



## Illawarra District Rugby Union

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# 2016 Junior Rugby Update

**From:** IDRU Junior Committee  
**To:** Illawarra Junior Rugby Community

**8 November 2015**

Dear Illawarra Junior Rugby Community,

We hope you find this 2016 Update informative. Our intent is to have the 2016 season well organised before the end of the 2015 calendar year, which allows players, parents, clubs, and team, representative and District staff the opportunity to plan ahead and be assured of the competition structure.

We encourage you to provide input and welcome your suggestions and involvement.

Yours in rugby,  
**IDRU Junior Committee**

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## 1. Communication

- **2 levels**
  - District (IDRU) – for competition-wide communications, representative program communications and information from the ARU, NSWRU and NSWCRU
  - Club – for club-specific information
- **4 channels**
  - IDRU Rugby Link-generated emails to all registered rugby participants
  - IDRU Website (<http://www.idru.com.au/en/>)
  - IDRU Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/IllawarraRugby/?fref=nf>)
  - Club communications direct from Junior Presidents/RugbyLink/Facebook etc.

## 2. Age Groups

There will be three levels of rugby:

1. **Junior Rugby** (Under 7, Under 8, Under 9) – competitions in every age group
2. **Development Rugby** (Under 10, Under 11, Under 12, Under 13) – comps in every age group
3. **Competition Rugby** (Second XV (Under 14 and Under 15) and First XV (Under 16 and Under 17))

### The First XV and Second XV Championship 2016

#### What is it?

The First XV and Second XV Championship is the new premier rugby union competition for those playing at the under 14 through to under 17 age-group levels in the Illawarra.

#### Why are we doing this?

The new competition has been put in place to enhance and revitalise rugby union for those players in the higher junior age-group levels. It is a response to:

- The declining number of players participating at the Under 14 through to the Under 17 age-group levels in the Illawarra (in common with other sports and Districts)
- The weakening of the overall competition and the standard of rugby as clubs struggle to consistently field full-strength teams at these age group levels
- The negative impact of diminishing junior numbers on the pool of players transitioning to the higher levels of club rugby (particularly at the colts and senior grade levels)
- The impact of declining junior numbers on the talent pool available for representative and other player development programs (eg. Illawarra representative teams and NSW Junior Gold Cup program)



### **Who is eligible to play?**

- Players eligible to play in the First XV competition must be under 17 years of age as of the 1st January of the playing year
- Players eligible to play in the Second XV competition must be under 15 years of age as of the 1st January of the playing year

<b>Year of Birth*</b>	<b>Age Group in 2016 Season*</b>
2003	<b>U13</b>
2002	<b>Second XV</b> (formerly U14)
2001	<b>Second XV</b> (formerly U15)
2000	<b>First XV</b> (formerly U16)
1999	<b>First XV</b> (formerly U17)

\*Note: A junior age rugby player must be younger than the age group in which he/she is playing as of the 1st January of the playing year

### **Who will run the competition?**

The competition will be managed by a sub-committee of the IDRUG Junior Committee that will focus specifically on issues of recruitment, retention and development of players in these higher level junior age groups (ie. from Under 14s through to Under 17s).

The new competition structure will draw on, and bring together, a range of existing junior recruitment and development initiatives as well as align closely with current ARU and IDRUG coaching and refereeing pathways.

### **What will the competition look like?**

#### **The First XV Championship**

In 2016, teams representing franchise zones (each associated with particular clubs) will compete for the Illawarra First XV Championship. Clubs may still field sides if they have sufficient numbers. The number of teams may be expanded in future seasons as interest in the competition grows, with the initial aim being a 6 to 7 team competition. We are currently in discussion with Southern Districts to include Southern Districts teams in First and Second XV competitions.



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Example only:

First XV Team 2016	Associated Clubs
Southern Districts	Southern Districts
Wollongong Zone	Shamrocks University Tech-Waratahs Vikings
Southern Highlands Zone	Bowral Goulburn
South Coast Zone	Avondale Kiama Shoalhaven Vincentia
Western Zone	Camden Campbelltown

Each franchise will have a distinctive team identity and will be outfitted in newly designed playing jerseys, shorts and socks in addition to training shirts and shorts.

Franchises will also have an off-field dress code to visibly promote the competition and the identity of the teams. This would apply to players arriving and departing scheduled games, and for team officials.

### **When will the games be played?**

The teams would likely compete in a 'twilight' competition on a Friday evening over a shortened season. When the opportunity arises, games may also be played as curtain-raisers for Illawarra senior club rugby games scheduled on a Saturday afternoon.

### **Why are the teams based on franchises rather than the existing clubs?**

The reduction in player numbers and the resulting decline in the number of teams makes running a more traditional club based competition and season structure unviable.

The zones are organized so that clubs unable to field 15-aside teams in these age groups can collaborate (with the assistance of IDRUG) around the promotion of rugby, the coaching and management of the game, and efforts to recruit and retain players, in their assigned zones.



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The First XV and Second XV initiative will expose players to the clubs in their zones and will in the longer term encourage the transition of those players to the Under 19 and Senior Grade levels in the Illawarra District club competition. It is also envisaged that such a program will help grow the talent pool available for representative and other player development programs.

### **What are the key principles of the competition?**

The competition will promote and reinforce the rugby tradition of camaraderie with team mates and opponents. The aim of the program is not only to produce good rugby players, but players who are generous in victory and dignified in defeat. As such, the overarching principle underpinning the competition is fair play and respect for others both on and off the field.

### **The Second XV Championship**

The Second XV competition will be organized along similar lines to the First XV Championship but will involve teams representing zones, or individual clubs where sufficient numbers are available. Each zone will have a distinctive identity and will be outfitted in newly designed playing jerseys, shorts and socks.

### **Example only:**

<b>Second XV Team</b>	<b>Associated Clubs</b>
<b>Southern Districts</b>	Southern Districts
<b>Northern Zone</b>	Shamrocks Vikings
<b>Central Zone</b>	University Tech-Waratahs
<b>Southern Highlands Zone</b>	Bowral Goulburn
<b>South Coast Zone</b>	Avondale Kiama Shoalhaven Vincentia
<b>Western Zone</b>	Camden Campbelltown



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### **3. Draw**

The 2016 Draw is being finalised but will in concept be:

- 14 Competition Rounds
- Allowing for April and July School holidays
- Two (possibly 3) Gala Days for Under7s to Under 9s
- Designated spare weekend
- Finishing on the same weekend as IDRU Seniors



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- Competition Rugby is planned to play on Friday nights aligned to the following schedule
- Junior and Development Rugby to be played on Sundays as per the below schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Sunday, 20 March	Gala Day style trials for all age groups
Sunday, 27 March	Easter Weekend
Sunday, 3 April	Round 1 (senior comp starts on 2 April 2016)
Sunday, 10 April	Round 2
Sunday, 17 April	School Holidays
Sunday, 24 April	School Holidays/ANZAC Long Weekend
Sunday, 1 May	Round 3
Sunday, 8 May	Round 4
Sunday, 15 May	Round 5
Sunday, 22 May	Round 6
Sunday, 29 May	Round 7
Sunday, 5 June	Round 8 and Gala Day for Under 7 to Under 9s inclusive
Sunday, 12 June	Queens Birthday Long Weekend/State Rugby Championships
Sunday, 19 June	Round 9
Sunday, 26 June	Round 10
Sunday, 3 July	Round 11
Sunday, 10 July	School Holidays
Sunday, 17 July	School Holidays
Sunday, 24 July	Round 12
Sunday, 31 July	Round 13
Sunday, 7 August	Round 14
Sunday, 14 August	Spare weekend for washout games; Deferred games for Country Champs, Gala Day for Under 7s to Under 9s inclusive
Sunday, 21 August	Major and Minor Semi finals
Sunday, 28 August	Finals
Sunday, 4 September	Grand Finals (coincide with Senior Grand Final on 3 September 2016, TBC)

### 4. Representative Program

- Dion Miller from the IDRU Board will be the Representative Program Director, supported by the Junior Committee, Chris Sellar and his develop officers, and Representative Staff
- The 2016 Under 13 team has been selected and will tour New Zealand as per normal schedule. All other age groups will go through initial common muster sessions, which will be announced in November 2015
- Initial training sessions will be common sessions focused on standardizing skills and the levels of those skills across the representative player base. The intent is to introduce an 'Illawarra brand' of rugby. After the initial common sessions, teams will then conduct the remainder of the representative season in team-based programs

- Coach qualifications to ARU L1 and L2 standards will be supported across all age groups. Managers must be SMART Rugby qualified
- There will be alignment between the Junior Gold program, Illawarra Representative Program and the Illawarra Academy of Sport
- Season fixtures and dates will be published as soon as we receive them from NSWCRU
- Canterbury has been appointed as the Illawarra clothing supplier. Representative teams will have playing kit and polo shirts subsidized, but extra clothing, including hats and hoodies will be available to purchase direct from the Illawarra section of the Canterbury online shop
- In 2016 we will commence an older age group (First XV) tour as well as the traditional Under 13s tour
- Rep staff are as follows:
  - U10 – *seeking applicants*
  - U11 – David Crowe, Will Panayi and Tony Keyes (manager)
  - U12 – Justin Lowe and Nick Reynolds
  - U13 – Mat Yates, Chick Butcher, Brett Kitely, Andrew Holland, and Tracey Austin (manager)
  - U14 – Jayson Joerdens, Evan Poata-Smith and Michelle Devine (manager)
  - U15 – Trevor Nugara and Kirsty Weller (manager)
  - U16 – Keiran Smith, Scott Dickson and Trent McPherson (manager)
  - U17 – Paul Freaan, Ron Honeysett and Ron Cotton (manager)

## 5. Finals Series

- Changes will occur in how we run the finals series. This includes running Major and Minor Semi-Finals at the one venue on the one day, as occurred successfully this year

## 6. Respect Rugby – Behavioural Standards

- Please note that Respect Rugby principles will be fully applied in 2016. This includes not just on-field behavior, but cover team staff and spectators as well
- As previously stated in this document, the competition will promote and reinforce the rugby tradition of camaraderie with team mates and opponents. The aim of the program is not only to produce good rugby players, but players who are generous in victory and dignified in defeat.
- **As such, the overarching principle underpinning the competition is fair play and respect for others both on and off the field**
- It is also our intent to run competition games under the same match day management procedures as the finals series are played under
- Referee qualifications, clothing and equipment, and administration will be more centralised and standardised