



Regulation 15.6.2 Out of Season Activity

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was this regulation introduced?

This regulation was introduced as a result of the work of the Age Grade Good Practice Group. This group examined the current challenges, research and best practice within Age Grade Rugby with the aim of ensuring that the game provides for the long term participation of those at U18 and younger.

This group addressed the issues of player welfare in the Age Grade Game along with evidence relating to player development.

Numerous evidence-based studies over the last 30 years show that early experience of a wide variety of sports has positive implications for long-term sport participation, does not hinder and may support elite sport development. This scientific research, combined with our analysis of injury risk, participation data and qualitative data highlighted that playing in summer months is not optimal for long term participation, skill development or recovery and can lead to over-playing/burnout for players who have already had a full season of rugby.

By implementing a summer break for U13 players and a June break for U14 players and above we aim to best protect our players and ensure their enjoyment and lifelong involvement in the game.

How does a summer break from rugby, help support the development of rugby?

Evidence shows that a break from rugby will reduce burnout – a common reason cited for leaving the game, and enable rugby players to develop as more rounded athletes/participants by allowing them to experience other sports and develop transferable skills

Who was on the group?

Experts from across the game, including representatives from clubs, schools, Constituent Bodies, talent pathways and rugby academies as well as safeguarding and medical professionals

U13 and below.

What is non-rugby activity? What can / can't we do?

We recommend that players at these age groups get the opportunity to experience multiple sports, such as cricket, basketball, football; activities which develop a player's fundamental movement skills; and activities which develop key transferable skills such as passing, catching, agility etc.

A list of suggest summer activities can be found on www.englandrugby.com/agegraderugby. Specific rugby activities – contact, touch rugby and tag rugby - should only take place during the eight month playing season.





Can we go on tour during May – Aug?

Clubs may tour in the out of season for team building and multi sports, but not for rugby matches or rugby training. This applies to tours in England and outgoing tours (including Scotland and Wales).

Our analysis showed that there are very few tours in these age groups at this time of year, so the impact of this change is minimal.

What if we have already booked and paid for a tour for summer 2018?

If this is the case we can support this on a case by case basis. Please contact agegraderugby@rfu.com directly.

What about school competition?

The regulations are applicable to school and club rugby. Clearly we encourage schools to teach and play rugby with the aim of transitioning players to a local club and we want to support schools in doing this during the season when clubs are active.

Can we still hold summer camps at these ages?

There is more information on this in the Codes of Practice. However if it is deemed appropriate to deliver a summer camp, these must be multi-sport / multi-activity (with no specific rugby activity as per the regulations) and with the programme approved by the CB or CSU.

U14-U18

Can we play or train in May (and July)?

If there has been a delay to a competition during the season due to weather then it is possible to play that re-arranged event up until the last Bank Holiday in May. In addition, non-contact rugby training and playing is allowed. This is the same for July.

What can we do in June?

June is intended as a rest month from rugby at these ages. Players should be encouraged to rest and/or participate in other sports or other physical activities to allow for recuperation and on-going development of transferable skills. This also allows for focus on exams and academic commitments. There should be no rugby specific activity.

What about pre-season preparation in August?

Contact training in preparation for the season is allowed in August in addition to the non-contact training and playing of July. In the last two weeks of the off-season before the season starts in September, pre-season matches and festivals can take place. These should be genuinely about preparing all players for the season and therefore adapted to maximise their involvement and revise/develop skills.





What about summer camps?

More information about summer camps is contained within the Codes of Practice. If the camp is in May or July, it can deliver non-contact rugby activities (in line with RFU Regulation 15). In August camps can include contact rugby activity. In June, camps must be multi-sport / multi-activity (with no specific rugby activity as per the regulations). In all cases, the programme needs to be approved by the CB or CSU.

Can we go on tour?

Yes – tours to countries outside England are allowed throughout the whole year. Internal tours are only allowed during the season.

Can we do contact ‘refresher’ before we go on tour?

Contact ‘refreshers’ should be built into the tour programme or within the Age Grade Season. Contact may be delivered in August as per the regulation. Otherwise contact is to be avoided.

Can we play O2 Touch?

With the exception of June which is a rest month - yes, absolutely! O2 Touch is a good way to keep fit and develop passing and evasion skills.

Can we play 7s tournaments?

May: If there has been pre-approved or a re-arranged competition in May, then yes

June: No. June is a rest month

July: There is no contact rugby in July but non-contact sevens can be played.

August: Sevens contact training is allowed; and in the two weeks prior to the season contact sevens tournaments can be played as warm-ups for the start of the season.

Can an U17 train with the adult team in summer?

A player may play adult rugby when they reach their seventeenth birthday as long as he/she has followed the correct permission process (detailed in the Codes of Practice). In line with RFU Regulation 15 and the Codes of Practice this must first be agreed to be in the players’ best interests.

