



Tournament Rules

July 31-1 Aug, 2026

Section 1: Tournament Contact

NAI7s - Tournament Manager

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It is the responsibility of the Team Manager to ensure team members and team personnel are conversant with the Tournament Rules

Amendments from 2024 are highlighted in yellow

Section 2: Tournament Structure

Each competition will have a distinct tournament structure. Please refer to the competition specific information for further details. All Pools are seeded prior to competition with the playoffs being based upon finishing position, not reseeded.

2.1 Pool Stage Matches

The first round of games will be played in pools on a round-robin basis. For composition of pools please see competition specific information. Following the pool round there will be knock-out rounds.

2.1.1 Play will consist of matches between teams in the same pool on a round-robin basis. Pool matches will be seven (7) minutes each way with a one (1) minute half-time break.

2.1.2 All Pool Matches carry the following points:

- 3 points for a win
- 2 points for a draw
- 1 point for a loss
- 0 points for a no show, abandonment or referee disqualification

2.1.3 In the event of two or more teams being equal on competition points for any position in the pool table the higher placed team will be determined using the following sequence:

- 1) If two teams are involved and have played each other, the winning team will take the higher position. If more than two teams have equal points this rule will not apply.
- 2) The margin of points scored for and against a team in all pool matches shall be considered. The team with the highest positive margin of points shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie remains unsolved then;
- 3) The team that scores the most points in all pool matches shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie remains unsolved then;
- 4) The team that concedes the least points in all pool matches shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie still remains unresolved then;
- 5) The winner will be decided by the toss of a coin between the Managers of the teams concerned.

2.2 Knock Out Stage Matches

Following the completion of the pool stage matches there will be knock-out finals stages. The draw will be based upon the team positions in the pool tables. For details on the knock-out stages please see the competition specific information.

- 2.2.1 All quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals will be played on a single elimination bracket with consolation rounds.
- 2.2.2 All quarter-final, semi-final and final games will be seven (7) minutes each way with a one (1) minute halftime break.
- 2.2.3 In the event of a match being drawn at the end of normal time (in the knock-out stages) extra time will be played, in five (5) minute periods until a winner is determined. There will be an interval of one (1) minute after full time has been declared then play shall commence with a coin-toss, the winner of which chooses either; which way to play or to kick-off the period of extra time. The first team to score will immediately be declared the winner and play will cease. After each five (5) minute period of extra time, teams will change ends, without stoppage, and resume play. Substitutions are not reset and the players who ended regulation time must be on field for extra time. Any penalty time will still apply
- 2.2.4 For all matches, should the Referee decide there is a clash of shirt colours the Referee will call both team captains together and toss a coin; the loser will change shirts.
- 2.2.5 Due to scheduling constraints play will continue as often as possible to avoid any delays. Referees will penalise unnecessary delays as time wasting. All games are required to kick-off on time. The organisers may change fields without prior notice to facilitate completion of the tournament on time. Any field changes will be communicated via the app. The field marshal shall also have the data at the original and new field
- 2.2.6 All teams are required to be at the allocated (or replacement) field and ready to start play seven (7) minutes before the scheduled kick-off time which is also halftime of the game prior to kickoff. Team Managers must report to the 4th official this time. Any team that arrives later than 5 minutes after the required meeting time will forfeit the match.

Section 3: Rules of the Tournaments

- 3.1 The rules of the Tournaments, including their interpretation, are matters for the Disputes Committee. As such the Tournament Management will appoint a Disputes Committee to arbitrate on all matters concerning the rules of the Tournaments. The Disputes Committee will be convened only in the event of an official written complaint being registered with the Tournament Manager (refer to 3.5 below) or at the discretion of the Tournament Manager. The complainant and affected parties may be required to attend a hearing at the discretion of the Disputes Committee. Failure of the complainant to attend will render the complaint void. In the event of any matters arising that are not covered by the Tournament Rules, or ambiguity of the Tournament Rules, the Committee shall make a ruling after interpreting the rules in the best interests of the tournament. Its decision shall be final, without appeal.
- 3.2 All matches will be played in accordance with the **Laws of the Game of Rugby Football 2024** and the rulings therein, together with all by-laws and directives of World Rugby and directions published in the Tournament Rules. The English text of the World Rugby Handbook (as published by World Rugby including all 7-a-side variations and available for view at <http://laws.worldrugby.org/>) and this Tournament Rules manual shall be authoritative and final.

- 3.3 Teams, Players or Team Personnel who breach the tournament rules will jeopardise their team's likelihood of being invited to participate in future tournaments.
- 3.4 At the end of each match the Referee must sign the scorecard in front of and prior to the Team Captains, to verify the final score, and hand it to the Match Controller.
- 3.5 A disputed match result must be brought to the attention of the Event Coordinator, (situated in the HQ Tent), by the Team Manager within 30 minutes prior to the commencement of their next game or within 2 hours of match completion, whichever is soonest.

3.6 Variations

The Tournament Manager reserves the right, before and during the tournament, to make or vary rules and give directions as to the conduct of the tournament, the conduct of participating teams and each member of their team. All such rules and directions when made and communicated will become binding on the participating teams and each member of their team, at the time of publishing, by posting of a notice in the Registration Tent.

3.7 Eligibility

3.7.1 Eligibility is a competition specific element of the Tournament Rules. Please see competition specific information for further details. (Section 7)

3.7.2 Players/officials currently under any sanction, from rugby or any other sport, and/or prohibited from playing or officiating in/at the tournament, who participate in the tournament, will have the following action taken:

- they will be immediately banned from the tournament
- their respective home Union (where applicable) will be informed who will use their discretion with regards to further sanctions being enforced
- the player/official will be barred from participating in the NAI Sevens for two (2) years

3.8 Appointment of Officials

The Tournament Management shall appoint the relevant Officials and/or agencies to:

- Administer and implement the Tournament Disciplinary Programme;
- The position of Officials' Manager;
- All necessary accredited positions;
- Administer the Tournament and ensure that rules of eligibility are adhered to;
- The position of Tournament Medical Officer (and support staff/structure);
- The membership of the Disputes Committee.

3.9 Request by Officials

All participating teams and each member of the team will comply with all reasonable requests of the Tournament Officials, Match Referees, Assistant Referees and Pitch Marshals. Any failure to do so could result in a complaint being made to the Tournament Manager and disciplinary action.

3.10 Forfeit, No Show or Disqualification

- 3.10.1 If a team does not show up, refuses to play or forfeits a match prior to its commencement without the prior consent of the Tournament Manager or their delegate, that team will 'lose' the match. The Tournament Manager will decide upon the further participation of that team in the tournament. Games will be considered forfeited if a team is not on the pitch, ready to commence play within two (2) minutes of the published kick-off time.
- 3.10.2 Teams who 'no-show' without informing the Tournament Manager or Registration Manager in advance, will not be invited to participate in future tournaments.
- 3.10.3 If a match is forfeited, a team fails to show up for a match or a team is disqualified by a Referee or a Tournament Official a score of 20 – 0 (four tries) will be recorded in favour of the offended team.

3.11 Abandonment

- 3.11.1 If a team refuses to play or abandons a match in progress, that team will forfeit the match. The Tournament Manager will decide upon the further participation of that team in the tournament.
- 3.11.2 If the Referee abandons a match due to:
- a) conduct of a team, this will result in a Disputes Committee decision being taken on the final result of the match;
 - b) or for non-disciplinary reasons,
 - At half-time or any time in the second half. The score will stand;
 - During the first half, the result will be declared a draw unless the match is a knock-out fixture, in which case the score will stand.
 - c) normal judicial procedures will also apply to players who are sanctioned through the Red and Yellow Card process.

3.12 Declaration of Squads, Teams and Replacements

Team rosters for each game played sections will consist of a maximum of twelve (12) players from the approved team roster. All twelve (12) players are eligible to play in each match. Teams may use up to five substitutions each match (see Section 5 Substitutions, Replacements and Stoppages). Teams must have a minimum of seven (7) players, (fit to participate in the match) on the pitch in order for a match to start.

- 3.12.1 A player, having been registered in a team, irrespective of whether he or she has taken part in the tournament, cannot register or make themselves available for registration in any other team.
- 3.12.2 If a team has brought more than 12 players on their team roster, the coach or manager must mark on the game report located at the 4th official for that field which players will be participating in the match and verify jersey numbers. It is advised that all managers or coaches verify jersey numbers on match reports prior to the commencement of the matches to improve stats and reporting from the 4th official to the HQ tent.

- 3.12.3 A player injured and certified by the Tournament Medical Officer as unfit to take any further part in the Tournament will remain a non-playing member of the squad. There will be no replacement player allowed to join the squad.
- 3.12.4 Once a player has been eliminated through injury and his/her name deleted from the Squad Registration form, that player can take no further part in the Tournament, and cannot be re-instated at a later date or time.
- 3.12.6 The Referee is the sole judge of fact and law and will take into consideration medical information available prior to ruling whether a player is fit to participate in a match.

Section 4: Understanding the Laws of the Game

- 4.1 All players are expected to have a basic understanding of the laws of the game of Rugby Union and have physical competency and fitness to play the game.
- 4.2 All kicks at goal must take place from the field of play. Kicks can occur from behind the goal posts for speed of match as well.
- 4.3 Squad members may only enter or leave the field of play in accordance with Law 6.A.5 and 6.C.2 to attend to the needs of their team. Approaches to a Match Official will be dealt with as misconduct.

Section 5: Substitutions, Replacements and Stoppages

- 5.1 All substitutions must be made through the 4th official located in the tent on the pitch. Once checked in, the AR will signal the next opportunity to enter the pitch.
- 5.2 The World Rugby Sevens substitution law (for seven-a-side teams) will apply as follows:
 - 5.2.1 A team may nominate up to five (5) replacement/substitute players.
 - 5.2.2 A team may substitute or replace up to five (5) players.
 - 5.2.3 A team may substitute the same player more than once as long as no more than five (5) substitutions are made in total.
 - 5.2.4 A substitution made for a blood or head injury does not count as one of the five (5) allowed substitutions.
- 5.3 All substitutions and replacements during a match, including but not limited to blood replacement, shall be made in accordance with World Rugby Law 3 and the seven-a-side variations.
- 5.4 For any injuries, time will not be stopped unless it is determined by the Referee, in consultation with the medical team, that the injury is serious enough to require the game to stop for safety reasons. The

Referee, at his/her discretion, may call the game off early to maintain the safety of participants.

5.5 The Tournament accepts no liability for injuries sustained during the course of the tournament.

Section 6: Judicial and Disciplinary Committee

- 6.1 For persistent or deliberate fouls or other infringements the Referee may issue a Yellow Card to dismiss a player to the Sin Bin for a period of two (2) minutes.
- 6.2 If a player receives two (2) Yellow Cards, for any reason during the match the Player will receive an automatic one (1) match ban from tournament play, unless 6.3 below applies.
- 6.3 The Tournament reserves the right to call the player to a Judicial hearing should the offence/s relate to player safety or dangerous play. The player will take no further part in the tournament until the judicial hearing has been conducted and the decision of the judicial hearing shall be final.
- 6.4 Rule 6.2/6.3 will be applied to any subsequent Card (Red or Yellow) that is received by the player following the discipline issued from the first offense (refer 6.2).
- 6.5 Should the Referee consider an infringement to be more serious, a player will be; issued a Red Card, dismissed from the field of play and will take no further part in that game.
 - 6.5.1 A player that has been issued with a Red Card will take no further part in the tournament.

Section 7: Rules Regarding Eligibility

All teams will be required to check into the tournament to receive their accreditation. Only teams and players actively showing in RugbyXplorer will be allowed to compete. For international teams, they must have a tour permit authorized by their home union that shows all players and staff. The event conforms to all USA Rugby and USA Youth and High School regulations found [HERE](#)

The competition comprises fifteen separate sections each with its own rules of eligibility, as follows;

1. U23

- a. Players participating in the U23 divisions will be born in year 2002 or later.

2. U18 Divisions

- a. Teams in this section must have layers born on or after 1 September 2006
- b. Players must be in HS or have just finished HS. Players who have registered and competed in Collegiate or Mens rugby are not eligible.
- c. A waiver may be submitted for players within 3 months of the deadline (June/July/Aug 2005 birthdates).
- d. A team may have no more than 2 waived players

3. U16 Divisions

- a. Teams in this section must have layers born on or after 1 September 2008
- b. A waiver may be submitted for players within 3 months of the deadline (June/July/Aug 2007 birthdates).
- c. A team may have no more than 2 waived players

U14 Divisions

- d. Teams in this section must have layers born on or after 1 September 2010
- e. A waiver may be submitted for players within 3 months of the deadline (June/July/Aug 2009 birthdates).
- f. A team may have no more than 2 waived players
- g. **All u14 players may weigh no more than 185lbs as weighed during checkin.**

The Tournament reserves the right to decline entry to teams, who it is felt, at the Tournament's sole discretion, do not qualify for the section which they have entered.

It is anticipated that the RUGBY tournament sections will comprise the following number of teams:

RUGBY		
1	U23 Men	16
2	U23 Women	0
3	U18 Boys Elite	12
4	U18 Girls Elite	8
5		
6	U18 Girls	16
7	U18 Boys	24
8	U16 Tier 1 Boys	16
9	U16 Tier 2 Boys	16
10	U16 Girls	16
11	U14 Boys	16
12	U14 Girls	16
13		
14		
RUGBY TOTAL		164

Should the minimal number of teams not be achieved the section may be removed from the tournament.

Section 8: Conduct

- 11.1 General Behaviour – participants, associated team personnel and supporters are expected to behave in a manner that is appropriate. General conduct during the tournament is expected to be inoffensive and in the spirit of sportsmanship.
- 11.2 Pitch/Court Invasion – participants and associated team personnel are only allowed onto the pitches for warm-up and match play. Team supporters are not allowed onto any of pitches at any time. Participants and associated team personnel who access pitches/courts when not eligible to do so will be asked to leave. Team personnel may be sanctioned for one game.
- 11.3 Acts of Violence –acts of violent behaviour will result in Police intervention, detention and criminal proceedings being actioned, plus removal from the stadium and a ban from future tournaments.

Section 9: Team Check In and accreditation

USA Rugby and USA Youth and HS are requiring the following process to be utilized for the registration of players and teams who will be competing within the NAI7s. These following processes will be required for both U23 and youth teams.

International teams

All international teams must have an international tour permit with a roster of players, coaches, and staff approved by their home union prior to participation. A copy must be sent to info@nai7s.com. International player check-in will occur same time as other teams but players need only produce passport.

U23

The U23 players all need to be registered with USA rugby via the RugbyXplorer App. Each team must have the following:

- Team must exist in RugbyXplorer
- All Players must be registered to that team
 - For players not registered to USAR, we will provide a tournament only valid registration link.
- See reference: [USA Rugby Policies](#) | [USA Rugby](#)

Youth Teams

Per USA Rugby and USA Youth and High School policies, all teams MUST conform to the following:

- Team must be registered to their respective SRO and be listed in RugbyXplorer.
- All players who will be competing for THAT specified team, must be registered with that team.
- A minimum World Rugby level1 coach must be rostered to the team.
- For NDP programs, the players must be registered to the NDP.

For example, Team “Nice” register with NAI7s to compete in the u18 division. Nice is located in Colorado and therefore must be a team registered with Rugby Colorado in RX. The Nice admin gets hold of the SRO and has a team created if it will only exist for the event. The coach and players will then be required to register with Nice. **That may include being transferred from their home club if Nice is a motley style team.**

If you are a team that is already part of your SRO, like Utah Lions Rugby Academy, the players would need to register with the team if they are not already part of it.

Your SRO will determine if there are any cost associated per their own internal policy. Most states waive fees for events like tournaments when players transfer for that specific event. If a player who is not part of USAR at all wishes to play, they would likely need to play their full state fees.

Team Check-In procedures

- NAI7s will designate location and times for each division. We are going to do our best to keep it close to each other understanding bigger organizations. For organizations that have a large number of teams travelling, we reserve the right to meet you at your location to check in the entire organization.

- Each team will arrive with at their designated time and, when asked, will go to the check in person with rugbyXplorer open. All players should be in the order shown in RugbyXplorer to speed up processing
- Each player will have a legal ID: Passport, drivers license, etc. that shows name, DOB and image. For u14s and young u16s, we will accept a copy(please no original) of a birth cert, a passport or a school ID. We realize some players may need to show 2 things to cover check in.
- Coaches will also be required to show a ID
- Staff will place an appropriate accreditation upon the player and coaches. Each age bracket will have a age specific accreditation.
- Coaches will have a unique accreditation that will show them as a coach and will allow them to coach across multiple teams if necessary.

On game days, teams and staff will check in with the Field Marshalls. Only players and staff with appropriate accreditation will be allowed into the technical areas. This will be a maximum of 14 players with the correct age accreditation for that match and 2 coaches. All others will be required to be outside the technical areas.

Photographers for a team will have a unique accreditation and will NOT be allowed into the technical zones. They are welcome to be opposite sideline or end zones.

Any Red card will have the accreditation removed so as to not allow into the technical zone. IF, in review, the player is allowed back into competition, or if it is a single day red card, then the player will need to come back to the tournament tent with ID to resecure an accreditation. The same goes for a destroyed or damaged accreditation. They will only be reissued IF they can provide the proper ID AND they appear on the roster in RugbyXplorer. Once validated, all rosters will lock.