

Outside of the potential change to Regulation 3.5-(d), there are not any significant changes proposed for 2025-26.

If you've read the Key Changes or the full document, you saw that most suggestions are adding emphasis or clarity to existing topics.

Our focus: four main topics.

CMS:

Full and complete use of CMS, for all NCS Qualifying matches and Reg 3.4.3. matches. We need more unions to ensure their members are in compliance with this throughout the season, not only just ahead of the playoffs and for only the clubs moving on.

USA Rugby certified coaches.

Because RX is designed to allow registration to be a quick and easy process, it allows anyone to register as a coach - even when they are missing some or all of the required accreditations. We ask local unions to continue to monitor member clubs to ensure all have at least one fully credentialed coach as a member, and to continue to review the 'missing accreditations' reports to track if/when coaches fall out of compliance. Background checks are valid for two years, but may expire midway through a season. Safe Sport is an annual requirement, it also will expire one year from the previous date of completion. We found a number of coaches whose credentials expired/were set to expire between April 15 and May 20 — during the playoffs. Given all clubs must have a certified coach registered to the club and with the club at the NCS, a few coaches had to quickly renew their certifications.

International Clearances: players and for touring teams, incoming and outgoing.

This is a World Rugby and USA Rugby policy and requirement, we need our club members to comply. The information is repeated through the Regulations as this is important.

Timeline for incoming players: the USA Rugby membership year meaning: September 1 through end of the membership cycle/club sevens championships.

NCS check-in process and the required documentation.

This seems to be a surprise for many members advancing to the NCS, with players unprepared to provide the correct documents or understand there is an actual physical check-in process. Hopefully the increased language, in more sections, will help. We have also confirmed that US Passports or the Enhanced Driver's Licenses from select northern border states will serve to confirm both the player's identity as well as their status as US Resident/US Citizen.

More specific to women's fifteens:

WER shall be considered an Elite Competition (this is their name, and they don't pay the players yet), with the participants considered Elite players.

After polling several Women's D1 clubs from different parts of the country, establishing roster restrictions was very important. As the Regulations have match roster restrictions for Professional players, the proposal is to apply the same limits for WER players.

As with professional players there is a waiver opportunity (7.5.2.F.) for those with limited playing time and experience.

Other topics:

Match Roster: Minimum players.

Unless the club or clubs have local union approval, all NCS Qualifying matches must include at least 15 players (World Rugby policy).

NCS Rosters: Players locked to the division on which they appear on the NCS roster for duration of the NCS. (3.5.2-(d)).

This rule has been around for a few years out of issues around larger clubs advancing more than one team into the USA Club Rugby playoffs.

Rationale.

To ensure a level playing field between all participants in the NCS, whether a large multi-divisional club or a smaller single-division club. Clubs advancing to the NCS are asked to declare their top 28 players for the event roster.

For single division clubs, this will be the top available players on that club. Should the club advance to the final, and have to replace members of the roster due to injury/unavailability, they would have to move down to beyond their top 28 players or possibly leave roster slots open.

A larger club has options to assign players based on lower division eligibility, to a lower division NCS roster. Should that club lose in the Regionals, it arguably could create an advantage should players from that roster be eligible for the upper division NCS championship roster: they would have NCS experience, and be additional bodies to fill out the NCS roster.