A photograph of rugby players in action, overlaid with a red tint. The players are wearing white jerseys with 'LIFE' and 'U' visible. A referee in a dark shirt is also visible. The background is a blurred crowd.

Protective Equipment and Clothing Guidelines 2015



USA RUGBY

Rugby is expanding quickly at all ages and with that comes more cross-over from other sports and activities. Players and coaches are bringing new techniques and skills from these other sports but with them come some protective gear that is not allowed in rugby. This document is meant to clarify what is allowed and not allowed in the sport of contact rugby. A couple items of note:

- There is no difference for the game of Sevens, Tens or Fifteens; illegal is illegal
- If you have a question, contact USA Rugby for a clarification. The easiest overarching guideline to know if something is permitted, is anything with plastic or metal of any kind is not allowed.
- There are different policies for men and women, but very few differences. Chest padding is allowed for women, but not men. Hijab headscarves and cotton one-seam tights are allowed for women for purposes of religious modesty. Best practice is when the headscarf is worn under a scrum cap.
- Please do not waiver on these banned items; they are for the safety of all players. If a player cannot play without a banned item, they should not be playing contact rugby until healthy enough to participate without that item.
- Banned items identification falls to every player and coach to police their own athletes and teams. The referee is only there as a final word on the item.

If you have any question on specific items you can contact USA Rugby's Referee Department, Marc Nelson at mnelson@usarugby.org. Please do not contact USA Rugby 5 minutes before a match, do this at least several days before your match to question an item. More information available at <http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/reg12>. And also <http://usarugby.org/laws-guidelines>

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*****Please note – USA Rugby does not endorse any specific brand or protective equipment or under clothing. The examples used within this document are for example only and utilized to illustrate the World Rugby and USA Rugby policy on players clothing.**

The World Rugby around Banned Items: *LAW 4.4 Banned items of clothing*

- A player must not wear any item that is contaminated by blood.
- A player must not wear any item that is sharp or abrasive.
- A player must not wear any items containing buckles, clips, rings, hinges, zippers, screws, bolts or rigid material or projection not otherwise permitted under this Law.
- A player must not wear jewelry such as rings or earrings.
- A player must not wear gloves.
- A player must not wear shorts with padding sewn into them.
- A player must not wear any other item which does not conform with the World Rugby Specifications for such clothing (Regulation 12).
- A player must not wear any item that is normally permitted by Law, but, in the referee's opinion that is liable to cause injury to a player.
- A player must not wear communication devices within that player's clothing or attached to the body.

LAW 4.2 SPECIAL ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR WOMEN are approved for play

- Chest pads, which must bear the IRB Approval Mark (Regulation 12).
- Cotton blend long tights, with single inside leg seam (inseam only). Must be worn under the shorts, socks and footwear.
- Headscarves or Hijabs providing they do not cause a danger to the wearer or other players and do not contravene Regulation 12.

REGULATION 12: <http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/reg12>

For many youth players coming from other sports, they may have equipment that seems suitable for contact rugby. These should be careful assumptions and if in doubt ask the referee before the match. As a general rule any soft padded equipment within reason should be acceptable. **PLEASE NOTE: the banned items listed in this document will remain banned regardless of how much tape, wrapping or padding is used to cover up dangerous or potentially dangerous features. A covering over an illegal item is still illegal.**

Clothing Worn Under Uniforms

- Undershirts are allowed as long as there is no padding on the ribs, hips, back or chest.
- Underwear is permitted as long as there is no padding. It must be shorter than the knee in length.
- Most padded protection is not suitable for rugby; it often has hard plastic features and covers more than is allowed.
- Hip/thigh padding sewn into underwear/pants of any kind is not permitted.
- Chest padding is only appropriate for women.
- Rugby specific shirts with padding are permitted only in the shoulders and upper arms of the undergarment. Infrequently, there may be some padding on the chest, suitable for women.



Underwear should not normally extend below the length of rugby shorts. Although not suggested, underwear can extend below rugby shorts; but must not be long enough to touch the knee. The player pictured is pushing the limit on this length.

Shirts and Tights

- Shirts can be worn under a rugby jersey with short or long sleeves. If the sleeve extends below the arm of the rugby jersey, the garment must be snug to the arm of the player (like a spandex).
- NO shirts with hoods may be worn during a contact rugby match.



- Athletic Tights of any length are not permitted in contact rugby for men and women. This includes when playing on turf or grass and in any temperature or weather condition. Tights can be a competitive advantage and are never allowed under any circumstances.
- Wearing tights but pulling them up over the knee is not permitted, they must be removed.
- ***Only Cotton tights with a single inseam are permitted for women for religious modesty. If a female player wishes to wear these kinds of tights during a match, they should alert the referee and allow the referee to visually inspect the garment.



Braces and Protection:

- Hinge plastic or metal knee brace covered with padding are not permitted.
 - Knee braces that feature metal or plastic are not be permitted, this also applies to braces with metal or plastic that is covered by padding or tape. Any soft brace or a neoprene sleeve is permitted.



- **Wrist guards with plastic or metal**

- Wrist guards with plastic or metal supports are not permitted.



- **Metal and hard plastic ankle supports**

- Any brace featuring metal and hard plastic supports is not permitted; a strapped ASO type of brace or neoprene sleeve with limited hard plastic is permitted and should be worn underneath the sock.





- **Shoulder braces**

- Only shoulder braces with soft fabric are permitted; any plastic, buckles, hinges or metal features are not safe for play.



Goggles and Eyewear – Not Allowed



Eyewear and sport goggles of ANY kind are not allowed in contact rugby.



NOTE* World Rugby has begun a trial on rugby goggles to study their use in contact rugby. Any rugby player can apply to be part of the trial at the following link: <http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/goggles>.

Once approved for the trial, a player must only wear the World Rugby Goggled purchased through their website and feature their approved tag (pictured here).

Gloves and Arm Covering

- Full finger gloves are not permitted, no matter the weather; players are allowed to wear rugby specific mitts that do not cover the fingers. Gloves must not contain padding.



Forearm Protectors

- Forearm protectors are allowed but must be rugby specific. Any other type of forearm protection is not permitted.



Face and Head Protection

- Face protection of any kind is not allowed.



- Head protection is allowed when it features the World Rugby (International Rugby Board, IRB) tag of approval.



- Headgear from other sports like wrestling, soccer, football, hockey or lacrosse is not permitted.



Mouth-Guards

Mouth Guards should be worn by every player, every time they play contact rugby. There are several mouth guards on the market that can work for rugby; comfort and protection should be key in choosing a mouth guard. Contact your dentist or opro.com for a custom mouth guard option.

Mouth Guards should not have any pieces extending outside the mouth, such as an attachment for a football helmet.



Cleats, Boots, Shoes and Footwear

- Whatever you call them, Cleats, Boots, Shoes, etc. for rugby are more varied than ever. Please familiarize yourself with the law around this. Here are just a few examples of allowed and illegal cleats. Referees should ALWAYS check each players footwear for compliance and sharp studs. Toe studs are legal in footwear, it is the consistency of the stud that should be checked.



No metal blades of any kind.



No American Football 'Screw in' cleats where the screw in stud consists of multiple materials (i.e. part metal and part plastic). The screw in stud must be made from EITHER metal or plastic but not both.

*American Football Cleats are legal if screw in studs comply.



Same as above, American Football Cleats must have the screw in studs replaced with studs of a single material, either metal or plastic.



Soccer, Rugby, Lacrosse, American Football or other cleats with 'molded' plastic cleats are permitted. Even if these cleats have a toe cleat. It does not have to be cut off.



Soccer cleats with an 'offset screw-in' toe cleat are allowed, as long as the screw in stud is made of a single material, EITHER plastic or metal.



Molded soccer cleats with 'blade' style are permitted.



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Rugby cleats of all brands are usually permitted as long as the screw in stud length falls within the law and the studs are made of a single material.

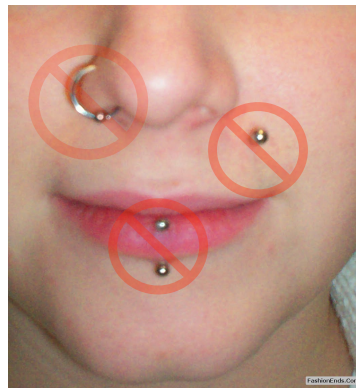
Additional Items:

Bracelets and Jewelry

- All bracelets of any kind must be removed before participating in contact or non-contact rugby. If a bracelet is tied on it must be cut off before playing rugby.



- All piercings and jewelry must be removed completely before participating in contact rugby. Players must NOT tape over piercings or jewelry, it must be completely removed.



Items for Hair

Metal of any kind is not permitted in contact rugby. Only fabric 'hairbands' are allowed for control of hair during a rugby match. Metal bobby pins or hair berets are not permitted, even under a scrum cap. 'Hair ties' like rubber bands are permitted, as long as there is no metal on them.



Knee and Thigh Pads

- Knee Pads are not permitted unless the padding is less than .5 Centimeters before compression. Very few knee pads would qualify for this requirement. Volleyball knee pads are not permitted.
- Thigh padding is not permitted. Players may wear a small pad under tape on their legs for lineout lifting purposes. This pad must not be thicker than .5 Centimeters uncompressed.



Prosthetics

Prosthetics limbs and devices are currently not permitted in contact rugby. Although there are several different models and materials for these items, they are not permitted in contact rugby. Please contact USA Rugby if there are specific questions around these items.

