



NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Competition Regulations Handbook

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2025

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NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

2025 Premier Competition • Key Dates

Date	
17 July	Transfer Period Closes – Player Movement Form needs to be filed with the NZR for any player who is on the list of ‘Captured Players’ and wants to change Provincial Unions
17 July	Cut-Off Date – Final day for non-captured players to move Provincial Unions or be cleared into New Zealand from overseas and still be considered as a ‘Local Player’
21 July	Naming of Premier Competition Squad – Final day for Premier Competition Unions to notify the NZR of their squads of at least 26 players, by 4pm
31 July	Premier Competition Commences
Five Games	Overseas or Returning New Zealand Players (excluding Front Row Players) – Must have been named in a Playing 23 before the Provincial Union has played five Premier Competition games
Five Games	Loan Players (excluding Front Row Players) – Loan Arrangement Form must be fully executed and filed with the NZR before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played five Premier Competition games
Ten Games	Front Row Loan Players – Loan Arrangement Form must be fully executed and filed with the NZR before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played ten Premier Competition games (with exception of 4.1(f)(iii))
Ten Games	Front Row Overseas or Returning New Zealand Players – must have been named in the Playing 23 before the Provincial Union has played ten Premier Competition games
25 October	Premier Competition Final

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

2025 Heartland Championship • Key Dates

Date	
6 June	Cut-Off Date – Final day for players to move Provincial Unions or be cleared into New Zealand from overseas and still be considered as a 'Local Player'
1 August	Pre-Season Statutory Declaration – Squad lists and Pre-Season Statutory Declarations must be sent to the NZR by 4pm
16 August	Heartland Championship Commences
13 September	Five Games - Players of Origin, Loan, Overseas and Returning New Zealand Players who are not front row players must have been named in a Playing 23
4 October	End of Round Robin – Players of Origin, Loan, Overseas and Returning New Zealand Players who are front row players must have been named in a Playing 23
18-19 October	Heartland Championship Finals
28 November	Post-Season Statutory Declaration – Post-Season Statutory Declarations must be sent to the NZR by 4pm, in accordance with clause 7.9 of the Player Eligibility Regulations

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Player Eligibility

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Player Eligibility • 2025

**World Rugby International Eligibility Form
(opposite)**

SCHEDULE 1. **DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF A PLAYER TO PLAY FOR THE SENIOR FIFTEEN-A-SIDE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TEAM, THE NEXT SENIOR FIFTEEN-A-SIDE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TEAM OR THE SENIOR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SEVENS TEAM OF A UNION**

DECLARATION OF PLAYER

I, (Name) of
..... (Address)

confirm that, I have read and understand the criteria for eligibility set out in Regulation 8 of the World Rugby Regulations Relating to the Game (World Rugby Regulations) and I hereby declare that I am eligible to play for Union because:

Tick applicable box(es)

- ☐ ☒ I was born in the country for which fifteen-a-side senior National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team, or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union for which I intend to play; or
- ☐ ☒ One of my parents or grandparent was born in the country for which senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union for which I intend to play; or
- ☐ ☒ I have completed sixty⁸ consecutive months of Residence immediately preceding the time of playing in the country for which senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union for which I intend to play; or
- ☐ ☒ I have completed ten cumulative years of Residence preceding the time of playing in the country for which senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union for which I intend to play

AND

- ☐ ☒ I have not played for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or, having reached the age of twenty, the senior National Representative Sevens Team of any other Union and I have not participated in the Olympic Games or Rugby World Cup Sevens as a member of the National Representative Sevens Team of any other Union.⁹

⁸ The sixty-month residency requirement comes into effect after the cut-off date of December 31, 2020. The residency requirement up to and including December 31, 2020 is "thirty-six consecutive months of Residence immediately preceding the time of playing".

⁹ If a Player has played for another Union's senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or senior National Representative Sevens team, this must be stated on this declaration form. For the avoidance of doubt, Players would only be eligible to play for a second Union if they can demonstrate that they allowed 36 consecutive months to elapse before they played for a second Union and that they played for that second Union before 1 January 2000 or where they have been cleared by the Regulations Committee pursuant to a transfer for the purposes of an Olympic Event (and in respect of representing the new Union at fifteen-a-side or any other version of the Game, have complied with the Regulation 8.12). Any such Players should submit in writing the circumstances of such participation on a separate sheet.

I have attached to this declaration relevant documentation¹⁰ to prove my eligibility to play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of Union and I understand and accept that if I am found to have played for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of a Union without satisfying the eligibility criteria set out in Regulation 8 of the World Rugby Regulations, and/or to have provided inaccurate information in this declaration then I and the Union concerned will be subject to sanctions.

Player's signature:

Date:

DECLARATION OF UNION

I, (Name) the
of (Position and Union)

hereby declare that the Union has made all such necessary enquiries in relation to the above Player's eligibility to play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior Sevens National Representative Team of the Union. I further declare that the Union is satisfied that the information provided by the Player in his declaration is correct, that the documentation in support of the Player's declaration is valid and that the Player is eligible to play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team

of Union. I understand and accept that if a Player plays for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team Union or the senior National Representative Sevens Team without satisfying the eligibility criteria set out in Regulation 8 of the World Rugby Regulations and/or the Union has provided inaccurate information in this declaration then the Union will be subject to the fixed penalty sanctions set out in Regulation 8.

Signed:

Date:

¹⁰ Players ARE expected to provide valid copy birth certificates or other relevant formal documentation in support of their declaration. Players may be requested to provide additional documentation as appropriate in support of their eligibility to play for a senior National Representative Team or the next senior National Representative Team of a Union.

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Player Eligibility Regulations

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Part 1 • Definitions

1. DEFINITIONS

In these Regulations, unless the context requires or indicates otherwise, the following definitions shall apply:

"Bill Osborne Taonga" means the Bill Osborne Taonga as provided for under the NZR Bill Osborne Taonga Regulations;

"Borrowing Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union to which a Player is loaned pursuant to a Loan Arrangement;

"Collective Agreement" means the Collective Agreement entered into by the NZR and the RPC as updated from time to time;

"Contract Year" means the calendar year (commencing on 1 January and concluding on 31 December) and may be defined with reference to a particular year (e.g. Contract Year 2025);

"Current Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union from which a player is made available under a Player of Origin Agreement;

"Employment Services" means Playing Services, Promotional Services and Media Interviews and associated travel as those terms are defined in the Collective Agreement;

"Finals Round" for the Premier Competition, has the meaning set out in Appendix 1 of NZR Domestic Competition Regulations, and for the Heartland Championship, has the meaning set out in Appendix 2 of the Domestic Competition Regulations;

"Heartland Championship" means the Heartland Championship as provided for under the NZR Domestic Competition Regulations;

"Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date" means the first Friday of June of the current Contract Year;

"Heartland Championship Union" means a Provincial Union competing in the Heartland Championship;

"Lending Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union from which a Player is loaned pursuant to a Loan Arrangement;

"Local Player" has the meaning set out in clauses 3 and 8;

"Loan Arrangement" means the form set out in Schedule 1;

"Loan Player" has the meaning set out in clauses 4 and 9;

"Non-Mandatory Challenge" means a non-mandatory challenge match as provided for under the NZR Regulations;

"NZR" means the New Zealand Rugby Union Incorporated;

"NZR Induction Programme" means the Induction programme as provided for in clause 119 of the Collective Agreement;

"Original Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union to which a Player is made available under a Player of Origin Agreement;

"Overseas Player" has the meaning set out in clauses 6 and 11;

"Played" means to have taken the field in a rugby union match;

"Player" means a rugby union player;

"Player of Origin" has the meaning set out in clause 12;

"Player of Origin Agreement" has the meaning set out in Schedule 2;

"Playing 23" means the fifteen selected players plus a maximum of eight reserves as recorded on the team sheet provided to the NZR for any Premier Competition match, any Heartland Championship match, any Ranfurly Shield match and any Bill Osborne Taonga match. For the avoidance of doubt, all players recorded on the team sheet must be present at the match;

"Post-Season Statutory Declaration" means the Statutory Declaration to be completed by the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of each Heartland Championship Union in relation to, but not limited to, payments made in relation to Players in its Heartland Championship team for the Contract Year in the form advised by the NZR to Provincial Unions from time to time;

"Premier Competition" means the Premier Competition as provided for under the NZR Domestic Competition Regulations;

"Premier Competition Cut-Off Date" means the date two weeks before the commencement date of the Premier Competition of the current Contract Year;

"Premier Competition Union" means a Provincial Union competing in the Premier Competition;

"Pre-Season Squad Information" means the information to be provided by a Heartland Championship Union in respect of at least 26 Players that the Provincial Union intends to select in its Heartland Championship team for the Contract Year, in the form as advised by the NZR to Provincial Unions from time to time;

"Pre-Season Statutory Declaration" means the Statutory Declaration to be completed by the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of each Heartland

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Championship Union in relation to, and to be provided with, the Pre-Season Squad Information in the form advised by the NZR to Provincial Unions from time to time;

"Provincial Union" means an Affiliated Union as defined in the NZR Constitution;

"Provincial Union Contract" means the contract set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Development Contract" means the contract set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Term" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Development Term" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Ranfurly Shield" means the Ranfurly Shield as provided for under the NZR Regulations for the Ranfurly Shield;

"Registered" means, in relation to a player:

- having completed the NZR Senior Player Registration Form for that Contract Year; or
- having an approved Senior Player registration recorded in the NZR online registration system for that Contract Year; or
- having an active registration in the National Rugby Database for that Contract Year;

"Returning New Zealand Player" has the meaning set out in clauses 5 or 10;

"Round Robin" for the Premier Competition, has the meaning set out in Appendix 1 of NZR Domestic Competition Regulations, and for the Heartland Championship, has the meaning set out in Appendix 2 of the Domestic Competition Regulations;

"RPC" means the Rugby Players Collective Inc;

"Super Rugby Competition" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement.

Part 2 • Premier Competition

2. INTRODUCTION.

- 2.1 This Part governs which Players can play in the Premier Competition or for a Premier Competition Union in the Ranfurly Shield.
- 2.2 The Playing 23 of any Premier Competition Union for the Premier Competition and the Ranfurly Shield shall consist only of Players who are:

- (a) Local Players in accordance with clause 3;
- (b) Loan Players in accordance with clause 4;
- (c) Returning New Zealand Players in accordance with clause 5;
- (d) Overseas Players in accordance with clause 6;

provided that the combined number of Loan Players and Overseas Players does not exceed six (or four in a Non-Mandatory Challenge against a Heartland Championship Union).

- 2.3 A Player must become a party to a Provincial Union Contract or a Provincial Union Development Contract, in order to participate in the Premier Competition.
- 2.4 A Player must have completed the NZR Induction Programme in order to participate in the Premier Competition.
- 2.5 In accordance with World Rugby Guidelines a Player must be at least 18 years of age as at the day of the first match in the Premier Competition in order to participate in the Premier Competition.
- (a) Further, any Provincial Union wishing to select any Player who is 18 years of age, or a front row Player who is 19 years of age as at the day of the first match in the Premier Competition as part of the Playing 23 for a Premier Competition match must obtain prior written approval from the NZR.
 - (b) NZR High Performance will issue protocols on an annual basis that it will then assess the Player against in consultation with the Provincial Union and the Player. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether it is in the best welfare and development interests of the Player to play in the Premier Competition.

3. LOCAL PLAYERS

- 3.1 “**Local Player**” means a Player who:

- (a) is Registered with a club competing in a competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union;

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- (b) has not been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union or national union after the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team);
 - (c) is not captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*; and
 - (d) has completed a World Rugby Clearance from any other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* by the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team).
- 3.2 Notwithstanding Regulation 3.1(d), a World Rugby Clearance received by the NZR on the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date by 11:59pm and approved by the NZR as soon as practicable thereafter shall be deemed to be approved on the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date for the purposes of these Regulations.
- 3.3 A Player Registered with a club competing in a club competition under the joint control and jurisdiction of two or more Provincial Unions shall be a Local Player for the Provincial Union within whose Provincial Union boundaries the club the Player is Registered with is located.

4. LOAN PLAYERS

4.1 “Loan Player” means a Player who:

- (a) is Registered on the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date with a club competing in a competition conducted outside the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union; or
- (b) has Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union after the date set out in (a) above; or
- (c) is captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*;

provided that Player is party to a Loan Arrangement as follows:

- (d) The terms of the Loan Arrangement for that Loan Player are recorded in writing in the form set out in Schedule 1 and are not inconsistent with the Collective Agreement, including:
 - (i) the Loan Arrangement must be for a specified term, which may not exceed the Player’s Provincial Union Term or Provincial Union Development Term (as the case may be);
 - (ii) the Loan Arrangement details any circumstances under which the Loan may be terminated;

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- (iii) the Loan Arrangement may not place any constraint upon the way a Player provides Employment Services to the Borrowing Provincial Union (for example, by requiring the Player not to play against the Lending Provincial Union).
 - (e) the Loan Arrangement is signed by the Lending Provincial Union, the Borrowing Provincial Union and the Loan Player and is provided to the NZR prior to the Loan Player being included in the Playing 23 for the Borrowing Provincial Union; and
 - (f) the Loan Arrangement is entered into in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, the Loan Arrangement is entered into before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played ten games in the current Premier Competition; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, the Loan Arrangement is entered into before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played five games in the current Premier Competition; or
 - (iii) in the event that a front row player is injured in the 10th game, or a quarter-final, or a semi-final, a Loan Arrangement may be entered into to replace the injured front row player to allow that Loan Player to play in the quarter-final and/or semi-final and/or Final, provided that the Provincial Union proves to the satisfaction of the NZR that an additional front row Loan Player is necessary. Such decision will be at the sole discretion of the NZR and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where, for example, the ability of the Provincial Union to name a Playing 23 which can safely compete in the match is compromised by injuries to otherwise eligible players in that position.
- 4.2 (a) There is no limit upon the number of Players which a Provincial Union may lend or borrow but the Playing 23 of any Premier Competition Union may not include more than six Loan Players, provided that the combined number of Overseas Players and Loan Players does not exceed six. For the avoidance of doubt, any additional front row Loan Player included in a Finals Round match in accordance with clause 4.1(f)(iii) above shall be included within the maximum of six.
- (b) Notwithstanding Regulation 4,2(a), the Playing 23 of a Premier Competition Union playing in a Non-Mandatory challenge against a Heartland Championship Union may not include more than four loan players, provided that the combined number of Overseas and Loan Players does not exceed four.
- 4.3 A Player who is not a party to a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract may enter into a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract at any time. For the avoidance of doubt, a Lending

Provincial Union must agree to a loan where that Player is not subject to a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract with that Lending Provincial Union.

4.4 A Loan Player can only play for the Lending Provincial Union after the loan start date if:

- (a) another Lending Provincial Union Player in a similar position is injured; and
- (b) the Loan Player agrees (whether agreed in the terms of the Loan Arrangement or at the time the other Player is injured);

in which case the Loan Player must be named in the next Playing 23 for the Lending Provincial Union; or

- (c) the Loan end date as specified on the Loan Arrangement has passed.

4.5 Under no circumstances can a Loan Player be:

- (a) selected in the Playing 23 for both the Lending and Borrowing Provincial Unions in the same week of the Premier Competition; or
- (b) loaned on more than one occasion during the current Premier Competition.

5. RETURNING NEW ZEALAND PLAYERS

5.1 “Returning New Zealand Player” means a Player who:

- (a) is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand; and
- (b) has been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team); and
- (c) is not captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*;

provided that:

- (d) the Returning New Zealand Player has completed a World Rugby Clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23;
- (e) the Returning New Zealand Player has not Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union prior to being Registered (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national team or touring team); and

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- (f) the Returning New Zealand player becomes a member of a Playing 23 of that Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player before the Provincial Union has played ten games in the current Premier Competition; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played five games in the current Premier Competition; and
- (g) the Provincial Union has proven to the satisfaction of the NZR that the Returning New Zealand Player is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand pursuant to *World Rugby Regulation 8 – Eligibility to Play for National Representative Teams* as at the start of the current Premier Competition and the NZR has confirmed this in writing before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23.

6. OVERSEAS PLAYERS

- 6.1 “**Overseas Player**” means a Player who has been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Premier Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team).

provided that:

- (a) the Overseas Player has completed a World Rugby Clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23; and
 - (b) the Overseas Player becomes a member of the Playing 23 of the Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played ten games in the current Premier Competition; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played five games in the current Premier Competition; and
- 6.2 (a) The Playing 23 of any Premier Competition Union must not include more than two Overseas Players, provided that the combined number of Overseas Players and Loan Players does not exceed six.
- (b) Notwithstanding Regulation 6.2(a), the combined number of Overseas and Loan Players in the Playing 23 of a Premier Competition Union playing in a Non-Mandatory Challenge against a Heartland Championship Union must not exceed four.

Part 3 • Heartland Championship

7. INTRODUCTION

7.1 This Part governs which Players can play in the Heartland Championship or for a Heartland Championship Union in the Ranfurly Shield or for a Heartland Championship Union playing for the Bill Osborne Taonga.

7.2 The Playing 23 of any Heartland Championship Union for the Heartland Championship, the Playing 23 for the Ranfurly Shield and the Playing 23 for the Bill Osborne Taonga shall consist only of Players who are:

- (a) Local Players in accordance with clause 8;
- (b) Loan Players in accordance with clause 9;
- (c) Returning New Zealand Players in accordance with clause 10;
- (d) Overseas Players in accordance with clause 11; or
- (e) Players of Origin in accordance with clause 12,

provided that the Playing 23 contains no more than four Non-Local Players. For the purposes of this clause 7.2, “**Non-Local Player**” means a player who is either a Loan Player, a Returning New Zealand Player, an Overseas Player or a Player of Origin.

7.3 By **4pm on the Friday two weeks before the Heartland Championship** commences, each Heartland Championship Union will provide the NZR with:

- (a) its Pre-Season Squad Information; and
- (b) its Pre-Season Statutory Declaration.

For the avoidance of doubt, the information provided must be complete, and must not be false or misleading.

7.4 Before a Player is eligible to participate in the Heartland Championship the Provincial Union must advise the NZR in writing, either as part of the Pre-Season Squad Information or otherwise, that it is satisfied that the player is eligible to participate in the Heartland Championship for that Provincial Union.

7.5 In accordance with World Rugby Guidelines a Player must be at least 18 years of age as at the date of the first match of the Heartland Championship in order to participate in the Heartland Championship. Further, any Provincial Union wishing to select a Player who is 18 years of age as at the day of the first match in the Heartland Championship as part of the Playing 23 for a Heartland Championship match or Ranfurly Shield match or Bill Osborne Taonga match) must obtain prior written approval from the NZR. NZR High Performance will assess the Players overall workload, taking into account all school, provincial and national

representative rugby commitments the Player has performed during the year, in consultation with the Provincial Union and the Player. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether it is in the best welfare and development interests of the Player to play as an 18 year old in the Heartland Championship.

- 7.6 A Player that has been named in a Playing 23 in the current Premier Competition is not eligible to play in the current Heartland Championship, whether pursuant to a Loan Arrangement, a Player of Origin Agreement, or otherwise.
- 7.7 Notwithstanding Regulation 7.6, a Player is eligible to play in the current Heartland Championship where the Player:
- (a) is the subject of a Loan Arrangement or a Player of Origin Agreement between a Heartland Championship Union and a Premier Competition Union; and
 - (b) has been named in a Playing 23 in the current Heartland Championship; and
 - (c) subsequently is recalled to his Premier Competition Union following an injury to a player in a similar position, and is named in the Playing 23 of that Premier Competition Union; and
 - (d) subsequently returns to the Heartland Championship Union pursuant to the original Loan Arrangement or Player of Origin Agreement.
- 7.8 Where Regulation 7.7 applies, after returning to the Heartland Championship Union pursuant to Regulation 7.7(d), that Player can continue to be recalled to his Premier Competition Union (pursuant to Regulation 7.7(c)) and return to the Heartland Championship Union (pursuant to Regulation 7.7(d)) for the duration of the Loan Arrangement or Player of Origin Agreement.
- 7.9 By **4pm on the last Friday in November in each year**, each Heartland Championship Union will provide the NZR with its Post-Season Statutory Declaration. For the avoidance of doubt, the information provided must be complete and must not be false or misleading.

8. LOCAL PLAYERS

- 8.1 For the purposes of this clause 8:
- (a) **“Minimum Number of Games”** means, for the current season in which that club is competing:
 - (i) four Round Robin games; or
 - (ii) if there are less than eight Round Robin games in the current season, then half of the Round Robin games in the current season, rounded up where the season has an odd number of Round Robin games.

- (b) **“Qualifying Injury”** means, when established by evidence to NZR’s satisfaction:
- (i) an injury that prevents a Player from being included in the Playing 23;
 - (ii) the injury occurred after the date in which they were Registered in accordance with clause 8.2(a);
 - (iii) the Player has been a member of at least one Playing 23 in the current season; and
 - (iv) the Player has Played for a club, school or other rugby organisation in a competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union in any calendar year prior to the calendar year in which they are Registered in accordance with clause 8.2(a).

8.2 **“Local Player”** means a Player who:

- (a) is Registered with a club competing in a competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union and has Played (or would have Played if not for a Qualifying Injury) at least the Minimum Number of Games for that club during the current season; and
- (b) has not been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union or national union after the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team); and
- (c) if not eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand, arrived in New Zealand on or before the first Friday of June and has resided in New Zealand since arrival; and
- (d) has completed a World Rugby Clearance from any other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* by the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team).

8.3 Notwithstanding Regulation 8.1(d), a World Rugby Clearance received by the NZR on the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date by 11:59pm and approved by the NZR as soon as practicable thereafter shall be deemed to be approved on the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date for the purposes of these Regulations.

8.4 A Player Registered with a club competing in a club competition under the joint control and jurisdiction of two or more Provincial Unions shall be a Local Player for the Provincial Union within whose Provincial Union boundaries the club the Player is Registered with is located.

9. LOAN PLAYERS

9.1 “Loan Player” means a Player who:

- (a) is Registered on Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date with a club competing in a competition conducted outside the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union; or
- (b) has Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union after the date set out in (a) above; or
- (c) is captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*;

provided that Player is party to a Loan Arrangement as follows:

- (d) the terms of the Loan Arrangement for that Loan Player are recorded in writing in the form set out in Schedule 1;
- (e) the Loan Arrangement is signed by the Lending Provincial Union, the Borrowing Provincial Union and the Loan Player and is provided to the NZR prior to the Loan Player being included in the Playing 23 for the Borrowing Provincial Union; and
- (f) the Loan Player becomes a member of a Playing 23 for the Borrowing Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played their final Round Robin game in the current Heartland Championship; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played five games in the current Heartland Championship.

9.2 There is no limit upon the number of Players that a Provincial Union may lend or borrow.

9.3 A Loan Player can only play for the Lending Provincial Union after having played for the Borrowing Provincial Union if:

- (a) another Lending Provincial Union Player in a similar position is injured; and
- (b) the Loan Player agrees (whether agreed in the terms of the Loan Arrangement or at the time the other Player is injured);

in which case the Loan Player must be selected in the next Playing 23 for the Lending Provincial Union.

10. RETURNING NEW ZEALAND PLAYERS

10.1 "Returning New Zealand Player" means a Player who:

- (a) is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand; and
- (b) has been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team); and
- (c) is not captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*;

provided that:

- (d) the Returning New Zealand Player has completed a World Rugby Clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23;
- (e) the Returning New Zealand Player has not Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to a Provincial Union prior to being Registered (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national team or touring team);
- (f) the Returning New Zealand Player has Played for a club, school or other rugby organisation affiliated to any Provincial Union in any calendar year prior to the calendar year in which they are being Registered;
- (g) the Returning New Zealand Player becomes a member of a Playing 23 of the Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played their final Round Robin game in the current Heartland Championship; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played five games in the current Heartland Championship; and
- (h) the Provincial Union has proven to the satisfaction of the NZR that the Returning New Zealand Player is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand pursuant to *World Rugby Regulation 8 – Eligibility to Play for National Representative Teams* as at the start of the current Heartland Championship Competition and the NZR has confirmed this in writing before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23.

11. OVERSEAS PLAYERS

11.1 “Overseas Player” means a Player who:

- (a) is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand and has been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team); and is captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*; or
- (b) is not eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand and arrived in New Zealand after the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date.

provided that:

- (c) the Overseas Player has completed a World Rugby Clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23; and
- (d) the Overseas Player becomes a member of the Playing 23 of the Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played their final Round Robin game in the current Heartland Championship; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played five games in the current Heartland Championship.

12. PLAYER OF ORIGIN

12.1 “Player of Origin” means a Player who:

- (a) is Registered on the Heartland Championship Cut-Off Date with a club competing in a competition conducted outside the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union; or
- (b) has Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union after the date set out in (a) above; or
- (c) is captured by another Provincial Union pursuant to the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*; and
- (d) during at least three years in which the player was aged 9-18 years (inclusive), played rugby for either a club or school based in that Provincial Union

provided that Player is party to a Player of Origin Agreement as follows:

- (e) the Agreement is signed by the Original Provincial Union, the Current Provincial Union and the Player of Origin and is provided to the NZR prior to the Player of Origin being named in the Playing 23 for the Original Provincial Union; and
- (f) the Player of Origin is named in a Playing 23 of the Original Provincial Union in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played their final Round Robin game in the current Heartland Championship; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, before the Provincial Union has played five games in the current Heartland Championship.

12.2 A Player of Origin can only play for the Current Provincial Union after having played for the Original Provincial Union in the same season if:

- (a) another Current Provincial Union Player in a similar position is injured; and
- (b) the Player of Origin agrees (whether agreed in the terms of the Player of Origin Arrangement or at the time the other Player is injured);

in which case the Player of Origin must be named in the next Playing 23 for the Current Provincial Union.

13. Heartland XV Selection Eligibility

13.1 A Player, in a calendar year, will be eligible to be selected for the Heartland XV Representative Team for that calendar year where the Player:

- (a) is a Local Player; and
- (b) is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand.

13.2 The final decision on selection for all Players of Heartland XV Representative Team squad will be made by the Heartland XV Coach as appointed by NZR.

Part 4 • General

14. CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

- 14.1 These Regulations, to the extent that they apply to the Premier Competition, have been developed pursuant to the Collective Agreement.
- 14.2 Except as provided for in clause 14.3, in the event the NZR wishes to make amendments to these Regulations, to the extent that such amendments relate to the Premier Competition, it must comply with the following process:
- (a) in the first instance, the NZR must meet with the RPC and attempt to obtain its agreement to any amendment;
 - (b) if the RPC withholds agreement, the NZR may proceed to make the amendment (provided that, in that event the RPC may seek to rely upon the problem resolution provisions of the Collective Agreement).
- 14.3 NZR management may, at its discretion subject to consultation with the RPC, make minor or incidental amendments to these Regulations provided consistency with the Collective Agreement is maintained.

15. BREACH OF REGULATIONS

- 15.1 Any breach of these Regulations by a Provincial Union will be dealt with by the NZR in accordance with clause 14 of the *NZR Domestic Competition Regulations*.
- 14.1 Prior to reaching a conclusion that there has been a breach of these Regulations, the NZR will notify the RPC of the nature of the alleged breach and provide the RPC with access to any information and an opportunity to have input into the investigation of any alleged breach, including any submissions RPC wish to make about penalty.

SCHEDULE 1: LOAN ARRANGEMENT FORM

Parties

Player name :

Player ID:

Lending Provincial Union:

Borrowing Provincial Union:

Loan Period

Loan Start Date:

Loan Expiry Date:

Terms of Loan

I DO/DO NOT (*circle one*) wish to return to my Lending Provincial Union in the event of an injury to another Lending Provincial Union Player in a similar position.

Other Terms: (*please list any additional terms here*)

Consents and Confirmations

Signature of Player: Date:

Name of Lending Provincial Union:

Signature of Lending Provincial Union: Date:

(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

Name of Borrowing Provincial Union:

Signature of Borrowing Provincial Union: Date:

(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

SCHEDULE 2: PLAYER OF ORIGIN AGREEMENT FORM

Parties

Player name :

Player ID:

Current Provincial Union:

Original Provincial Union:

Loan Period

Start Date:

Expiry Date:

Terms

I DO/DO NOT (*circle one*) wish to return to my Current Provincial Union in the event of an injury to another Current Provincial Union Player in a similar position.

Other Terms: (*please list any additional terms here*)

Consents and Confirmations

Signature of Player: Date:

Name of Current Provincial Union:

Signature of Current Provincial Union: Date:
(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

Name of Original Provincial Union:

Signature of Original Provincial Union: Date:
(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Competition Regulations Handbook • 2025

Player Movement

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Player Movement Regulations

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Part 1 • Definitions

1. DEFINITIONS

In these Regulations, unless the context requires or indicates otherwise, the following definitions shall apply:

“Captured Union” has the meaning set out in clause 4.1;

“Collective Agreement” means the Collective Agreement entered into by the NZR and the RPC as updated from time to time;

“Contract Year” means the calendar year (commencing on 1 January and concluding on 31 December) and may be defined with reference to a particular year (e.g. Contract Year 2025);

“Development Compensation Fee” means the payment a Transferring Union may be required to make to a Player’s Captured Union pursuant to these Regulations;

“Heartland Championship Captured Player” has the meaning set out in clause 6.1;

“Heartland Championship” means the Heartland Championship as provided for under the NZR Domestic Competition Regulations.

“Heartland Championship Union” means a Provincial Union competing in the Heartland Championship;

“Home Super Rugby Franchise” has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

“NZR” means the New Zealand Rugby Union Incorporated;

“Player” means a rugby union player who is a Premier Competition Captured Player or a Heartland Championship Captured Player;

“Playing 23” means the fifteen selected players plus eight reserves as recorded on the team sheet provided to the NZR for any Premier Competition or any Heartland Championship match;

“Premier Competition Captured Player” has the meaning set out in clause 5.1;

“Premier Competition” means the Premier Competition as provided for under the NZR Domestic Competition Regulations;

“Premier Competition Union” means a Provincial Union competing in the Premier Competition;

“Provincial Union” means an Affiliated Union as defined in the NZR Constitution;

"Provincial Union Contract" means the contract set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Development Contract" means the contract set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Term" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Provincial Union Development Term" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Registered" means, in relation to a player:

- having completed the NZR Senior Player Registration Form for that Contract Year; or
- having an approved Senior Player registration recorded in the NZR online registration system; or
- having an active registration in the National Rugby Database for that Contract Year;

"RPC" means the Rugby Players Collective Inc;

"Super Rugby Competition" has the meaning set out in the Collective Agreement;

"Super Rugby Eligibility Date" is a date specified by the NZR in agreement with the RPC (with such agreement to be reached no later than the end of August in each Contract Year);

"Transfer" is the process by which a Player alters his Provincial Union by moving from his Captured Union to the Transferring Union pursuant to these Regulations;

"Transfer Period" is the period beginning 1 October in one Contract Year to the date two weeks before the commencement date of the Premier Competition in the immediately following Contract Year;

"Transferring Union" in relation to a particular Player means the Provincial Union to which that Player wishes to transfer.

Part 2 • Player Movement

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 These Regulations govern the process by which a Player alters their Provincial Union.
- 2.2 The Transfer of any Player wishing to be eligible to play for a Provincial Union other than the Player's Captured Union must take place in accordance with these Regulations.
- 2.3 There is no restriction upon the number of Players that may Transfer from, or to, any Provincial Union.

3. TRANSFER PERIOD

- 3.1 The Transfer of a Player wishing to play in the Premier Competition must occur in the **Transfer Period**.
- 3.2 If the Transfer of a Player is agreed in writing and notified to the NZR prior to the Super Rugby Eligibility Date (even if it is to take effect at a later date in the Transfer Period) the Player's Transferring Union will be taken into account for the purpose of determining his Home Franchise for the following Super Rugby Competition.
- 3.3 A Player may Transfer only once in the Transfer Period.

4. CAPTURED UNION

- 4.1 A Premier Competition Captured Player or a Heartland Championship Captured Player shall be deemed to be captured by the Provincial Union in which he is currently Registered. This Provincial Union will be the Player's **Captured Union** until otherwise determined pursuant to these Regulations.
- 4.2 A Player is not eligible to be selected for the Playing 23 of a Provincial Union, other than his Captured Union, for the Premier Competition immediately following the Transfer Period during which the Player becomes a Premier Competition Captured Player or Heartland Championship Captured Player unless the Player has transferred in accordance with these Regulations, or has been loaned in accordance with the *NZR Player Eligibility Regulations*.

5. TRANSFER OF PREMIER COMPETITION CAPTURED PLAYERS

- 5.1 A **Premier Competition Captured Player** is a player who is:
 - (a) party to a Provincial Union Contract or a Provincial Union Development Contract at any time during the Transfer Period; or

PART 2

- (b) enrolled in one of the 14 Regional Rugby Academies and Registered with a club affiliated to a Premier Competition Union during the Contract Year in which the Transfer Period commences; or
 - (c) Registered with a club affiliated to a Premier Competition Union and is either:
 - (i) named in any New Zealand Under 20 representative squad announced during the Contract Year in which the Transfer Period commenced; or
 - (ii) named in any New Zealand Under 20 representative squad announced during the Transfer Period.
- 5.2 A Player who is a party to a Provincial Union Contract (or Provincial Union Development Contract) may only Transfer following the expiry of that Player's Provincial Union Term (or Provincial Union Development Term, as the case may be) or earlier termination of these contracts. For the avoidance of doubt, a Player is not in breach of any employment obligation by entering into discussions during his Provincial Union Term or Provincial Union Development Term concerning employment arrangements which are proposed for a period after the expiry of that Term.
- 5.3 A Player who is not a party to a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract may enter into a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract at any time.
- 5.4 A Premier Competition Captured Player may Transfer to another Premier Competition Union during the Transfer Period using the Player Movement Form attached as Schedule 1.
- 5.5 A Premier Competition Captured Player may Transfer to a Heartland Championship Union without using the Player Movement Form. Such Transfer will be completed by registering in the Heartland Championship Union.
- 5.6 No Development Compensation Fee is payable where a Premier Competition Captured Player Transfers.

6. TRANSFER OF HEARTLAND CHAMPIONSHIP CAPTURED PLAYERS

- 6.1 A **Heartland Championship Captured Player** is a player who is:
- (a) Registered with a club affiliated to a Heartland Championship Union and is selected in the Playing 23 of that Heartland Championship Union on one or more occasions during the Heartland Championship taking place at the time the Transfer Period commences; or
 - (b) Registered with a club affiliated to a Heartland Championship Union and is either:

PART 2

- (i) named in any New Zealand Under 20 representative squad announced during the Contract Year in which the Transfer Period commences; or
 - (ii) named in any New Zealand Under 20 representative squad announced during the Transfer Period; or
 - (c) Registered with a club affiliated to a Heartland Championship Union and is either:
 - (i) named in the New Zealand Secondary Schools representative squad announced during the Contract Year in which the Transfer Period commences; or
 - (ii) named in any New Zealand Secondary Schools representative squad announced during the Transfer Period.
- 6.2 A Heartland Championship Captured Player may Transfer to a Premier Competition Union during the Transfer Period using the Player Movement Form attached as Schedule 2. A Heartland Championship Captured Player may Transfer to a Heartland Championship Union without using the Player Movement Form. Such Transfer will be completed by registering in the Heartland Championship Union.
- 6.3 A Player who is a party to an agreement with a Heartland Championship Union may only Transfer following the expiry of that agreement.
- 6.4 A Development Compensation Fee may be payable where a Heartland Championship Captured Player Transfers to a Premier Competition Union. The maximum Development Compensation Fee in these circumstances is as follows:

Category of Player	Maximum Development Compensation Fee
<i>"Heartland Championship" as defined in 6.1(a)</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>"New Zealand Under 20" as defined in 6.1 (b)</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>"New Zealand Secondary Schools" as defined in 6.1 (c)</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>

- 6.5 Where a Heartland Championship Captured Player wishes to Transfer to a Premier Competition Union there are two alternatives available to the Transferring Union:
- (a) the Transferring Union may agree a Development Compensation Fee with the Captured Union to be paid at the time the Transfer takes place during the Transfer Period; or
 - (b) the Transferring Union may agree at the time of the Transfer to pay the Captured Union a Development Compensation Fee for that Heartland Championship Captured Player in the event that the Transferring Union contracts that Player on a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union

PART 2

Development Contract during the Contract Year in which the Transfer Period finishes. For the avoidance of doubt:

- (i) the amount of such Development Compensation Fee need not be determined at the time of the Transfer; and
- (ii) the Development Compensation Fee will be payable at the time the Player enters into a Provincial Union Contract or Provincial Union Development Contract.

In the event the Transferring Union cannot agree the amount of the Development Compensation Fee with the Captured Union, the Transferring Union may refer the matter to the CEO of the NZR. Upon referral, the CEO will establish a panel of senior management to determine the amount of the Development Compensation Fee taking into account the submissions of the Captured Union and Transferring Union and any other interested stakeholder, the number of years that the player has been registered to the Captured Union, the costs incurred in developing the player, the financial capacity of the Transferring Union to pay, and any other relevant factors.

6.6 In the event a Transferring Union fails to pay to the Captured Union any agreed Development Compensation Fee the NZR may deduct the amount from the next NZR grant due to be paid to the Transferring Union.

6.7 The NZR shall within 10 working days of deducting it from any NZR grant, pay the full amount to the Captured Union.

7. NOTIFICATION OF TRANSFER

7.1 No Transfer of a Player to a Premier Competition Union will be recognised by the NZR unless a Player Movement Form as set out in Schedule 1 or 2 has been submitted to the NZR.

7.2 All Player Movement Forms must be submitted to the NZR prior to the end of the Transfer Period.

7.3 At the end of the Transfer Period the NZR shall notify all Provincial Unions of all Transfers to Premier Competition Unions that occurred during the Transfer Period. Any Player will no longer be captured by his Captured Union and shall be entitled to be selected and play for the Playing 23 of the Transferring Union from the transfer date noted on the Player Movement Form submitted to the NZR or on the date that the transfer is acknowledged by the NZR, whichever is the later.

Part 3 • General

8. CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

- 8.1 These Regulations have been developed pursuant to the Collective Agreement.
- 8.2 Except as provided for in clause 8.3, in the event the NZR wishes to make amendments to these Regulations it must comply with the following process:
- (a) in the first instance, the NZR must meet with the RPC and attempt to obtain its agreement to any amendment;
 - (b) if the RPC withholds agreement, the NZR may proceed to make the amendment (provided that, in that event the RPC may seek to rely upon the problem resolution provisions of the Collective Agreement).
- 8.3 NZR management may, at its discretion subject to consultation with the RPC, make minor or incidental amendments to these Regulations provided consistency with the Collective Agreement is maintained.

9. BREACH OF REGULATIONS

- 9.1 Any breach of these Regulations by a Provincial Union will be dealt with by the NZR in accordance with clause 14 of the NZR *Domestic Competition Regulations*.
- 9.2 Prior to reaching a conclusion that there has been a breach of these Regulations, the NZR will notify the RPC of the nature of the alleged breach and provide the RPC with access to any information and an opportunity to have input into the investigation of any alleged breach, including any submissions RPC wish to make about penalty.

SCHEDULE 1: PLAYER MOVEMENT FORM, PREMIER COMPETITION CAPTURED PLAYER

Player Details

Player name:

Player ID:

(a) Captured Union (Union transferring from):

(b) Transferring Union (Union transferring to):

Status during the Transfer Period (tick relevant option/s):

- ☐ PUC or PUDC player ☐
- ☐ Rugby Academy member ☐
- ☐ New Zealand Under 20 Representative ☐

This Transfer will take effect from:

Signature of Player:

Details of Transfer

We, the Provincial Unions specified below, agree that the above named Player will Transfer in accordance with the NZR Player Movement Regulations. From the Transfer Date the Player will be eligible to play for the Transferring Union in the Premier Competition or Heartland Championship. If this form is agreed by all parties and notified to the NZR before the Super Rugby Eligibility Date this Transfer will be taken into account for the Super Rugby Selection Process, regardless of the Transfer Date.

Name of Captured Provincial Union:

Signature of Captured Provincial Union: Date:.....
(Signature of Authorise Person from PU)

Name:..... Position:

Name of Transferring Provincial Union:

Signature of Transferring Provincial Union: Date:.....
(Signature of Authorise Person from PU)

Name:..... Position:

SCHEDULE 2: PLAYER MOVEMENT FORM, HEARTLAND CHAMPIONSHIP CAPTURED PLAYER

Player Details

Player name:

Player ID:

(a) Captured Union (Union transferring from):

(b) Transferring Union (Union transferring to):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Heartland Championship PU Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. New Zealand Under 20 Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. New Zealand Secondary Schools Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This Transfer will take effect from:

Signature of Player:

Details of Transfer

We, the Provincial Unions specified below, agree that the above named Player will Transfer in accordance with the NZR Player Movement Regulations. From the Transfer Date the Player will be eligible to play for the Transferring Union in the Premier Competition or Heartland Championship. If this form is agreed by all parties and notified to the NZR before the Super Rugby Eligibility Date this Transfer will be taken into account for the Super Rugby Selection Process, regardless of the Transfer Date.

Name of Captured Provincial Union:

Signature of Captured Provincial Union: Date:.....

(Signature of Authorise Person from PU)

Name:..... Position:

Name of Transferring Provincial Union:

Signature of Transferring Provincial Union: Date:.....

(Signature of Authorise Person from PU)

Name:..... Position:

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Competition Regulations Handbook • 2025

Domestic Competitions

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Domestic Competition Regulations

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1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 In these Regulations, unless the context requires or indicates otherwise, the following definitions shall apply:

"Board" means the Board of the NZR;

"Competition Manual(s)" means the manual(s) published by the NZR from time to time relating to the operation of the Domestic Competition(s);

"Elite XV Competition" means the inter-regional XVs competition between Super Clubs as provided for under the NZR Elite XV Competition Regulations outlined in the NZR Elite XV Competition Regulations Handbook;

"Finals Round" has the meaning set out in clauses 12-15 of Appendix 1 and clauses 11-12 of Appendix 2;

"NZR Fixture" has the meaning set out in the NZR Regulations Relating to the Definition of an NZR Fixture, the Order of Precedence and First Class Fixtures;

"Home Union" has the meaning set out in clause 5.3;

"Home Match" means a match to be played at the venue specified in the Provincial Union's application for participation in the Domestic Competitions;

"NZR" means the New Zealand Rugby Union Incorporated;

"Playing Uniform" means rugby jerseys, shorts, tracksuits, socks, boots, boot studs, laces, headgear, mouth guards, mitts, visible undergarments, protectors, elastic bandages and any other type of "strapping", used for the purposes of participating in, or preparing for, any rugby match, including as a substitute;

"Provincial Union" means an Affiliated Union as defined in the NZR Constitution;

"Round Robin" has the meaning set out in clause 5 of Appendix 1 and clause 6 of Appendix 2;

"Visiting Union" has the meaning set out in clause 6.1.

"Women's Competition" means the national women's domestic inter-provincial competition known as the Farah Palmer Cup.

2. COMPOSITION

- 2.1 The domestic interprovincial competitions are conducted by the NZR on an invitation basis and there is no obligation for a Provincial Union to participate.
- 2.2 In the event that a Provincial Union's application to participate in the domestic competitions set out in clause 2.3 below (**"Domestic Competitions"**) is accepted by

the NZR, it is a condition of continued participation in the Domestic Competitions that the Provincial Union comply with the terms of their application and the Participation Agreement as far as that relates to participation in the Domestic Competitions.

2.3 The following Domestic Competitions will be played:

- (a) Premier Competition;
- (b) Heartland Championship; and
- (c) Women's Competition.

2.4 From 2022, the Elite XV Competition (i.e. Super Rugby Aupiki) will be played in accordance with the NZR Elite XV Competition Regulations Handbook. For the avoidance of doubt, unless expressly stated in the NZR Competitions Handbook, the provisions of this NZR Competitions Handbook do not apply to the Elite XV Competition.

3. FORMAT

3.1 The Premier Competition will be played in the format set out in Appendix 1 to these Regulations.

3.2 The Heartland Championship will be played in the format set out in Appendix 2 to these Regulations.

3.3 The Women's Competition will be played in the format set out in Appendix 3 to these Regulations.

4. SCHEDULING AND CANCELLATION

4.1 The NZR will set the dates, venues and times for all Domestic Competition matches.

4.2 The NZR has the right to appoint a match as the main curtain-raiser for any Domestic Competition match.

4.3 All Domestic Competition matches during the Premier Competition, Heartland Championship and Women's Competition are NZR Fixtures.

4.4 Subject to clause 4.6, each Provincial Union participating in the Domestic Competition must play all matches that it is scheduled to play as directed by the NZR pursuant to clause 4.1.

4.5 Subject to clause 4.6, if:

- (a) a Domestic Competition match is not played on its scheduled day; and

- (b) in the opinion of the NZR, a valid reason exists for that Domestic Competition match not being played on that day;

the NZR shall, in consultation with the Provincial Unions who were to have participated in the match and with the cooperation of those Provincial Unions, arrange for the match to be rescheduled on an alternative date (which is to be as soon as reasonably possible after the originally scheduled date) and, if required by the NZR at an alternative venue.

- 4.6 If a Domestic Competition match is not played on its scheduled day and, in the opinion of the NZR, no valid reason exists for that match not being played on that day, the NZR may, in its discretion:
 - (a) determine that one or both of the Provincial Unions who were to have participated in the match was responsible for the match not being played on that day; and
 - (b) impose any of the penalties set out in clause 14 of these Regulations on that Provincial Union or Unions.
- 4.7 If a Domestic Competition match is not played on its scheduled day, the NZR may direct that the match is cancelled and the points for the match will be shared on the basis of two points to each team having taken into account the following considerations:
 - (a) the result of that match would have no effect on determining the quarter-finalists (if relevant) semi-finalists (if relevant), or the finalists of that Competition; and
 - (b) both of the Provincial Unions who would have participated in the match agree to the match being cancelled.
- 4.8 All Provincial Unions are required to ensure that all travel arrangements made for its Domestic Competition team allow for the arrival of the team with sufficient time to ensure that Domestic Competition matches are played at the scheduled date, time and venue.
- 4.9 All Provincial Unions are required to ensure that they have a home venue that meets the "Minimum Standards" as set out in the Competition Manual available for the entire period of the Domestic Competition including any Finals Round. In the event that a Provincial Union advises the NZR that it does not have a home venue available for a Home Match scheduled in accordance with clause 4.1 to the satisfaction of the NZR the match will be moved at the NZR's discretion to:
 - (a) the home venue of the Visiting Union participating in the match; or
 - (b) an alternative neutral venue as determined by the NZR.

5. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

- 5.1 The NZR will appoint referees for all matches in the Domestic Competitions, unless otherwise directed in the Competition Manual.
- 5.2 The NZR will appoint both assistant referees and the television match official for all Finals Round matches, unless otherwise directed in the Competition Manual.
- 5.3 The Provincial Union for whom the Domestic Competition match is a Home Match (**"the Home Union"**) will appoint two suitably qualified and experienced referees as assistant referees for Round Robin matches and shall identify one of those assistant referees as the reserve referee for that match.
- 5.4 The Home Union will appoint other match officials as may be directed by the NZR as per the Competition Manual.

6. FUNDING

- 6.1 The NZR will provide travel for the team of the Provincial Union for whom the Domestic Competition match is not a Home Match (**"the Visiting Union"**) as follows:
 - (a) Except as provided for in (c) below, air travel for the Visiting Union from the most appropriate departure airport (as determined by the NZR in consultation with the Visiting Union) to the most appropriate airport close to the venue of the match.
 - (b) Coach transport to and from:
 - (i) The home base departure point, where the airport is outside the home base city or town.
 - (ii) The arrival point, where the match is to be played outside the environs of the arrival city or town.
 - (c) Where (in the opinion of the NZR) air travel is impractical, coach transport from the home base to the venue. Guidelines will be provided in the Competition Manual.
- 6.2 All other expenses associated with the Visiting Union's participation in all Domestic Competitions matches are the responsibility of the Visiting Union, subject to the express provisions of these Regulations and Appendices.
- 6.3 Gate charges for all matches will be determined at the discretion of the Home Union.

7. COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

- 7.1 Each Union will allocate complimentary tickets to the following with the number to be prescribed from time to time in the Competition Manual:

- (a) To the Visiting Union.
- (b) To the NZR for distribution to the NZR's sponsors and officials or other persons nominated by the NZR.

8. MATCH BALLS

- 8.1 Only balls manufactured or supplied by the NZR's official supplier of rugby footballs are to be used for Domestic Competition matches.

9. PLAYING STRIP COLOUR CLASHES

- 9.1 Where the NZR determines a colour clash will arise in a Domestic Competition match, the team that will be required to play in an alternative strip will be determined as follows:
 - (a) in accordance with any approval of colours given by the CEO in the NZR Constitution; and
 - (b) if not determined by (a) above, then the Visiting Team will play in its alternative strip.

10. ADVERTISING ON PLAYER UNIFORMS

- 10.1 Any advertising, sponsor or manufacturer marks on Playing Uniforms must comply with the directions made by the NZR (in accordance with World Rugby Regulations), with respect to size, location and number of marks.
- 10.2 Provincial Unions are required to affix the Domestic Competition logo, as provided by the NZR, to the centre bottom of the right hand sleeve of their team's playing jersey including any alternate jersey. Each Provincial Union will provide the NZR with an example of its Team's playing jersey each year for promotional and display purposes.

11. TEAM NUMBERING

- 11.1 All playing jerseys must be numbered according to generally accepted Rugby practice and in particular in the manner provided in Regulation 15.1 of the World Rugby Regulations Relating to the Game.

12. TEAM NAMING

- 12.1 Provincial Unions are required to announce publicly 24 hours prior to the kick-off of any Domestic Competition match the 15 players who will start that match and their respective positions together with the eight replacements/substitutes.

13. EXPERIMENTAL LAW VARIATION OR INNOVATION

- 13.1 Any temporary innovation or experimental variation, (including, for example, the length of the game, a fan engagement initiative or other game innovation introduced into a Domestic Competition following consultation with the Provincial Unions), may be included in the Competition Manual and, unless in direct conflict with a provision in these Regulations, will be deemed to be enforceable during the Domestic Competition to which the relevant Competition Manual applies.

14. PENALTY

- 14.1 If satisfied that an administrative error or an oversight has occurred that may cause or has caused a breach of these Regulations, or may result or has resulted in unfair consequences that are contrary to the purpose of one or more provisions of the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*, the *NZR Player Eligibility Regulations* or the *NZR Player Eligibility Regulations for the Women's Competition*, NZR Management can, at its discretion, take the necessary steps to remedy the error or oversight or avoid the unfair consequences without the need to refer the matter to the Board if the implications of the breach or unfair consequences are or would be manifestly disproportionate or unfair in light of the conduct in question.
- 14.2 Subject to clause 14.1, the Board has jurisdiction to determine whether or not there has been any breach of these Regulations, the *NZR Player Movement Regulations*, the *NZR Player Eligibility Regulations*, or the *NZR Player Eligibility Regulations for the Women's Competition*. For the avoidance of doubt, any breach of the *NZR Salary Cap Regulations* will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *NZR Salary Cap Regulations* and not these Regulations.
- 14.3 Where the Board considers a breach of the Regulations referred to in clause 14.2 has occurred it may impose any penalty as, in its discretion it considers appropriate, including one or more of the following:
- (a) a financial penalty (which may, in the case of a Provincial Union in breach of clause 4.6, be paid in whole or in part to the Provincial Union whose team were available to play);
 - (b) a deduction in points awarded to a Provincial Union on the points table for the Domestic Competition; and/or
 - (c) where the Board considers that there are exceptional circumstances and that a fair result requires a reallocation of points, any points deducted from a Provincial Union may be awarded to another Provincial Union or Provincial Unions on the points table for the Domestic Competition;
 - (d) the awarding of points to the Provincial Union not at fault;
 - (e) expulsion from the Domestic Competition.

14.4 Any breach of the relevant Competition Manual shall, at the sole discretion of the NZR, be treated in the same manner as if it is a breach of these Regulations and dealt with in accordance with this clause 14.

15. DISPUTES AND INTERPRETATION

15.1 Subject to Rule 10 of the NZR Constitution, any dispute as to:

- (a) The meaning or interpretation of these Regulations; or
- (b) As to any matter or questions relating to matches played as part of the Domestic Competition but not provided for in these Regulations will be determined by the NZR.

Appendix 1 • Regulations Relating Solely to the Premier Competition

ENTRY

1. Entry to the Premier Competition is at the discretion of the Board.
2. Continued participation in the Premier Competition is at the discretion of the Board acting reasonably and is subject to on-going compliance with the terms of application and the Participation Agreement as far as it relates to the Domestic Competition.
3. The Premier Competition will contain up to 14 Provincial Unions as determined by the Board.

FORMAT

4. The Premier Competition will be played between all 14 Premier Competition Unions.
5. Each team plays ten competition matches (five home games and five away games) ("**Round Robin**") prior to quarter-finals and/ or semi-finals and/ or finals ("**Finals Rounds**").
 - a. The Round Robin as set out in clauses 7 - 9 of this Appendix; followed by
 - b. The Finals Round as set out in clauses 13 - 15 of this Appendix.

SEEDING

6. The seedings for the Premier Competition will be allocated in accordance with this clause:

1 st seed	The winner of the final of the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year.
2 nd seed	The loser of the final of the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year.
3 rd seed	<p>The losing semi-finalist in the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year which, in that year, had the higher aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin of the losing semi-finalists.</p> <p>If no semi-finals were played in the immediately preceding year, then of the remaining Premier Competition Unions, the Union that finished with the highest aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin.</p>
4 th seed	The losing semi-finalist in the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year which, in that year, had the lower aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin of the losing semi-finalists.

APPENDIX 1

If no semi-finals were played in the immediately preceding year, then of the remaining Premier Competition Unions, the Union that finished with the next highest aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin.

- 5th - 8th seeds The losing quarter-finalists in the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year, ranked according to their aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin in that year.

If no quarter-finals were played in the immediately preceding year, then of the remaining Premier Competition Unions, the Union that finished with the next highest aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin.

- 9th – 14th seeds The remaining Provincial Unions that played in the Premier Competition in the immediately preceding year, ranked according to their aggregate number of competition points in the Round Robin in that year.

- a. In the event that two or more Premier Competition Unions have the same number of competition points, that tie will be broken in accordance with clause 14 of this Appendix.

ROUND ROBIN

7. The Round Robin will consist of:
- a. Teams finishing 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 in the previous year will all play each other, and four **crossover matches** against teams finishing 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.
 - b. Teams finishing 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 in the previous year will all play each other, and four **crossover matches** against teams finishing 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13.
8. The NZR will be responsible for determining the draw for the Round Robin including the order of matches and the allocation of home and away matches.
9. The way in which the crossover matches will be determined is as follows:
- i. In the first round of picks, matches are selected by odd seeded teams in reverse order of seeding. These matches will be played as home matches for the odd seeded teams.
 - 1. Seed 13
 - 2. Seed 11
 - 3. Seed 9
 - 4. Seed 7
 - 5. Seed 5
 - 6. Seed 3
 - 7. Seed 1

Round 2

- ii. In the second round of picks, matches are selected by even-seeded teams in reverse order of seeding. These matches will be played as home matches for the even seeded teams.

1. Seed 14
2. Seed 12
3. Seed 10
4. Seed 8
5. Seed 6
6. Seed 4
7. Seed 2

Round 3

- i. In the third round of picks, matches are selected by odd seeded teams in order of seeding. These matches will be played as home matches for the even seeded teams;

1. Seed 1
2. Seed 3
3. Seed 5
4. Seed 7
5. Seed 9
6. Seed 11
7. Seed 13

Round 4

- i. In the fourth round of picks, matches are selected by even seeded teams in order of seeding. These matches will be played as home matches for the odd seeded teams;

1. Seed 2
2. Seed 4
3. Seed 6
4. Seed 8
5. Seed 10
6. Seed 12
7. Seed 14

- b. in making any selection:

- i. a team may not select a team that it will already play (for example, as a result of a pick made by another team in a previous round); and

- ii. where the process necessarily results in the situation described in the previous paragraph, the previous two picks in that round will be ruled void and must be made again (and must be made differently).
- c. the above selections will be made, on a sequential basis, on the same day at an event dedicated for this purpose.

STATUS OF MATCHES

10. All matches in the Round Robin carry full competition points.

TIES DURING OR AT CONCLUSION OF ROUND ROBIN

11. In the event that two or more teams have the same number of competition points, the positions (or seedings) of the Premier Competition Unions will be determined in accordance with the following criteria, which will be applied in the order in which they appear below until the tie is broken:
- a. Where three or more Premier Competition Unions are tied:
 - i. If all tied Premier Competition Unions have played each other the tied Premier Competition Union with the most competition points in that year against the other tied Premier Competition Unions shall have the higher position (or seeding).
 - ii. If all tied Premier Competition Unions have not played against the other tied Premier Competition Unions, the tied Premier Competition Union which has the higher points difference in the Round Robin will have the higher position (or seeding).
 - b. Where any two Premier Competition Unions are tied:
 - i. The winner of any Round Robin match played between the two Premier Competition Unions in that year will have the higher position (or seeding).
 - ii. The Premier Competition Union which has the higher points difference in the Round Robin will have the higher position (or seeding).
 - c. If a tie cannot be broken by the criteria set out in subclauses a and b of this clause:
 - i. The Premier Competition Union that scored the most tries in the Round Robin shall have the higher position (or seeding).

- ii. Or if the number of tries is tied, the Premier Competition Union that scored the most points in the Round Robin shall have the higher position (or seeding).
- iii. Or, if the points in the Round Robin are also tied, the toss of a coin will be used.

FINALS RANKING

12. The eight Premier Competition Unions with the highest number of competition points at the completion of the Round Robin will proceed to the Finals Round. In the event that two or more Premier Competition Unions have the same number of competition points, that tie will be broken in accordance with clause 11 of this Appendix. The remaining 6 Provincial Unions will take no further part in the Premier Competition.

Finals Rankings

- 1. 1: The Premier Competition Union with the highest number of competition points at the completion of the Round Robin; and
- 2. 2 – 8: The Premier Competition Unions with the next-highest number of competition points at the completion of the Round Robin in descending order from 2 to 8.

FINALS ROUND

13. Based on the competition points for the Premier Competition, each Finals Round will be played as follows, with the top ranked team hosting:

Quarter-finals:

QF 1 1 plays 8;

QF 2 2 plays 7;

QF 3 3 plays 6; and

QF 4 4 plays 5.

Semi-finals:

SF 1 Top ranking quarter-final winner hosts against lowest-ranked quarter-final winner; and

SF 2 2nd highest ranked quarter-final winner hosts 3rd highest ranked quarter-final winner.

14. The winning semi-finalists will play each other in the Premier Competition final.
15. The winning finalist will be awarded the Premier Competition trophy.

VENUES FOR FINALS ROUND

16. The venue for all Finals Round matches will be the home venue of the Premier Competition Union with the higher finals ranking of the two teams participating in that match. This is subject to the NZR having the right to change the venue if circumstances necessitate it.

TIES IN FINALS ROUND

17. In the event that teams are tied at the end of a Finals Round match, the winner will be determined by the following criteria, which shall be applied in the order in which they appear until a result is determined:
 - a. The winner following a further ten (10) minutes of extra time each way.
 - b. The team scoring the most tries in the match (including extra time).
 - c. The winner of any Round Robin match played in that year between the two teams.
 - d. The team having the higher points difference at the end of the Round Robin.
 - e. The team that scored the most tries in the Round Robin.
 - f. The team that scored the most points in the Round Robin.
 - g. The team with the higher finals ranking.

FINALS PAYMENT

18. The Visiting Union for a semi-final and final matches will be entitled to receive payment of actual and reasonable costs from the Home Union with the maximum amounts to be determined by the NZR from time to time and set out in the Competition Manual.
19. The NZR reserves the right to audit the ticket receipts of Home Unions for all Finals Round matches and the Unions must provide the NZR with access to all relevant records and such assistance as the NZR may reasonably require for this purpose.

Appendix 2 • Regulations Relating Solely to the Heartland Championship

ENTRY

1. Entry to the Heartland Championship is at the discretion of the NZR.
2. Continued participation in the Heartland Championship is at the discretion of the NZR acting reasonably and is subject to on-going compliance with the terms of application and the Participation Agreement as far as it relates to the Domestic Competitions.
3. The Heartland Championship will contain up to 12 Provincial Unions as determined by the Board.

MEADS CUP AND LOCHORE CUP

4. The Meads Cup and the Lochore Cup will be contested in the Heartland Championship.
5. If the holder of either the Meads Cup or the Lochore Cup is not a participant in the Heartland Championship, that Cup will be returned to the NZR.

FORMAT

6. The Heartland Championship will be played over ten weeks:
 - a. In one round of pool play ("**Round Robin**"); followed by
 - b. semi-finals and finals ("**the Finals Rounds**") in the Meads Cup and the Lochore Cup.

ROUND ROBIN

7. The Round Robin will consist of each Provincial Union playing eight matches, four of which will be home matches and four will be away matches.
8. The NZR will be responsible for determining the draw for the Round Robin including the order of matches and the allocation of home and away matches.

STATUS OF MATCHES

9. All matches in the Round Robin carry full competition points.

TIES DURING OR AT CONCLUSION OF ROUND ROBIN

10. In the event that two or more Provincial Unions in the Heartland Championship have the same number of competition points, the positions of the Provincial Unions will be determined in accordance with the following criteria, which will be applied in the order in which they appear below until a result as to the positions of the relevant Provincial Unions is determined:

- a. Where three or more Provincial Unions are tied:
 - i. If all tied Provincial Unions have played each other the tied Provincial Union with the most competition points in that year against the other tied Provincial Unions shall have the higher position.
 - ii. If all tied Provincial Unions have not played against the other tied Provincial Unions, the tied Provincial Union which has the higher points difference in the Round Robin will have the higher position.
- b. Where any two Provincial Unions are tied:
 - i. The winner of any Round Robin match played between the two Provincial Unions in that year will have the higher position.
 - ii. The Provincial Union which has the higher points difference in the Round Robin will have the higher position.
- c. If a tie cannot be broken by the criteria set out in subclauses a and b of this clause:
 - i. The Provincial Union that scored the most tries in the Round Robin shall have the higher position.
 - ii. The Provincial Union that scored the most points in the Round Robin shall have the higher position.
 - iii. The toss of a coin will be used.

FINALS ROUND

- 11. The four Provincial Unions with the highest number of competition points at the completion of the Round Robin will proceed to the Meads Cup Finals.
- 12. The four Provincial Unions with the fifth highest to the eighth highest number of competition points at the completion of the Round Robin will proceed to the Lochore Cup Finals.

MEADS CUP FINALS

- 13. The semi-finals in the Meads Cup will be played as follows:
 - a. The Provincial Union in the Meads Cup semi-finals with the highest number of competition points in the Round Robin will play the Provincial Union in the Meads Cup semi-finals with the lowest number of competition points in the Round Robin; and
 - b. The Provincial Union in the Meads Cup semi-finals with the second-highest number of competition points in the Round Robin will play the Provincial

Union in the Meads Cup semi-finals with the second-lowest number of competition points in the Round Robin.

14. The winning semi-finalists will play each other in the Meads Cup final. The winning finalist will be awarded the Meads Cup.

LOCHORE CUP FINALS

15. The semi-finals in the Lochore Cup will be played as follows:
 - a. The Provincial Union in the Lochore Cup semi-finals with the highest number of competition points in the Round Robin will play the Provincial Union in the Lochore Cup semi-finals with the lowest number of competition points in the Round Robin.
 - b. The Provincial Union in the Lochore Cup semi-finals with the second-highest number of competition points in the Round Robin will play the Provincial Union in the Lochore Cup semi-finals with the second-lowest number of competition points in the Round Robin.
16. The winning semi-finalists will play each other in the Lochore Cup final. The winning finalist will be awarded the Lochore Cup.

VENUES FOR FINALS ROUND

17. The venue for all Finals Round matches will be the home venue of the Provincial Union with the higher number of competition points in the Round Robin of the two teams participating in that match. Ties will be broken in accordance with clause 10 of this Appendix.

TIES IN FINALS PLAY

18. In the event that teams are tied at the end of a semi-final or final match, the winner will be determined by the following criteria, which shall be applied in the order in which they appear until a result is determined:
 - a. The winner following a further ten (10) minutes of extra time each way.
 - b. The team scoring the most tries in the match (including extra time).
 - c. The winner of any Round Robin match played in that year between the two teams.
 - d. The team having the higher points difference in the Round Robin.
 - e. The team that scored the most tries in the Round Robin.
 - f. The team that scored the most points in the Round Robin.
 - g. The team with the higher number of competition points in the Round Robin.

FINALS PAYMENT

19. The NZR will pay an amount to the Visiting Union competing in a semi-final or final match in either the Meads Cup or the Lochore Cup, with the amount to be determined by the NZR from time to time and set out in the Competition Manual.
20. The NZR reserves the right to audit the ticket receipts of Home Unions for all Finals Round matches and the Unions must provide the NZR with access to all relevant records and such assistance as the NZR may reasonably require for this purpose.

Appendix 3 • Regulations Relating Solely to the Women's Competition

ENTRY

1. Entry to the Women's Competition is at the invitation and discretion of the NZR.
2. Continued participation in the Women's Competition is at the discretion of the NZR acting reasonably.

FORMAT

3. The Women's Competition format will be determined by the NZR following consultation with Provincial Unions and subject to team numbers. The format will be set out in the Competition Manual.

SCHEDULING

4. The NZR will be responsible for determining the draw for the Women's Competition including the order of matches and the allocation of home and away matches.
5. Each Provincial Union participating in the Women's Competition must play all matches that it is scheduled to play as directed by the NZR.

STATUS OF MATCHES

6. All matches in one round of pool play ("the Round Robin") carry full competition points.

TIES DURING OR AT CONCLUSION OF ROUND ROBIN

7. In the event that two or more Provincial Unions finish the Round Robin with the same number of competition points, the finishing positions of the Provincial Unions will be determined in accordance with the following criteria, which will be applied in the order in which they appear below until a result as to the positions of the relevant Provincial Unions is determined:
 - a) If three or more Provincial Unions are tied, the tie will be determined by scoring points differential of the relevant teams. The Provincial Union which has the higher points differential in the Round Robin will have the higher position.
 - b) Where any two Provincial Unions are tied:

- i) the winner of any Round Robin match played between the two Provincial Unions in that year shall have the higher position;
- ii) the Provincial Union which has the higher points difference in the Round Robin will have the higher position.

FINALS RANKING & FINALS ROUND

8. The finals ranking will be determined by the NZR as set out in the Domestic Competitions Manual.

VENUES FOR FINAL

9. The venue for the final will be determined by the NZR.

TIES IN FINALS PLAY

10. In the event that teams are tied at the end of a quarter-final (if relevant) semi-final or final match, the winner will be determined by the following criteria, which shall be applied in the order in which they appear until a result is determined:
- a) The winner following a further ten (10) minutes of extra time each way.
 - b) The team scoring the most tries in the match (including extra time).
 - c) The winner of any Round Robin match played in that year between the two teams.
 - d) The team having the higher points difference at the end of the Round Robin.
 - e) The team that scored the most tries in the Round Robin.
 - f) The team that scored the most points in the Round Robin.
 - g) The team with the higher finals ranking.

FINALS PAYMENT

11. The NZR will pay an amount to the Visiting Union competing in the final, with the maximum amount to be determined by the NZR from time to time and set out in the Competition Manual. For the avoidance of doubt, if the final is played at a neutral venue, both Provincial Unions will be entitled to a finals payment.

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Competition Regulations Handbook • 2025

Player Eligibility Regulations for the Women's Competition

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

2025 Women's Competition • Key Dates

25 July	Cut-Off Date – Final day for players to move Provincial Unions or be cleared into New Zealand from overseas and still be considered as a Local Player
9 August	Women's Competition Commences
Three Games	Loan Players (excluding Front Row Players) – Loan Arrangement Form must be filed with the NZR before the Provincial Union has played three games in the current Women's Competition
Three Games	Overseas or Returning New Zealand Players – must have been named in a Playing 23 before the Provincial Union has played three games in the current Women's Competition
Final Round Robin	Front Row Loan Players – Loan Arrangement Form must be filed with the NZR before the Provincial Union has played its final Round Robin game of the Women's Competition for the current season
21-22 September	Championship Competition concludes
4-5 October	Premiership Competition Concludes

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Player Eligibility Regulations for the Women's Competition

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NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Player Eligibility Regulations for the Women's Competition

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. DEFINITIONS

In these Regulations, unless the context requires or indicates otherwise, the following definitions shall apply:

"Borrowing Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union to which a Player is loaned pursuant to a Loan Arrangement;

"Lending Provincial Union" means the Provincial Union from which a Player is loaned pursuant to a Loan Arrangement;

"Local Player" has the meaning set out in clause 3;

"Local Club Player" has the meaning set out in clause 3.1.b);

"Loan Arrangement" means the form set out in Schedule 1;

"Loan Player" has the meaning set out in clause 4;

"NZR" means the New Zealand Rugby Union Incorporated;

"Overseas Player" has the meaning set out in clause 6;

"Played" means to have taken the field in a rugby union match;

"Player" means a rugby union player;

"Playing 23" means the fifteen selected players plus a maximum of eight reserves as recorded on the team sheet provided to the NZR for any Women's Competition match. For the avoidance of doubt, all players recorded on the team sheet must be present at the match;

"Provincial Union" means an Affiliated Union as defined in the NZR Constitution;

"Registered" means, in relation to a Player:

- having completed the NZR Senior Player Registration Form for the current year in which the Women's Competition is taking place; or

- having an approved online Senior Player registration recorded in the NZR online registration system for the current year in which the Women's Competition is taking place; or
- having an active registration in the National Rugby Database for that current year in which the Women's Competition is taking place;

"Returning New Zealand Player" has the meaning set out in clause 5;

"Round Robin" has the meaning set out in Appendix 3 of NZR Domestic Competition Regulations;

"Women's Competition" means the Women's national inter-provincial XVs competition as provided for under the NZR Domestic Competition Regulations;

"Women's Competition Cut-Off Date" means the Friday two weeks before the date of the first match of Women's Competition;

"Women's Competition Union" means a Provincial Union competing in the Women's Competition.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. This Part governs which Players can play in the Women's Competition.

2.2. All Players must be female.

2.3. Players must be at least 16 years of age as at the date of the first match in the Women's Competition in the particular year in order to participate in the Women's Competition. Any Provincial Union wishing to select a front row player who is under 19 years of age as at that date, or any other player who is under 18 years of age as at that date, must obtain prior written approval from the NZR in the manner set out in the Competition Manual.

2.4. Each Provincial Union team will comprise only of players who are:

- a) Local Players in accordance with clause 3;
- b) Loan Players in accordance with clause 4;
- c) Returning New Zealand Players in accordance with clause 5; and
- d) Overseas Players in accordance with clause 6.

3. LOCAL PLAYERS

3.1. **"Local Player"** means a Player who:

- a) is Registered with a club competing in a competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union; and

- b) has not been Registered with, or played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union or national union after the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team in the relevant year); or
 - c) are registered with a club that is not affiliated to that Provincial Union, but who play for a club team that plays primarily in that Provincial Union's club competition and the Provincial Union that the Player's club is affiliated to does not have a team in the NZR Women's Competition ("Local Club Player"); and
 - d) has completed a World Rugby clearance from any other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* on or before the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team).
- 3.2. Notwithstanding clause 3.1(d), a World Rugby Clearance received by the NZR on the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date by 11:59pm and approved by the NZR as soon as practicable thereafter shall be deemed to be approved on the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date for the purposes of these Regulations.
- 3.3. A Player Registered with a club competing in a club competition under the joint control and jurisdiction of two or more Provincial Unions shall be a Local Player for the Provincial Union within whose Provincial Union boundaries the club the Player is Registered with is located.

4. LOAN PLAYERS

4.1. "Loan Player" means a Player who:

- a) is Registered on the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date with a club competing in a competition conducted outside the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union (with the exception of Local Club Players under clause 3.1.d)); or
- b) has Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union after the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date;

provided that the Player is party to a Loan Arrangement as follows:

- c) The terms of the Loan Arrangement for that Loan Player are recorded in writing in the form set out in Schedule 1, including:
 - (i) the Loan Arrangement must be for a specified term, which shall not exceed the current year;

- (ii) the Loan Arrangement details any circumstances under which the Loan may be terminated; and
 - (iii) the Loan Arrangement may not place any constraint upon the Player's services for the Borrowing Provincial Union (for example, by requiring the Player not to play against the Lending Provincial Union);
 - d) the Loan Arrangement is signed by the Lending Provincial Union, the Borrowing Provincial Union and the Loan Player and is provided to the NZR prior to the Loan Player being included in the Playing 23 for the Borrowing Provincial Union;
 - e) the Loan Arrangement is entered into in accordance with the following time frames:
 - (i) for a front row player, the Loan Arrangement is entered into before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played their final Round Robin game in the current Women's Competition; or
 - (ii) for a player other than a front row player, the Loan Arrangement is entered into before the Borrowing Provincial Union has played three games in the current Women's Competition.
- 4.2. There is no limit upon the number of Players which a Provincial Union may lend or borrow but the Playing 23 of any Women's Competition team may not include more than six Loan Players, provided that the combined number of Overseas Players and Loan Players in the Playing 23 does not exceed six.
- 4.3. A Loan Player is only eligible to be named in the Playing 23 for the quarter-final (if relevant), semi-final and final matches of the current Women's Provincial Championship provided that the Player has not been named in the Playing 23 for the Lending Union in the current Women's Provincial Championship; or the Player has been named in the Playing 23 for a Lending Union in the current Women's Provincial Championship but has subsequently:
- a) entered into a Loan Arrangement with the Borrowing Union;
 - b) been named in the Playing 23 for the Borrowing Union prior to the final Round Robin match; and
 - c) has not been named in the Playing 23 for the Lending Union following their loan.
- 4.4. A Loan Player returning to their Lending Union is eligible to be named in the Playing 23 for the Lending Union for the semi-final and final matches of the current Women's Competition provided that the Player's Loan Arrangement with the Borrowing Union has expired or been terminated.

4.5. Under no circumstances can a Loan Player be:

- a) selected in the Playing 23 for both the Lending and Borrowing Provincial Unions in the same week of the Women's Competition; or
- b) loaned on more than one occasion during the current Women's Competition.

5. RETURNING NZ PLAYERS

5.1. **"Returning New Zealand Player"** means a Player who:

- a) is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand; and
- b) has been Registered with, or played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team in the relevant year);

provided that:

- c) the Returning New Zealand Player has completed a World Rugby clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23;
- d) the Returning New Zealand Player has not Played for a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another Provincial Union prior to being Registered (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include a Player playing only for a national team or touring team);
- e) the Returning New Zealand Player becomes a member of a Playing 23 of the Provincial Union before the Provincial Union has played three games in the current Women's Competition; and
- f) the Provincial Union has proven to the satisfaction of the NZR that the Returning New Zealand Player is eligible to play international rugby for New Zealand pursuant to *World Rugby Regulation 8 – Eligibility to Play for National Representative Teams* as at the start of the current Women's Competition and the NZR has confirmed this in writing before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23.

6. OVERSEAS PLAYERS

6.1. **"Overseas Player"** means a Player who has been Registered with, or Played for, a club or other rugby organisation affiliated to another national union after the Women's Competition Cut-Off Date (for the avoidance of doubt this will not include

a Player playing only for a national representative team or touring team in the relevant year);

provided that:

- a) the Overseas Player has completed a World Rugby clearance from the other national union to the NZR in compliance with *World Rugby Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement* and is Registered with a club competing in a club competition conducted under the control and jurisdiction of that Provincial Union before that Player becomes a member of a Playing 23; and
- b) the Overseas Player becomes a member of the Playing 23 of the Provincial Union before the Provincial Union has played three games in the current Women's Competition.

6.2. The Playing 23 of any Women's Competition Union must not include more than two Overseas Players, provided that the combined number of Overseas Players and Loan Players in the Playing 23 does not exceed six.

7. BREACH OF REGULATIONS

7.1. Any breach of these Regulations including the relevant Competition Manual by a Provincial Union will be dealt with by the NZR in accordance with clause 14 of the Domestic Competition Regulations.

SCHEDULE 1: LOAN ARRANGEMENT FORM

Parties

Player name :

Player ID:

Lending Provincial Union:

Borrowing Provincial Union:

Loan Period

Loan Start Date:

Loan Expiry Date:

Terms of Loan

I DO/DO NOT (*circle one*) wish to return to my Lending Provincial Union in the event of an injury to another Lending Provincial Union Player in a similar position.

Other Terms: (*please list any additional terms here*)

Consents and Confirmations

Signature of Player: Date:

Name of Lending Provincial Union:

Signature of Lending Provincial Union: Date:

(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

Name of Borrowing Provincial Union:

Signature of Borrowing Provincial Union: Date:

(*Signature of Authorise Person from PU*)

Name: Position:

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

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Ranfurly Shield

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Regulations for the Ranfurly Shield

1. The Ranfurly Shield (the “**Shield**”) shall be a challenge open to all Affiliated Unions.
2. The Affiliated Union from time to time holding the Shield (the “holder”) shall hold it subject to the rights of challenge by an Affiliated Union in accordance with these Regulations.
3. The references in Regulations 4, 6 - 8 inclusive and 12 -14 inclusive to the “holder” are references to the holder of the Shield at the beginning of the relevant Rugby season.

CONDITIONS FOR ALL CHALLENGE MATCHES

4.
 - a. The holder shall not be required to but may at its sole discretion play any challenge match before the first day of July.
 - b. Unless the consent of the NZR is obtained, no challenge match shall be played during the Round Robin of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship by the holder against an Affiliated Union which is in a different Domestic Competition from that of the holder.
 - c. No challenge match shall be played after the last day of the Round Robin of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship.
5. All home matches in the Round Robin of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship played by the holder shall be challenge matches (“**mandatory challenges**”).
6. Affiliated Unions wishing to play a challenge match, other than a mandatory challenge, must give the holder notice in writing by no later than one week after the final of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship, whichever is the latter, in the preceding year (“**non-mandatory challenges**”).
7. Provided sufficient non-mandatory challenges have been lodged then;
 - a. If the holder is in the Premier Competition, it shall accept not less than two non-mandatory challenges from Affiliated Unions not in the Premier Competition. A challenge lodged under clause 6 by the holder of the Meads Cup must be accepted.
 - b. If the holder is not in the Premier Competition it shall accept not fewer than one non-mandatory challenge from an Affiliated Union in the Premier Competition.

- c. If a Premier Competition holder has only received one non-mandatory challenge as set out above it shall accept that non-mandatory challenge received from an Affiliated Union not in the Premier Competition.
 - d. In the event that the Meads Cup holder is not determined in any particular Heartland Championship, and the current holder of the Meads Cup has already played their challenge under clause 7a, the then current holder shall be treated as the holder when the Competition is next played but shall not be entitled to a second Meads Cup holder challenge under clause 7a.
8. The holder must, not later than three weeks after the date of the final of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship, whichever is the latter, in the year the non-mandatory challenges are received:
- a. give notice to the NZR and all Affiliated Unions who have lodged non-mandatory challenges of:
 - i. the non-mandatory challenges which have been accepted; and
 - ii. the dates on which the non-mandatory challenge matches are to be played as agreed with the Affiliated Unions concerned (or failing such arrangement, the date fixed by the NZR).
9. All challenge matches shall be played on a ground of the holder unless the holder, at its option, agrees to play a challenge match on a ground of the challenging Affiliated Union.
10. The NZR shall appoint the referee for all challenge matches.
11. If a challenge match is subject to golden point:
- a. the winner of the match at the conclusion of the golden point period shall win the Shield; and
 - b. if the match is still drawn at the conclusion of the golden point period, then the holder shall retain the Shield.
12. If a challenge match is not subject to golden point and is drawn at full time, the holder shall retain the Shield.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS WHERE THE HOLDER IS DEFEATED PART WAY THROUGH THE SEASON

13. All matches to be played by the new holder against other Affiliated Unions on any ground of the holder, up to and including the final weekend of the Round Robin of the Premier Competition or the Heartland Championship, are challenge matches.

EXPENSES

14. A challenging Affiliated Union which is in a different Domestic Competition to that of the holder, shall be eligible to receive a special travel grant from the holder as detailed below, provided however that this grant shall not exceed 10 per cent of the gross ticket receipts for that match.

0 to	100km	\$1,000 + GST
101 to	250km	\$2,000 + GST
251 to	500km	\$3,000 + GST
501 to	750km	\$4,000 + GST
751 to	1,000km	\$5,000 + GST
Over	1,000km	\$6,000 + GST

15. For the avoidance of doubt, the distances set out in clause 14 are distances for the return trip.
16. A challenging Affiliated Union that is the holder of the Meads Cup shall be eligible to receive a special grant of up to \$5,000 from the NZR based on the net cost of the challenge if the challenge match is played on a ground of the holder.

DISPUTES AND INTERPRETATION

17. Subject to Rule 10 of the NZR Constitution, any dispute as to:
- The meaning or interpretation of these Regulations, or
 - As to any other matter or questions not provided for in these Regulations,
- will be determined by the NZR.

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

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Bill Osborne Taonga

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Regulations for the Bill Osborne Taonga

1. The Bill Osborne Taonga (the “**Taonga**”) shall be a challenge open to all Heartland Championship Unions.
2. The Heartland Championship Union from time to time holding the Taonga (the “**holder**”) shall hold it subject to the rights of challenge by a Heartland Championship Union in accordance with these Regulations.

CONDITIONS FOR ALL CHALLENGE MATCHES

3. All challenge matches shall be played during the Heartland Championship.
4. Challenge matches shall not occur after the last day of the Round Robin of the Heartland Championship.
5. All home matches in the Round Robin of the Heartland Championship played by the holder shall be challenge matches.
6. If a challenge match is subject to golden point:
 - a. the winner of golden point shall win the Taonga; and
 - b. if the match is still drawn at the conclusion of golden point, then the holder shall retain the Taonga.
7. If a challenge match is not subject to golden point and is drawn at full time, the holder shall retain the Taonga.
8. The NZR shall appoint the referee for all challenge matches.

DISPUTES AND INTERPRETATION

9. Subject to Rule 10 of the NZR Constitution, any dispute as to:
 - a. the meaning or interpretation of these Regulations, or
 - b. as to any other matter or questions not provided for in these Regulations,will be determined by the NZR.

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

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**Regulations Relating to the Definition of an
NZR and First Class Fixture and the Order of
Precedence**

NEW ZEALAND RUGBY UNION

Regulations Relating to the Definition of an NZR and First Class Fixture and the Order of Precedence

NZR FIXTURES

1. NZR Fixtures are matches where the NZR has a direct involvement including but not limited to:
 - (a) All Black matches wherever played.
 - (b) Matches in official tours by visiting national teams.
 - (c) Matches involving any other New Zealand representative team.
 - (d) Trial matches for all New Zealand representative teams.
 - (e) Super Rugby matches.
 - (f) Ranfurly Shield matches.
 - (g) Premier Competition matches.
 - (h) Heartland Championship matches.
 - (i) Elite XV Competition matches (i.e. Super Rugby Aupiki).
 - (j) Women's Competition matches.
 - (k) Such other matches as the NZR Board may from time to time determine.

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

2. The order of precedence of teams and assemblies is as follows, provided that the Board may from time to time include additional teams or vary the order;
 - (a) The senior national representative team (i.e. the All Blacks).
 - (b) The next senior national representative team (i.e. the Junior All Blacks).
 - (c) The New Zealand Sevens team competing in the Rugby World Cup Sevens Tournament, Olympic or Commonwealth Games.
 - (d) New Zealand trials for the senior national representative team.
 - (e) The New Zealand Māori team.

FIRST CLASS FIXTURES

- (f) Super Rugby teams.
 - (g) The New Zealand Sevens team.
 - (h) The New Zealand Under 20 team and trial teams.
 - (i) Teams playing Ranfurly Shield matches.
 - (j) Teams playing in the Premier Competition.
 - (k) Teams playing in the Heartland Championship.
 - (l) New Zealand Heartland XV team.
 - (m) Affiliated Union senior representative teams playing matches against teams of equivalent or higher status.
 - (n) Affiliated Union senior representative teams playing matches against another Affiliated Union's next senior representative team.
 - (o) Teams playing in the "B" competition.
 - (p) Regional Māori representative teams playing in matches against other Regional Māori representative teams.
 - (q) The New Zealand Universities team playing against Affiliated Union senior representative teams or teams of equivalent or higher status.
 - (r) The New Zealand Defence Force Representative team playing against Affiliated Union Senior Representative Teams or teams of equivalent or higher status.
3. In the event that there is a potential clash of scheduling between two or more of the teams listed in clause 2, NZR High Performance will have the discretion to vary the order of precedence in relation to an individual player taking into account the following factors:
- (a) what is in the best development and welfare interests of the individual player;
 - (b) the views of the respective team coaches;
 - (c) any identified positional strengths and weaknesses in the respective teams; and
 - (d) any other relevant factors.

FIRST CLASS FIXTURES – MEN'S RUGBY

4. To qualify as a First Class Fixture, a match must be played strictly within the Laws of the Game.

FIRST CLASS FIXTURES

5. Subject to clause 4, matches involving the men's teams set out below shall automatically be accorded First Class Fixture status:
 - (a) The senior national representative team (i.e. the All Blacks).
 - (b) The next senior national representative team (i.e. the Junior All Blacks).
 - (c) New Zealand trials for the senior national representative team.
 - (d) The New Zealand Māori team.
 - (e) New Zealand Heartland XV team.
 - (f) Super Rugby teams.
 - (g) The New Zealand Under 20 team.
 - (h) Teams playing Ranfurly Shield matches.
 - (i) Teams playing in Premier Competition matches.
 - (j) Teams playing in Heartland Championship matches.
 - (k) Matches in official tours by visiting national teams.
 - (l) Such other matches as the NZR Board may from time to time determine.
6. Subject to clause 4, matches involving the men's teams set out below may be accorded First Class Fixture Status at the discretion of the NZR. The NZR will only exercise this discretion where it has received an application from the relevant Rugby playing organisation which hosted the match made within 14 days of the match being played, stating the names of the players for both teams on official team sheets (including match officials and points scoring details) and the reasons why the match should be classified as a First Class Fixture:
 - (a) Provincial Union senior representative teams playing matches against teams of equivalent or higher status.
 - (b) Provincial Union senior representative teams playing matches against another Provincial Unions next senior representative team.
 - (c) Regional Māori representative teams playing in matches against other Regional Māori representative teams.
 - (d) The New Zealand Universities team playing against a Provincial Unions senior representative teams or teams of equivalent or higher status.
 - (e) The New Zealand Defence Force Representative Team playing against Provincial Unions senior representative teams or teams of equivalent or higher status.

FIRST CLASS FIXTURES – WOMEN'S RUGBY

7. To qualify as a First Class Fixture, a match must be played strictly within the Laws of the Game.
8. Subject to clause 7, matches involving the women's teams set out below shall automatically be accorded First Class Fixture status:
 - (a) The senior national representative team (i.e. the Black Ferns).
 - (b) The next senior national representative team.
 - (c) New Zealand trials for the senior national representative team.
 - (d) Teams playing in Elite XV Competition (i.e. Super Rugby Aupiki).
 - (e) Teams playing for the Provincial Union senior representative team in the Women's Competition.
 - (f) Matches in official tours by visiting national teams.
 - (g) Such other matches as the NZR Board may from time to time determine.