



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING GUIDELINES 2024-2025



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, Fifteens, beach or any contact rugby, of any age; illegal is illegal. These guidelines do not apply to non-contact rugby
- If you have a question, contact USA Rugby for a clarification. The easiest overarching guideline to know if your item is permitted; 'If it has 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 turbans are allowed for men and women. Best practice is when the headscarf is worn under a scrum cap, but not required.
- Please do not waver 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.
- Cochlear Implants and hearing aids are permitted in community rugby, if worn underneath a scrumcap. They must be removed if no scrumcap is available.
- Goggles are permitted when using the World Rugby approved goggles. Other sport goggles are not permitted.
- 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, contact USA Rugby's Training & Education Department, Jamie McGregor at jmcgregor@usa.rugby. Please do not contact USA Rugby 5 minutes before a match, allow several days before your match to question an item. More information available at <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/player-welfare> and also <https://www.usa.rugby/referee/resources>

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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 law around Banned Items: *LAW 4.5 Banned items of clothing:*

4.5. A player may not wear:

- a. Any item contaminated by blood.
- b. Any sharp or abrasive item.
- c. Any items containing buckles, clips, rings, hinges, zippers, screws, bolts or rigid material or projection not otherwise permitted under this law.
- d. Jewelry.
- e. Gloves.
- f. Shorts with padding sewn into them.
- g. Any item that is normally permitted in law but, in the referee's opinion, is liable to cause injury.
- h. Communication devices.

4.6 The referee has the power to decide at any time that part of a player's clothing is dangerous or illegal. In this case, the referee must order the player to remove the item. The player must not take part in the match until the item is removed or rendered harmless.

4.7 If, at an inspection before the match, a match official tells a player that an item banned under this law is being worn and the player is subsequently found to be wearing that item on the playing area, that player is sent off for misconduct. Sanction: Penalty.

LAW 4.4 SPECIAL ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR WOMEN are approved for play:

- a. Chest pads.
- b. Cotton blend long tights, with single inside leg seam under their shorts and socks.
- c. Headscarves, providing they do not cause a danger to the wearer or other players

REGULATION 12: <http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/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 or spandex 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 for men in any National Championship Series events, International Test Matches or other official events for USA Rugby. Local rugby leagues and organizations can make reasonable policy and exception for items like synthetic turf fields and severe weather. Please check with and adhere to any local policy for men wearing tights.
- If not allowed, wearing tights but pulling them up over the knee is not permitted. They must be removed.
- Tights are permitted for women.



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.





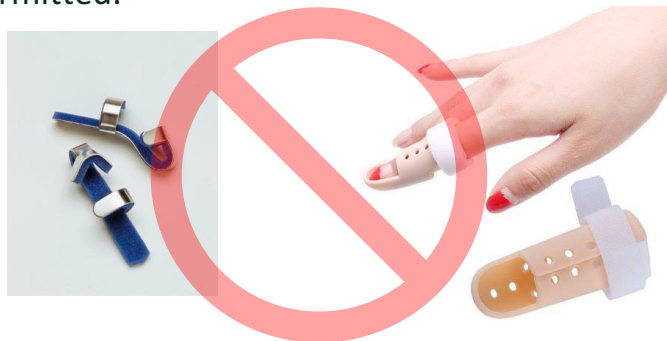
- **Shoulder braces**

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



- **Splints and Braces**

- Splints and braces for fingers containing metal or plastic, hands and wrists are not permitted.



Goggles and Eyewear – Approved, with Exceptions

Eyewear and sport goggles are normally not allowed in contact rugby, but have been approved when using the designated, approved goggles from World Rugby <http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/goggles>.



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 only when it features the World Rugby tag of approval.



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



- Hijabs, Headscarves and Turbans are permitted. Best practice is when they are worn under a scrumcap to prevent pulling or stretching, but is not a requirement.



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.



Teeth Additions

Tooth implants, gold teeth or 'grills' that are removable should be removed for rugby. If permanent, they must be covered by a mouth guard.

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. The tip of the stud should be made of a single material, either plastic or metal.



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.



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 tip of the screw in stud is made of a single material (either plastic or metal).



Molded soccer cleats with 'blade' style are permitted, as long as no metal is present.

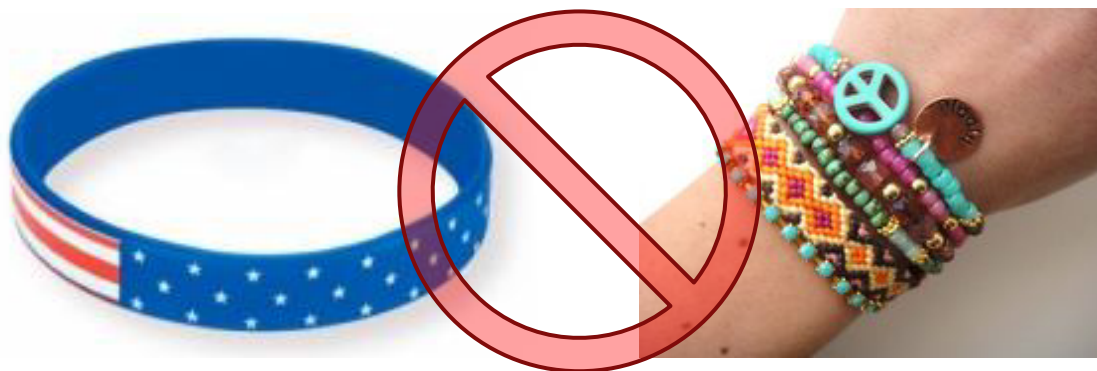


Rugby cleats of all brands are usually permitted as long as the screw in stud length falls within the law and the studs are made of a single material on its tip.

Additional Items:

Bracelets and Jewelry

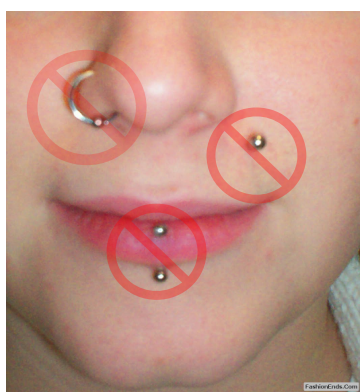
- All bracelets of any kind must be removed before participating in contact or non-contact rugby. If a bracelet is tied on it must be cut off before playing rugby.



- Fitness trackers, pedometers, house arrest bracelets or any kind of electronic devices of any kind are not permitted.



- 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.**
- Face and body piercings of any kind (hidden or visible) must be removed before participating in contact rugby

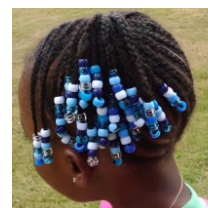
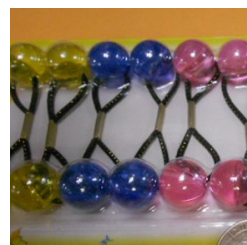


- Ear Gauges are permitted only if they are silicone or plastic. Metal gauges must be removed. If gauges are worn, best practice is to wear a scrum cap to cover the ears and gauges.



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 barrettes 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. We encourage our athletes with prosthetic limbs to participate in touch rugby, referee, coach and stay involved in the game!

Hearing Aids

Hearing aids and Cochlear Implants are permitted when worn under a scrum cap. Player should understand the potential for these items to be damaged during play.

Glucose Monitors

Small 'tag' monitors for glucose levels or diabetes treatment ports are permitted during a rugby match, but must be taped over to ensure they do not come out of place during play.

