



Alberta Rugby Union

COMPLIANCE WITH 'FAIRNESS AND SAFETY IN SPORT ACT'

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Board Approved: November 5, 2025

1. Definitions

In this policy,

- a. “amateur competitive” means a sport or sport discipline where:
 - i. an athlete’s primary focus for participation is on development, such as providing competitive experience, skill improvement, and opportunities for active participation; and
 - ii. an athlete seeks personal or team excellence, measures performance against others and/or seeks opportunities for advancement.

- b. “applicant” means one of the following individuals who submits a confidential challenge to an athlete’s eligibility to participate in a relevant sport:
 - i. athlete;
 - ii. parent or guardian of an athlete if the athlete is under 18 years of age;
 - iii. the President of a Rugby Alberta member organization.

- c. “athlete” means a participant registered in a Rugby Alberta sanctioned program.

- d. “birth registration document” means a birth registration document as defined in the Vital Statistics Act or a similar document issued outside of Alberta that contains the following information respecting an athlete:
 - i. full name of the athlete;
 - ii. date and place where the birth of the athlete occurred; and
 - iii. the sex of the athlete.

- e. “relevant sport” means an amateur competitive sport or sport discipline governed, regulated, coordinated, promoted or sponsored by Rugby Alberta.

- f. “sex at birth” means the sex of an individual that appears on the athlete’s birth registration document.

2. Purpose

In compliance with the Government of Alberta’s Fairness and Safety in Sport Act and its associated Regulation, Rugby Alberta will promote fairness and safety in sport by applying the eligibility guidelines established by the Government of Alberta to govern participation in female-only rugby programs. This policy reflects the legislative requirements and is intended to ensure consistent application across sanctioned activities. It does not constitute legal advice and should not be interpreted as a statement of Rugby Alberta’s independent position on the legislation.

3. Application

This policy only applies to participation in a relevant sport by athletes who are ages 12 and older.

4. Athlete Eligibility

To participate in a female-only league, class or division of a relevant sport, an athlete must be of the female sex at birth.

5. Confirmation of Athlete Eligibility

- a. Before an athlete may participate in a relevant sport, an athlete (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age) must confirm in writing through the registration process with Rugby Alberta that they understand and meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 4 of this policy.
- b. Failure of an athlete (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age) to confirm their eligibility in writing with Rugby Alberta will render the athlete ineligible to participate.

6. Confidential Challenge to Athlete Eligibility

- a. A confidential challenge may be submitted by an applicant if there are reasonable grounds to believe that an athlete is ineligible under section 4 of this policy.
- b. A confidential challenge must be made in writing and sent to the Rugby Alberta President at president@rugbyalberta.com.
- c. A confidential challenge to an athlete's eligibility must include:
 - i. the name of the applicant;
 - ii. the name of the athlete, their club/team; and
 - iii. detailed information that supports the grounds for the challenge.

7. Verification of Athlete Eligibility

- a. Upon receipt of a confidential challenge to an athlete's eligibility under section 4 of this policy, Rugby Alberta will confirm receipt and notify the Minister of Tourism and Sport, without personal identifying information, within 3 business days.
- b. Rugby Alberta may dismiss the challenge if, in the opinion of Rugby Alberta, reasonable grounds do not exist for the challenge. Upon dismissal of the challenge, the applicant will be notified by Rugby Alberta and may be subject to sanctions under section 9 of this policy. Rugby Alberta will notify the Minister of Tourism and Sport of the dismissal, without personal identifying information, within 30 business days of the challenge.
- c. If Rugby Alberta does not dismiss the challenge under section 7(b) of this policy:
 - i. the applicant and the athlete whose eligibility is the subject of the challenge will be notified that the challenge is moving forward; and

- ii. the athlete whose eligibility is the subject of the challenge (or their parent or guardian if the athlete is under the age of 18) will be required to provide Rugby Alberta with a copy of the athlete's birth registration document within 30 calendar days. The athlete is eligible to participate in rugby activities during this 30-day period. Any costs associated with obtaining the necessary birth registration document will be reimbursed by Rugby Alberta based on required documentation being provided.
- iii. Failure to provide the birth registration document as defined in the Vital Statistics Act, or similar document issued outside of Alberta, to Rugby Alberta will render the athlete ineligible to participate in a relevant sport.

8. Resolution

- a. Once the birth registration document is received, Rugby Alberta will verify the athlete's eligibility under section 4 of this policy.
- b. If the challenge is upheld and the athlete is determined to be ineligible, Rugby Alberta will notify the applicant and athlete whose eligibility has been challenged. The athlete will be permanently ineligible for participation in a female-only league, class or division of a relevant sport.
- c. If the challenge is dismissed and the athlete is determined to be eligible, Rugby Alberta will notify the applicant and the athlete whose eligibility has been challenged. The athlete will be permanently eligible for participation in a female-only league, class or division of a relevant sport.
- d. Upon a determination under section 8(b) or 8(c) of this policy, Rugby Alberta will notify the Minister of Tourism and Sport of the decision, without personal identifying information, within 30 business days of the challenge.

9. Invalid Challenge

- a. Pursuant to section 7(b) of this policy, Rugby Alberta may determine that reasonable grounds do not exist for a challenge, including but not limited to where:
 - i. Rugby Alberta has previously resolved a challenge for the same athlete;
 - ii. Not enough information has been provided to proceed as a valid challenge; or
 - iii. The challenge is deemed to have been made in bad faith.
- b. Factors relevant to determining whether a challenge, dismissed under section 7(b) of this policy, was made in bad faith and merits appropriate sanctions for the applicant include, without limitation:
 - i. The applicant's prior history;
 - ii. A pattern of inappropriate behavior or numerous unfounded challenges under this policy; and
 - iii. The ages of the athletes involved.
- c. Sanctions for an applicant may include, without limitation:

- i. A written warning
- ii. A determination that the applicant has violated the Rugby Alberta Code of Conduct, where applicable; and
- iii. Restrictions from submitting any future challenges under this policy.

10. Appeals

All decisions made under Section 8 of this policy will be final and not subject to appeal.

11. Protection of Personal Information

All information and data relating to the athlete will be treated as sensitive personal information and will be processed as such in accordance with applicable data protection and privacy laws. Such information and data will not be used for any purpose other than to determine athlete eligibility.

12. Assistance with this Policy

- a. Rugby Alberta is committed to the participation of all athletes in accordance with the athlete eligibility requirements set out in this policy. Any individuals seeking information on the application of this policy should contact the Rugby Alberta President at president@rugbyalberta.com for assistance.
- b. Any individuals seeking information on the application of the Government of Alberta's Act and Regulation may contact the Ministry of Tourism and Sport at SPAR@gov.ab.ca for assistance.

POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This Policy will be reviewed annually by Rugby Alberta, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, organizational needs, or direction from the Government of Alberta.