Frequently Asked Questions - Two Year Window Policy *(Updated Jan 2012)*

What is the purpose of the Age Grade Two Year Window Policy?

- To protect the safety and welfare of age grade rugby players by trying to ensure that participants with broadly compatible physical development and skill levels play with and against each other.
- To outline the circumstances of an exception to the Policy that permits certain players to participate in an age group above the two-year window.
- To describe the potential risks to the player that he/she may face if they choose to participate in an age group above the two-year window.
- To ensure that all involved in the decision to permit a player to participate in an age group above the two-year window understand their respective responsibilities.

Can a player participate in an Age Grade competition more than two years above his or her age for their school/club?

- Yes. In exceptional cases, where a player's physical development, skill level and experience is such that he or she may be allowed to participate in an age grade competition that is more than two years and no greater than three years above his or her age.
- A player wishing to participate in an age grade competition more than two years above his or her age should carefully consider the information in Schedule A of the Two Year Window Policy, complete the Consent Form including assessed by a Level 2 coach and submit to your Competition Manager.

How old must a player be to participate in an Age Grade competition?

- To participate in an U18 age grade competition in 2012, the player would be turning either 17 or 18 years of age in the year of competition (ie Year of Birth 1995 or 1994 in 2012).
- A player turning 16 years of age in the year of competition (on or after 1 January 2012) ie Players born 1996 would also be able to participate with Two Year Window exception.

	Year of Competition		
Year of Birth	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Players born **2008**			U6
Players born **2007**		U6	U7
Players born **2006**	U6	U7	U8
Players born **2005**	U7	U8	U9
Players born **2004**	U8	U9	U10
Players born **2003**	U9	U10	U11
Players born **2002**	U10	U11	U12
Players born **2001**	U11	U12	U13
Players born **2000**	U12	U13	U14
Players born **1999**	U13	U14	U15
Players born **1998**	U14	U15	U16
Players born **1997**	U15	U16	U17
Players born **1996**	U16	U17	U18
Players born **1995**	U17	U18	U19
Players born **1994**	U18	U19	
Players born **1993**	U19		

Do we have to use 1 January as the Age Grade cut off for competitions?

- Australian Rugby Union adopt 1st January as the cut-off for all age grade competitions and representative teams. This is in line with age parameters adopted universally within Australian sporting context.
- Schools may request approval from the Australian Rugby Union to use different age eligibility dates (other than 1 January) for a respective school competition. There must exist a consistent Two Year Window across all age grade competitions, and age cut-offs must be clearly documented in Competition Rules.

How do I locate a Level 2 coach to undertake my assessment?

- Discuss with your club/school to ascertain coaches at the club/school who meet the necessary requirements. Additionally, contact your local affiliate or State/Territory Union to discuss options.

Why is there an additional exception process required to play in the Front Row (as an exception to the Age Grade Two Year Window Policy?

- The objective of the Policy is to protect "at risk" athletes. The decision to protect front rowers is based on research which supports that the "front row" is in the highest risk group within Rugby. Relevant research includes:
- Fuller et al (2007) and (ii) Carmody et al (2005) support the notion that there is a greater risk of injury for players playing in the front row (prop or hooker),
- Fuller et al (2007): On an injury per event basis the scrum carries a sixty (60) percent greater risk of injury than the tackle.
- Carmody et al (2005) and more recently Bohu et al (2009): The majority of catastrophic injuries in Rugby occur to players playing in the Front Row.

If the tackle is the "most frequent cause of injury" why are there additional requirements pertaining to the "scrum"?

- This is true in some respects but when you look at "injuries per game event" the scrum is still the most injurious phase of the game. This is confirmed in a recent study by Fuller et al in 2007.
- This study confirmed that:
  1. the scrum is still a higher risk event with respect to injury in Rugby Union
  2. the tackle is responsible for the largest number of injuries but only because it is the most common event in the game
  3. scrums occur less frequently in the game than tackles but on an injury per event basis carry a sixty (60) percent greater risk of injury than the tackle.

  The study that reported this was undertaken in England by the RFU - *"Fuller et al: Contact events in Rugby Union and their propensity to cause injury. Br J. Sport Med. 2007"*

Can a player play in the Front Row in an Age Grade competition more than two years above his/ her age for their school/club?

- Yes. However, a player wishing to participate above the two-year age grade window and play in the Front Row (prop or hooker) must also apply for approval from the ARU prior to participation in rugby, as outlined in Schedule B - Exception for Front Row, including Submission Form.
- A player must complete both Consent Form and Submission Form and must submit to the ARU for consideration of this exception. The player may not play in the Front Row in age grade rugby until ARU approval has been received.

Is it correct that I may have to undertake a scan prior to approval to play in Front Row?

- A decision on the necessity for an MRI or CT scan is at the discretion of the ARU, and applicants will be advised accordingly if this is necessary, prior to approving an exception for Front Row. The objective of the scan is to identify any structural issues that may increase this athlete's propensity to injury. This is not a compulsory requirement!
- A referral for these investigations will be forwarded to you, if appropriate. The costs of these investigations must be borne by the player.

Is this scan covered by Medicare? How much will it costs?

- The requested MRI is a screening investigation and therefore not covered by Medicare.
- Discussions with a number of radiology practices suggests that a reduced fee (between $150 – $200) would be appropriate as this is a limited MRI study. The athlete will be responsible for settling this account.

Where do I undertake the scan?

- Should an MRI or CT scan be required, it can be undertaken at a radiology practice by appointment.
- It is recommended that you advise the radiology practice that this is a limited MRI study only, and provide a copy of the referral letter outlying requirements for scan. This should improve your chances of attaining scan sooner than later.

Where do you get a copy of the Policy documentation, and Consent/Submission Forms?

- Policy document, including Consent Forms and Submission Forms are available from www.rugby.com.au/policies.