

Rugby Arizona Safe Play Waiver Policy

Effective: 09/01/2025

Authority: Rugby Arizona (RAZ) in alignment with USA Rugby Age Grade Regulations

Purpose

This policy ensures safe and fair competition in RAZ sanctioned competitions by establishing clear weight thresholds for each youth age grade (U8, U10, U12, Middle School). Players significantly under or over the average range for their age grade may be at higher risk of injury to themselves or others. The U10 Coed age-grade does not have an Average Lower Weight (lbs.), as there is no U8 tackle division to drop down into. The Middle School Division does not have an Average Upper Weight or Waiver Threshold Max Weight, as USA Rugby guidelines prohibit players in middle school from playing with high school players; there is no division for players in middle school to move up into.

Scope

This policy applies to all RAZ sanctioned competitions, including league matches, friendlies, tournaments, and representative/select-side teams.

Age Grade Determination

Per USA Rugby Regulation 3.4, youth age grades are determined by the player's age as of September 1 of the competitive year (Sept 1 – Aug 31).

Weight Matrix & Waiver Thresholds

Division	Typical Age Range	Average Lower Weight (lbs.)	Average Upper Weight (lbs.)	Waiver Threshold Max Weight	Waiver Required Below	Waiver Required Above
U10	8–9	NA	105	130	NA	> 105
U12	10–11	60	135	165	< 60	> 135
Middle School (8 th grade & under)	12–13	80	NA	NA	< 80	NA

Waiver Rules

- If a player's weight is below the 'Average Lower Weight' threshold, a completed and signed waiver must be submitted to RAZ a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the next scheduled competition for consideration to play down one lower age grade. Players who submit a waiver request in less than seven days prior to the next scheduled competition risk delaying their eligibility to participate until the subsequent week to ensure that their waiver request and player evaluation can be properly reviewed, scheduled, and completed.
 - A waiver approval means that the player can play down one age-grade.
 - A waiver denial means that the player must remain at their natural age-grade.
- If a player's weight exceeds the 'Average Upper Weight' threshold, a completed and signed waiver must be submitted to RAZ a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the next

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scheduled competition for consideration to remain at their natural age grade. Players who submit a waiver request in under seven days prior to the next scheduled competition will be required to wait until the subsequent week to ensure that their waiver request and player evaluation can be properly reviewed, scheduled, and completed.

- A waiver approval means that a player may remain at their natural age-grade.
- A waiver denial means that a player must play up one age-grade or may opt to participate at their natural age-grade under the “Red Penny” provision.
- Weight must be measured for ALL players during club practices and official RAZ compliance check-ins at the outset of the fall and spring. For weigh-ins, players should wear light athletic clothing and remove shoes. A properly calibrated scale must be used.
- Players who submit a waiver request to play down or to remain at their natural age grade are evaluated by the designated RAZ officials during their first match at their natural age grade.
- Two RAZ officials (i.e., VP & Commissioner) will evaluate these players to assist in deciding about the most suitable age grade while prioritizing both the safety of the player requesting a waiver, as well as the other players on the pitch.
- All Players will be weighed prior to tackle competition in the Fall and then once again prior to the Spring League season during a team compliance check-in prior to participating in tackle competitions.
- RAZ may reassess a player’s eligibility at any time, including before playoffs.
- RAZ decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Exceptional Circumstances – RAZ Penny Provision (Tackle)

- In rare instances where a player does not qualify for a waiver, or they are not physically or emotionally ready to play safely at their natural age grade or not physically or emotionally ready to move up an age-grade, and his/her only option is not to play, a “RAZ Penny” exception may be requested. Under this exception, during a tackle match, the player will wear a “RAZ Penny”. If a player is approved for this exception provision, it must be documented by a RAZ official on the Waiver Request form.
- The “Red Penny” indicates that opposition players are not allowed to tackle that player, nor is that player allowed to tackle his/or opposition. Instead, the “RAZ Penny” Player will play two-hand touch to “tackle” the opposition and the opposition will use two-hand touch to “tackle” the “RAZ Penny” player. In both instances, play will resume with the player in possession making an immediate pass to a teammate and the opposition all being onside behind the mark of the tag. The referee will strictly enforce this provision and have discretion for adjusting the restart method, if necessary. The goal of the restart is to maintain player safety and avoid slowing the game down. The player’s parent(s), coach(es), and the appropriate RAZ administrator must collaborate in advance and come to a mutual agreement prior to requesting this exception. Each team may only field one RAZ Penny approved player at a time, with a maximum of two RAZ Penny players on the pitch at any given time.

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References & Data Sources

1. USA Rugby – Age Grade Regulations (Regulation 3.4, Player Eligibility by Age). <https://www.usa.rugby/>
2. World Rugby – Player Welfare Guidelines. <https://www.world.rugby/>
3. Rugby Arizona Competition Rules & Compliance Check-In Procedures (internal).
4. CDC Growth Charts – Boys & Girls, Ages 2–20. <https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/>
5. National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) – Child Growth & Development Data.
6. Pop Warner Youth Football – Age/Weight Matrix. <https://www.popwarner.com/>
7. USA Wrestling – Age & Weight Classification Standards. <https://www.usawrestling.org/>
8. Hawaii Youth Rugby & Ontario Rugby – Modified Age/Weight Rugby Rules.
9. Safe Sport Act & Player Safety Best Practices. <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>
10. Sports Risk Management Manual – American Sports Builders Association.