. District Nines – participating districts to run a club Nines competition or tournament.
2. Regional Nines – Participating districts to select a district representative team to enter the Regional Nines.
3. National Nines – Top two (2) qualifying district representative teams from each Regional Nines tournament to enter the National Nines. The National 16s and 18s Districts Nines Tournament will consist of four (4) age grades; 16s girls, 18s girls, 16s boys and 18s boys. The tournament shall be officially referred to as “The National 16s and 18s District Nines”.

Note: District and Regional Competitions or Tournaments can be played over one (1) day or several days. The National Nines Tournament will be played over two (2) days.

4. COMPETITION FORMAT:

The National 16s and 18s District Nines shall consist of up to eight (8) teams in each age grade. Each age grade will consist of two (2) pools of four (4) teams participating in a one round, round robin tournament, with the two top qualifiers from each pool playing off for the National District Nines Cup.

Allocation of points shall be two (2) points for a win, one (1) point for a draw and no (0) points for a loss. In the event that two teams have equal competition points at the conclusion of round robin play, the teams to qualify for the final shall be decided by the following criteria in order.

- (a) The team with the highest points for and against.
- (b) The team with the highest percentage differential points for and against.
- (c) If the teams are still tied after (a) and (b), the team who won in round robin between the two teams shall advance.
- (d) If the teams are still tied after the application of (a), (b) and (c) above, then the team that has scored the most tries in round robin play shall be the higher ranked team.
- (e) If the teams are still tied after the application of (a), (b), (c) and (d) above, then the top qualifier shall be decided by the toss of a coin.

Note: No extra time is to be played in the round robin matches.

5. COMPETITION CRITERIA

Selection Process: In the presence of regular and meaningful Rugby League grade competitions (club and/or school); player selection for District or Zone representative squads must be made from these competitions.

Minimal competition of four (4) teams playing a round robin competition, plus a final, played within a District or Zone – or alternatively two (2) ‘mini-series / tournaments’ held twice through the season.

Player Eligibility players shall need to have been listed on at least two (2) competition game team sheets or played in at least one tournament played within a District or Zone representing. A record of the team sheets will need to be recorded on Sporty. The term “played” is defined as the player must have taken part in a match.

This rule does not apply to players who have been injured. Clubs, Districts or Zones must provide details/evidence around each player. For injured players medical evidence must be submitted i.e., medical certificates, ACC documents.

Player Registration Requirements All players must be registered members of their District or Zone in 2022 to a District Club prior to the competition start.

Note: If the District or Zone does not provide a regular and meaningful Rugby League grade competition then the District or Zone must apply to NZRL for an exemption to participate in the Tournament. NZRL will consider each exemption application on its own merits. These players must be registered to the District or Zone through the Sporty process.

6. COMPOSITE TEAMS

A district [host team] may offer sporting opportunities to players from other districts who have less than 25 players in a particular age group and who unable to host a ‘meaningful competition or ‘mini-series / tournaments. The host team may enter Regional and National Tournaments with players from both host and attached districts.

- All other eligibility rules regarding age and attendance of the player are met.
- The respective District Chair / President complete a written agreement on the terms that allow players from the ‘attached’ district to play for the host district, the terms to include agreement that the player[s].
- At least two (2) weeks prior to the proposed shared participation at the Regional Tournament, the agreement[s] will be provided to NZRL for approval.
- The Chairperson / President of the host district accepts responsibility for the ‘host team.’
- The district team[s] will compete under the name of the ‘host district.’
- Players will be named as representatives of the ‘host District.’
- Each player will require a portability clearance for the duration of the tournament as players can only be registered to one District league at any one time.

7. FINALS ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible to play in the National District Nines Final, a player must have played in at least one of the round robin matches. The term “played” is defined as the player must have taken part in a match.

8. RULES:

The National 16s and 18s District Nines will be conducted in accordance with the normal international rules of the game and game day policies, however with several variations for the tournament:

- Matches are played nine-a-side with two nine-minute halves.
- There are unlimited interchanges.
- Sin-bin periods last for three (3) minutes rather than 10.

- The scoring team will recommence the game with a drop-kick to the opposition.
- Scrums will be formed of five players rather than six.

9. MATCH TIMES

Each match will consist of two equal halves of Nine (9) minutes. A half time period of two (2) minutes shall take place.

10. EXTRA TIME – GOLDEN POINT

- During the round robin fixtures, if a draw at full-time, the match will be deemed a draw and the competitions points awarded accordingly.
- If the scores are tied after normal playing time in the final or play-off matches, the winner shall be determined according to the following:
 - Golden Point extra point will be played to determine the winner. The first team to score (try, penalty or dropped goal) in this period will be declared the winner.
 - There will be a two (2) minute interval between the end of normal playing time and the start of extra time. During this time, the teams will toss a coin to decide either to kick off or which end of the field they will defended.
 - Five (5) minutes of extra time will then commence. If there are no points scored in this period of extra time, a second period of extra time will commence immediately via a kick-off, with teams switching ends.
 - Should the match still be drawn at the conclusion of the second period of extra time, the winner shall be the team that scored the first points during normal playing time.

11. SQUAD SIZE:

Participating teams are restricted to a maximum number of 15 players for each tournament.

12. PLAYERS

The total number of players on the field at any one time in each team shall not exceed nine (9). Team's will consist of 13 players maximum on the team card with no more than 9 players on the field at any one time.

13. POINTS

- A try shall count for four (4) points.
- All try conversions shall be taken by way of drop-kick in line with where the try was scored and will count for two (2) points.
- All penalty kicks at goal shall be taken by way of a drop-kick from the point at which the penalty is awarded and will be worth two (2) points.
- A field goal in general play shall be awarded as one (1) point.
- A field goal in general play from 40 metres out being awarded two (2) points.

14. SCRUMS

- All scrums shall be formed with a maximum of five players from each team (three players in the front row and two in the second row). There shall be no more than four players of each team acting as backs.
- Scrums will occur from a double knock-on. All other infringements will be a handover.
- In the event of a successful 40/20 kick, play will recommence with an 'optional tap kick' to the kicking team 20 metres in from where the ball crossed the touch line.

15. ACCREDITATION:

All team officials must produce proof of accreditation plus contact phone and email details by the squad registration date outline in these rules.

16. TEAM COACHES:

All coaching staff members must meet the minimum qualification standard to coach at the NZRL National District Nines Tournament. See appendix 8 Coach Accreditation for National District Nines Tournament.

17. TEAM TRAINERS:

Trainers must have the minimum qualification of being registered to Sport Tutor (www.sporttutor.nz/nzrl) And must have completed *Leaguesmart, The Founding Principles of Coaching, Kiwi Way Developing Trainers Resource Module*.

18. TEAM MANAGERS:

Team Managers must have the minimum qualification of being registered to Sport Tutor (www.sporttutor.nz/nzrl) And must have completed *Leaguesmart, Thriving Under Fire*.

19. TEAM TRAINER'S RULES:

- Maximum of three trainers per team per game permitted.
- Trainers are not permitted to enter the playing field during an on-field skirmish between players. Trainers in breach of this rule will receive a mandatory one match suspension. Should a trainer breach this rule for a second time in the same game, he/she shall receive a further one match suspension and shall be dismissed from the playing area by the Match Manager. (For the purpose of this rule, the playing area is defined as that area enclosed by a fence or other such lines of demarcation, which prevents the encroachment of spectators). The team Manager will officially be notified of any such suspensions, immediately following the conclusion of the game by means of a suspension notice.
- Trainers are permitted to enter the playing field for the rehydration of players (whilst their team is in possession of the ball only) and attending to injuries and as such their on-field time shall be limited to that purpose.
- In all cases when trainers enter the playing field to either attend to an injured player or carry water, they must immediately leave the playing field once their assigned task has been completed and return to their assigned player's bench.
- Trainers are not permitted to walk up and down the touch line.
- Trainers, under no circumstances, are to remain standing their teams in goal area during the run of play.
- If Present, a physiotherapist is permitted on the field to attend to an injured player.
- Trainers are responsible for the running and removal of the kicking tee from the playing field.
- Trainers are required to wear the appropriate coloured shirts for their role as detailed below.
- Communication equipment is not permitted on the playing field at any time, this includes the use of mobile phones. Persons found to be in breach of this rule shall be removed from the playing field by the Match Manager.
- Trainers must conduct themselves in accordance with the Rugby League Pledge.

ORANGE TRAINER RULES:

- Must be First Aid Officer Accredited.
- May take the field to provide water to players during stoppages of play after a try is scored by either team.
- May take the field to provide water to players while their team is in possession of the ball.

- May take to the field to provide medical assessment and support to their player at any time, taking care not to interfere with the run of play or in times of need to have the referee hold the match.

BLUE TRAINER RULES:

- Must be First Aid Officer Accredited.
- May take the field to provide water to players while their team is in possession of the ball.
- May take to the field to provide medical assessment and support to their player at any time, taking care not to interfere with the play or in times of need to have the referee hold the match.

YELLOW TRAINER RULES:

- May take the field to provide water to players during stoppages of play (scrum not included as a stoppage) after a try is scored by either team; or
- Assist the Blue or Orange Trainer with an injured player.

Note: Match Officials may dismiss any trainer from the game for non-compliance of the above rules.

20. MATCH MANAGERS:

- Match Managers will be responsible for the management of the game, including time keeping, interchange of players and completion and return of the match report sheets and to ensure that trainers operate in compliance with the Team Trainers Rules. The Match Manager shall have the right to dismiss a trainer in breach of the rules from the playing area.
- To ensure the tournament runs to schedule the start time and time during of each match will be signalled from Match Manager.
- Team Managers shall be responsible for getting their Teams to the field of play by the scheduled kick-off time. If a Team has not reached the field of play at the scheduled time, then the Team on the field ready for play will receive and start the game with a penalty at halfway.

21. INTERCHANGE RULES:

All District Nines Tournaments will operate with an unlimited interchange rule, however the following rules when making an interchange will apply as follows.

- Teams a limited to a maximum of two interchanges at any one time.
- The player being replaced must cross the touch line before the replacement player can enter the field of play.
- During general play, all interchanges are to take place on the 10 meters lines either side of the halfway line Match Managers side of the field, except in the case of an injured player, or following a try being scored, a team may drop a player off behind the dead ball area.
- Interchanges can take place at any time during the game, except at a scrum, (Scrum period is from the referee blowing the whistle to award the scrum to the ball clearing the scrum).
- Players being replaced following a try being scored are to be held at the halfway line until the conversion kick has been completed.
- It is the team trainer's responsibility to get the replaced player off the field.

22. RESERVE BENCH RULES:

Team Officials are responsible for the behavior of the players while in the reserve bench area. Players who exit the reserve bench area on to the field of play without the permission of the match officials will receive a mandatory one

match suspension, plus any additional suspension arising from any acts of misconduct committed by that player whilst on the field.

A maximum of ten (12) personnel are permitted in the reserve bench area:

- Coach
 - Assistant Coach
 - Team Manager
 - Assistant Manager
 - Three (3) Trainers
 - Four (4) reserve players
- a) All the above personnel apart from the trainers involved in the rehydration of the players, and reserve players who are warming up, are to remain seated in the reserve bench area.
- b) Trainers are not permitted to wander up and down the sideline, or to adopt a position behind their team's defensive line on the field, in goal, or behind the dead ball line. Once rehydration is completed, trainers are to return to the reserve bench area.
- c) A policy of zero tolerance is to be adopted for inappropriate behavior from personnel within the reserve bench area. Any such behavior is to be reported to the Match Judicial Panel.

23. GREEN CARD CONCUSSION PROTOCOLS:

The Green Card concussion protocols will operate during the National District Nines Tournament. The NZRL will appoint a dedicated medical Personnel to manage the assessment of players and the operation of the Green Card system.

24. MOUTH GUARDS:

It is compulsory for all players playing in all NZRL Competition and Tournaments to wear a protective mouthguard. The **“No Mouthguard No Game Policy”** is to be firmly enforced. Referees are to check that all players are compliant with this rule prior to the commencement of the game.

25. BLOOD BIN:

The referee shall direct a player who is bleeding to leave the field for attention. A blood bin player who leaves the field for treatment and who is not replaced may return to the field, without an interchange taking place.

26. SIN BIN:

The sin bin time in all the National District Nines Tournaments will be three (3) minutes. Sin binned players are to go to the designated area (Match Managers position) and may be rehydrated by a team trainer.

The timing of the sin bin is to commence once the player is seated at the Match managers position and is actual playing time. Injury and stoppage times are not included.

27. TEAM DEFAULTS/WITHDRAWALS:

Should a team default a match, the opposition team shall have deemed to have won the game by 22 points to nil and shall be awarded 2 championship points. Should a team withdraw from a competition, after having played in the competition, all championship points, plus points for and against scored by that team up to its withdrawal shall be expunged from the competition.

28. DISMISSED PLAYERS:

Players who have been ordered off the field by the match referee are to leave the playing area immediately and change out of their playing strip. Dismissed players are not permitted to return to the reserve bench area.

29. PRE-MATCH HAKA:

Team Managers are to inform the Competition Organiser/ Match Manager on arrival at the ground if their team is to perform a pre-match haka, so that an earlier on field time can be advised. All pre-match haka are to take place behind the teams 10 metre line and teams are not to advance over this line.

Note: If a team or a member of a team advances over the 10-metre line during the haka, the referee will commence the match with a penalty to the non-offending team at the centre of the halfway line. Should both teams offend, the team that advanced over the 10-metre line first shall be penalised.

30. COMPETITION DISPUTES AND JUDICIAL PANEL:

The NZRL will appoint a Competition Disputes Panel, which will be comprised of the Competition Organiser (Chairperson) and two other NZRL appointees. The Competition Disputes Panel will adjudicate on all matters of dispute and protest between members, breaches of the competition rules and all incidents of misconduct occurring prior to and post the playing of a game.

31. PROTESTS AND OUT OF ORDER PLAYERS:

The Competition Disputes Panel shall adjudicate on all matters pertaining to protests for all NZRL Competitions and Tournaments and shall be responsible for policing the rules pertaining to players registration. Protest hearing will take place within 48 hours of the receipt of the protest lodgement.

32. LODGEMENT OF PROTESTS:

A team may lodge a protest against an opposition player/s, if they are of the belief that the player/s are for any reason ineligible to play in the competition.

- a. Protests must be lodged in writing and must include the name of the challenged player/s, the reason for the protest and must be signed by the teams Zonal or District manager. The lodgement of the protest must be received by the Competition Organiser by no later than 10:00am on the Monday following the game and must be accompanied by a fee of \$200.00, which will be forfeited should the protest be lost.
- b. On receipt of the protest lodgement, the Competition Organiser will advise the players Zone or District in writing of the protest. Should the players Zone or District wish to dispute the protest, they may submit evidence in defence of the protest, to the Competition Organiser within 48 hours of the notice of protest.
- c. The Competition Organiser shall on receipt of supporting evidence from the player/s Zone or District, or at the conclusion of the 48-hour period forward the protest to the Competition Disputes Panel, who will adjudicate on the matter within 48 hours of receiving the notice of protest.

33. PROTEST DECISION:

Should the Competition Disputes Panel find that the protest is upheld and/or a registration breach has occurred they will advise the Competition Organiser of their decision, including any penalties to be imposed. The Competition Organiser will then advise the players Zone or District manager of the full decision including penalties.

34. PROTEST PENALTIES:

If a player is found to be ineligible to participate in the competition, the Competition Disputes Panel may impose one or more of the following of the following penalties.

- i. Stand the offending player down for one competition match, including a final series match if required. Bye matches are not included.
- ii. Remove from the team any competition points gained in a match in which the player played.
- iii. Impose a \$200.00 fine on the players Zone or District.
- iv. Require that the team coach and manager appear before a hearing of the Competition Judicial Panel.

35. MISCONDUCT / MANDATORY SUSPENSIONS.

Teams participating in the NZRL District Nines Competition shall be responsible and accountable for the conduct of their players, team officials and any other persons participating in an official capacity during the NZRL District Nines Competition.

For the purpose of the competition, misconduct shall mean any conduct, behavior, or practice on or off the playing field that is unsporting and/or unruly and/or ill-disciplined and/or has the potential to bring the sport of Rugby League into disrepute.

If a player is dismissed from the field by the Match Referee for any offence as listed below in the Mandatory Suspension list, a period of suspension as listed shall apply, without the right of appeal. Grading of offences shall be determined by the Competition Organiser by taking into consideration the Referees report and any injury suffered by the non-offending player that may or may not have resulted in him/her having to leave the playing field.

Players Dismissed from the playing field by the referee for any offence not listed in the Mandatory Suspension List will be required to appear before a hearing of the Competition Disputes and Judicial Panel.

Mandatory Suspension List

Offence	Severity	Suspension
Tripping/Kicking	Grade 1	1 X Game
Second Offence or Injury resulting	Grade 2	3 X Games
Striking/Fighting	Grade 1	1 X Game
Second Offence or Injury Resulting	Grade 2	3 X Games
Contact with the head (Careless)	Grade 1	1 X Game
Reckless/Intentional contact Injury Resulting	Grade 2	2 X Games
Dangerous Tackle (Lifting/Shoulder Charge)	Grade 1	2 X Games
Second Offence or Injury Resulting	Grade 2	4 X Games
Offensive Behavior (Verbal)	Grade 1	1 X Game
Second Offence (Verbal)	Grade 2	2 X Games
Referee Abuse (Verbal)	Grade 1	1 X Games
Second Offence (Personal verbal abuse)	Grade 2	3 X Games

36. JUDICIAL HEARINGS:

On receiving a report from the Competition Organiser of a complaint of on field misconduct, or a player being dismissed from the field, excluding those players that have been dismissed under the Mandatory Suspension List of Offences, the Competition Disputes and Judicial Panel will convene on the following Wednesday to conduct a hearing. Hearing involving players from out of Auckland will be by Zoom, with Auckland based player appearing in person. Auckland based hearings will be held at the offices of the NZRL at 7 Beasley Ave Penrose.

37. SUSPENSIONS:

Suspensions resulting from the competition shall be served during the competition. Should the full term of a suspension be unable to be completed during the competition, the remaining unserved suspension shall be served during the 2022 season. The Competition Organiser will notify the players registered District League of the suspension period to be completed. All suspension will be entered onto the players tribunal history.

38. MANDATORY SUSPENSIONS:

Mandatory suspensions imposed as per Rules 19 (Trainers) and 27 (Players) and the Mandatory Suspension List shall apply to the next scheduled match (including a final series match). Should a suspension occur in the final match of the competition, the suspension shall be served as per Rule 36 above.

39. MISCONDUCT REPORTING:

All acts or alleged acts of misconduct, either on or off the field must be reported to the Competition Organiser at the earliest possible time and shall include the following:

- (a) A referee who has been appointed by the NZRL must report to the Competition Organiser any instant of misconduct or foul play during the progress of a match, which led to the dismissal of a player(s) from the field of play, or the dismissal of a Team Official from the playing area.
- (b) A referee or a touch judge who has been appointed to a match may report to the Match Manager or Competition Organiser any instance of misconduct by a player(s) or a team official(s) irrespective of whether such misconduct occurred before, during or after such match, and whether it led to the player(s) being ordered from the field of play or not or the team official(s) being ordered from the playing area or not.
- (c) The Match Manager will deal with all matters reported to him/her or in circumstances he/she deems appropriate and will refer any matter to the Competition Organiser. The Match Manager will advise the team manager(s) of any such referral, immediately following the conclusion of the match.
- (d) In relation to a disciplinary hearing, the Competition Disputes and Judicial Committee may disqualify, suspend, fine, or otherwise deal with persons in its absolute discretion after conducting a hearing as set out in these rules, provided that it adheres to any maximum limit of penalty otherwise imposed in the rules.
- (e) Having received a report pursuant to the preceding rule the Competition Organiser may after due enquiry refer the matter to the Competition Disputes and Judicial Committee who will determine whether the player(s) or team official or team officials concerned should be called on to appear before the Competition Disputes and Judicial Committee to show cause why the accused should not be disqualified, suspended, fined, or otherwise dealt with.
- (f) Where the Competition Organiser receives a complaint from a team concerning the conduct of a player related to a match in which the player takes part or the conduct of a team official related to a match which the team official attends, and such conduct has not been subject of a report by the referee in charge of the match or a touch judge, he may refer the matter to the Competition Judicial Panel who may require the player or team official concerned to appear before it to answer a charge that the conduct complained of constitutes conduct harmful to the interests, welfare or image of NZRL or the game of Rugby League. A complaint under this rule must be registered with the Competition Organiser not later

than 5:00pm on the first business day following the date of the match in respect of which the conduct complained of is alleged to have occurred.

- (g) The Competition Organiser may at any time require a player or team official to appear before the Competition Judicial Panel to answer a charge that conduct (including the player being sin-binned), by that player/team official in a match in which the player/team official take's part or by that team official attending a match, which the Competition Organiser specifies in such charge, is conduct harmful to the interests, welfare, or image of NZRL or the game of Rugby League.
- (h) Where a player makes an allegation of misconduct against a player in the opposing team during a match, the referee will call on the captains of both teams involved and a touch judge to witness the allegation. The referee will refer this to the Match Manager who will advise the team manager that the allegation against the player will be reported to the Competition Organiser who may require the player against whom the allegation was made to appear before the Competition Judicial Panel.
- (i) When a player makes an allegation of the nature referred to in paragraph 'h' (above) of this rule and subsequently withdraws such allegation or fails to attend a hearing or provide evidence regarding such allegation, the Competition Organiser may require that player to appear before the Competition Judicial Panel to show cause why he should not be dealt with for conduct detrimental to the interests, welfare, or image of the game of Rugby League.
- (j) Any player who has been dismissed from the field of play during a match or any team official who has been dismissed from the playing area during a match in the competition or is reported to the Competition Organiser by a referee or touch judge pursuant to these rules will be suspended from playing in or participating respectively in the competition or in any game of Rugby League played under the jurisdiction of NZRL, a Zonal or District League or any other game subject to the rules of the International Board until the player and/or match official has appeared before a hearing of the Competition Judicial Panel as appropriate or where applicable, the Competition Organiser advises that the report will not be referred to the Competition Judicial Panel Judicial Committee.
- (k) A refereeing official who has ordered a player or players from the field of play or a referee or touch judge who intends to report a player(s) or team official(s) for misconduct, must give a written statement outlining the nature of the charge to the Match Manager/Competition Organiser as appropriate immediately upon conclusion of the game.
- (l) All matters not provided for in these rules shall be determined by the Competition Organise, who may in the event of a serious case of misconduct refer such a case to the Competition Disputes and Judicial Committee.

39.1 MISCONDUCT/OFF FIELD:

Participating teams are responsible and accountable for the conduct of their players, team members and any other person acting in an official capacity with the team during the competition. For the purpose of the competition, misconduct shall mean any conduct, behaviour, or actions on or off the playing enclosure in connection with the competition that is unsporting, and /or unruly, and/or ill-disciplined and /or that brings, or has the potential to bring the sport of Rugby League into disrepute.

40. AMENDMENT OF RULES:

The NZRL reserves the right, on reasonable notice to amend these rules as it sees fit.

APPENDICIES

1. THE KIWI WAY:

We are diverse, we call New Zealand home, and we are all Kiwis

- > We are Family first
- > We are family first
- > We are responsible
- > We are innovative and courageous
- > We are inclusive, respectful, and humble
- > We are stronger together

We live and play The Kiwi Way every day

2. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR:

All participants involved in the tournament will be bound by the NZRL Code of Behaviour.

This Code of Behaviour applies for all players and team officials.

1. No player or team official may during a match or after a match under the jurisdiction of the NZRL abuse or address a referee or touch judge in insulting terms, or act in a provocative manner toward a referee or touch judge.
2. A player while engaged in a game and a team official while attending a game must not use crude or abusive language, or engage in any conduct harmful to the interests, welfare, or image of the NZRL or the game of Rugby League.
3. A player must at all times abide by the terms of the Player Registration Form which they have entered with the team for which he plays and the NZRL, and a team official must at all times abide by the terms of the contract which they have entered with the team and the NZRL.
4. A player must at all times act, dress and behave in public in a professional manner.
5. A player must, in the interests of maintaining the image of the game, accept all reasonable directions of the team management and must not engage in any public acts of misconduct or unruly public behaviour while representing any team affiliated to the NZRL.
6. A player may, having first obtained the written approval of the NZRL appointed Tournament Organiser or his nominee, write a column for publication in any newspaper provided that such approval at any time will not be unreasonably withheld, and such approval will be deemed to continue until withdrawn by the Tournament Organiser
7. No player or team official may, at any time, make any comment in any publication whether written, televised or broadcast which is detrimental to the interests, welfare, or image of the NZRL or Rugby League in general.
8. Players and officials are prohibited from placing bets, and benefiting financially, from bets placed by others, on games in which they are participating.
9. Where the NZRL receives a report of an alleged breach of this Code of Behaviour, the player or team official will be summoned to appear before a hearing of the NZRL/District League Judicial Committee, who may:
10. If the player is found guilty of a breach of this code after due investigation, fine, and/or disqualify or suspend the player from playing, or otherwise deal with the player concerned.

11. If the team official is found guilty of a breach of this code after due investigation, fine and/or disqualify or suspend the team official from participating in the game of Rugby League, or otherwise deal with the team official concerned.

3. CONCUSSION POLICY/GREEN CARD PROTOCOLS

For the safeguarding of players and those involved in NZRL run matches we will be implementing a **GREEN CARD** (return to play) system to include the National Premiership and NZRL Championship Competitions.

If a Player experiences or exhibits any one or more of the following symptoms or signs, the Player must be immediately taken from the field in a medically appropriate way to be assessed by the team doctor and/or dedicated medical personnel.

- a. Clinical features including abnormal neurological signs of a serious or structural head and/or neck injury requiring emergency management and hospital transfer
- b. Loss of consciousness or suspected loss of consciousness
- c. No protective action in fall to ground (tonic or floppy; or cervical hypotonia)
- d. Impact seizure or possible impact seizure e.g., tonic clonic movements or tonic posturing
- e. Confusion or disorientation
- f. Memory impairment (e.g., fails the Maddocks questions)
- g. Motor incoordination (e.g., Balance disturbance or possible balance disturbance, clumsiness with upper limbs or in getting up); (e.g., ataxia)
- h. Player reports significant, new, or progressive concussion symptoms
- i. Dazed, blank/vacant stare or not their normal self (e.g., no facial expression, no apparent emotion in response to the environment, reduced conscious state (GCS<15), not responding appropriately to those around him including other Players, referees, or trainers/medical staff)
- j. Behavioural change atypical of the Player
- k. Slow to stand following a possible head injury (1st priority is to ensure that there is no neck injury present)
- l. Loss of responsiveness (Player lying motionless for 2-3 seconds or until support staff arrives)
- m. Suspected facial fracture.

In addition, if the team doctor, physiotherapist or assigned medical personnel forms a clinical impression that the Player appears to display other signs that a head injury may have occurred following trauma/impact, the Player must immediately be taken from the field in a medically appropriate way to be assessed by the dedicated medical personnel.

Note: 'Balance disturbance' is defined as when a Player is unable to stand steadily unassisted or walk normally and steadily without support in the context of a possible head injury.

1. If a Player is required to leave the field of play because of the identification of one or more of these features to complete a Head Injury Assessment (HIA), this interchange will not be included for the purposes of calculating the number of interchanges listed within the Competition Rules under Interchange Protocols.
2. The period in which the HIA is to take place is to be a period of 15 minutes. The period is to begin from the time at which the Player is in the care of the dedicated medical personnel (this time cannot be delayed for any other non-legitimate reason). If the Player has been cleared by the dedicated medical personnel during the HIA, the Player will be provided with a **GREEN CARD** (return to play) and must report immediately to the interchange

official prior to or at the completion of the 15-minute HIA to return to the field of play but can only return at the completion of the 15-minute period and provided they have an official **GREEN CARD**.

3. The 15-minute period prior will not be assessed against the official match time or clock. The timing of the HIA period will be monitored by the match manager if a designated HIA official is not on duty.
4. If a Player is required to be assessed for a period longer than the specified HIA period, that Player would then be adjudicated as an interchange for the purposes of calculating the number of interchanges listed. The participating team will be required to hand over their next interchange card available in sequential order immediately to the interchange official.
5. Any Player who is required to leave the field of play for a second HIA (including if one or both incidents are the result of the incident being placed on report or a send-off offence) in the same match, will not be allowed to return to play in that Match.
6. In the event of an on-field incident which has required two Players from the same team to be taken from the field of play at the same time for a HIA, the team doctor or dedicated medical personnel may request from the HIA interchange official an additional 10-minute period for one (1) of the HIA Players to complete the necessary assessment. The team doctor or dedicated medical personnel must nominate which Player will be assessed first.
7. In the event of an on-field incident in the first 10 minutes during a HIA for one Player requiring a second Player from the same team to be removed from the field of play for a HIA, the team doctor or dedicated medical personnel may request from the HIA interchange official an additional 10-minute period for the second HIA Player to complete the necessary assessment.
8. If the Player has suffered a head injury in a tackle or incident that was a consequence of foul play which resulted in a send-off, sin bin or the player being penalised, this interchange will take place in accordance with Interchange Protocols which refers to interchange in the event of foul-play. There will be no maximum time limit associated with the Head Injury Assessment, but that Player cannot return for a minimum of 15 minutes if deemed not to have suffered a concussion.
9. Once a Player has been substituted as per normal interchange rules, a HIA cannot be initiated from the side-line.
10. If a HIA takes place in the 15-minute period prior to half time, the HIA period will be deemed to have been completed at the end of the half time, unless 15 minutes has not elapsed. The team must indicate to the HIA interchange official or the match manager if a designated HIA official is not on duty immediately at the completion of half-time whether the Player is to return to the field of play.
11. If a participating team has used all its allocated interchanges whilst a Player is completing a HIA, and if that Player is unable to return to the field of play at the completion of the HIA, the participating team but immediately remove a Player from the field of play and complete the match with one (1) less Player.
12. At the completion of the match, the match manager is to complete, as part of their report to a Competition Organiser, details of any Player who has completed a HIA during the match. Similarly, a team's medical staff must include details of the HIA in their post-match medical report.12.
13. Following any such match where a player has been deemed unable to return to the field due to incurring a concussion, the return to play process (including stand down periods) will apply as per the NZRL Concussion / Head Injury Policy. More information can be found via the NZRL website: <https://nzrl.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NZRL-Concussion-Policy-2018-1>

14. Participating teams must only use a HIA for the reasons set out within this section of the Competition Rules. Any team which is proven to have used a HIA for any reason other than that detailed within these protocols will be deemed to have gained an unfair tactical advantage in the Match and be subject to penalty.

4. MOUTHGUARD POLICY

It is compulsory for all players playing in sanctioned Tournament by the NZRL and its members to wear a protective mouthguard.

- The **No Mouthguard, No Game Policy** is to be firmly enforced.
- Players are not permitted to share mouth guards.

Operational Guidelines

- Referees and/or touch judges will check that all players (including reserves) have a mouthguard prior to the start of the game.
- During a match, any player found not to have a mouthguard in the mouth and not having a mouthguard in their possession, (due to having it dislodged because of a tackle) will be made to leave the field.
- On obtaining a replacement mouthguard, the player may re-enter the field of play after reporting to a touch judge.
- In the event of the player being unable to obtain a replacement mouthguard they may take no further part in the game but may be substituted, with that substitute counting as an interchange.
- During a match, any player found not to have a mouthguard in their mouth, but to have one in their possession (in their sock or pocket etc.) will be penalised and sin binned for 5 minutes.
- Referees are to use common sense in enforcing this policy regarding players approaching a scrum with a mouthguard in their hand and other such incidents, where there is a break in play.

Mouthguard Exemption Guidelines

- The player in question must provide a medical certificate from a dentist clearly stating why a mouthguard cannot be worn by the player.
- The player must submit the dentist medical certificate with a portrait photo to the NZRL prior to taking the field.
- The NZRL reserves the right to make the final decision on issuing a mouthguard exemption.

5. ANTI-DOPING POLICY

NZRL aims to eliminate the use of prohibited substances and prohibited methods from Rugby League by adoption of the Sports Anti-Doping rules and WADA code. The WADA code can be sourced from www.drugfreesport.org.nz and education/resources from <http://drugfreesport.org.nz/what-we-do/education/>

NZRL will educate and inform athletes and athlete support personnel about issues concerning doping in sport, including by:

- a. Circulating or providing athletes and athlete support personnel with information materials and resources on doping in sport; and
- b. Co-operating with the NZSDA, WADA and other relevant Anti-Doping Organisations to implement drug education and information programs for athletes and athlete support personnel.

This policy applies to:

- All Athletes who are within the jurisdiction of the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of NZRL; and
- All athletes support personnel within the jurisdiction of the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of NZRL; and
- All other people who have acknowledged in writing that they are bound by this policy or who are otherwise deemed to be bound.

6. DRUG TESTING

Drug testing may be carried out on a random basis throughout the duration of the competition by Drug Free Sport NZ. Prior to the commencement of the competition the Competition Organiser will supply DFSNZ with a copy of the confirmed competition draw, player's registration details plus details of each team's training times and venues.

Further information can be sought from:

<http://drugfreesport.org.nz/for-athletes/information-for-athletes-that-may-be-tested/>

<http://drugfreesport.org.nz/what-we-do/education>

7. SMOKEFREE PHILOSOPHY

NZRL is committed to removing smoking from our sport by establishing a Smokefree policy for people to respect and enjoy.

We are Smokefree because: Participating in the game of Rugby League and being Smokefree is a positive health choice for each of us to make.

- It helps us feel good socially, emotionally, and physically, especially during a game of Rugby League.
- It supports our team-mates and friends who want to give up smoking.
- It supports our friends who do not smoke in the club and on the sideline as it provides healthy environments for all to enjoy.
- Having role models (players, coaches, and administrators) who are Smokefree encourages our youth to choose not to smoke.
- It protects our youth from the harmful effects of people smoking around them at the game and especially in the clubrooms.
- Rugby League is all about good health and active lifestyles and smoking has no part to play.

Please respect our Smokefree Philosophy.

If you choose to smoke, please do so outside our Smokefree areas. Remind smokers not to light up in our Smokefree areas . . . Be supportive – tobacco addiction is a powerful thing.

“Kia Tu Tangata, Kia Auahi Kore”

8. COACH ACCREDITATION:

As part of the NZRL philosophy and commitment to improving the experience of the player, supporter, official and coach, it is a requirement for all coaching staff to be accredited or working towards accreditation in the following.

Head and Assistant Coach – *Kiwi League Youth Coaching:*

Manager - *NZRL Managers Level 1:*

Trainers – *NZRL Developing Trainers:*

To begin the development pathway, each staff member must register to Sport Tutor (www.sporttutor.nz/nzrl) and complete the following online modules before attending face to face coaching, trainer, or managers courses.

Head and Assistant Coach *Leaguesmart, The Founding Principles of Coaching and the Kiwi Way, Coaches Legal Responsibilities.*

Managers - *Leaguesmart, Thriving Under Fire.*

Trainers – *Leaguesmart The Founding Principles of Coaching, Kiwi Way Developing Trainers Resource Module.*

If a face-to-face course is not available for the above staff to become fully accredited, the minimum accreditation they must have completed are the online modules. The modules must be completed 30 days prior to the Tournament/Competition commencement date.

The confirmed list of all coaches, managers and trainers involved in the tournament must be sent to the NZRL National Coach Development Manager < dan.kepa@nzrl.co.nz > no later than 4 weeks prior to the National Districts 9s Tournament commencement date.

National District 9s Tournament Coaches Forum

All coaches, trainers and managers who qualify for the National Districts 9s Tournament will need to attend an online tournament information forum on Monday 4th April 2022 (link to be provided). The forum will cover rule clarity, behavioural standards and expectations and any relevant tournament updates and a Q & A session.