

REGULATION 8. ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

8.1 Subject to Regulation 8.2, a Player may only play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team, the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team and the senior National Representative Sevens Team of the Union of the country with which the Player has a genuine, close, credible and established national link in which:

- (a) he was born; or
- (b) one parent or grandparent was born; or
- (c) he has completed sixty¹ consecutive months of Residence immediately preceding the time of playing; or
- (d) he has completed ten years of cumulative Residence preceding the time of playing.

8.2 A Player who (subject to Regulation 8.6 to 8.12) has played for:

- (a) the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team of a Union; or
- (b) the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team of a Union; or
- (c) either of (i) the senior National Representative Sevens Team of a Union where the Player has reached the age of twenty on or before the date of participation; or (ii) the National Representative Sevens Team of a Union in the Olympic Games or the Rugby World Cup Sevens, having reached the age of majority on or before the date of participation in such tournament,

is not eligible to play for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the senior National Representative Sevens Team of another Union.

8.3 For the purposes of this Regulation, a Player is deemed to have played for the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team of a Union if:

- (a) He is selected for such team to play in an International Match against the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team of another Union (or in a fifteen-a-side international Match against another Union's senior or next senior Touring Squad during a World Rugby approved International Tour) and is present at the Match played by that team either as a replacement, substitute or a playing member of that team and has, at the time of the Match, reached the age of majority; or
- (b) He is selected to represent a Union's senior Touring Squad on an International Tour which includes an International Match or Matches approved by World Rugby and is present at any fifteen-a-side Match played on that International Tour either as a replacement, substitute or a playing member of a team selected from the Union's senior Touring Squad and has, at the time of the Match, reached the age of majority; or
- (c) He is selected to represent a Union's next senior Touring Squad on a World Rugby approved International Tour and during that International Tour he is present at a Match against the senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team or the next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team of another Union either as a replacement, substitute or playing member of a team selected from the Union's next senior Touring Squad and has, at the time of the Match reached the age of majority.

(d) Before January 1, 2018, he is selected to represent the Under 20s National Representative Team of a Union which has been pre-designated as that Union's next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team and the Player is part of the team which participates in an International Match as part of the World Rugby Junior World Championships, World Rugby Junior World Rugby Trophy or the Six Nations U20 Championship and is present at the Match played by that Team either as a replacement, substitute or playing member of that Team and has, at the time of the Match, reached the age of majority².

8.4 For the purposes of this Regulation, a Player is deemed to have played for the senior National Representative Sevens Team of a Union if he is;

(a) selected to represent a Union's senior National Representative Sevens Team in an International Match against the senior National Representative Sevens Team of another Union and is present at the Match played by that Team either as a replacement, substitute or playing member of that Team the Player has, on or before the date of the Match, reached the age of twenty; or

(b) selected to represent a Union's National Representative Sevens Team in the Olympic Games or the Rugby World Cup Sevens and is present at such tournament either as a replacement, substitute or playing member of that Team having reached the age of majority on or before the date of participation in such tournament.

8.5 Responsibility, breach and penalties for a breach of Regulation 8

8.5.1 Unions

Regulation 8 is a strict liability offence and shall be construed in accordance with the principles of strict liability under English law. It is not, therefore, necessary that fault or intent on the part of a Union be shown in order for a breach of Regulation 8 to be established. Nor is lack of fault or intent on the part of a Union a defence to a breach of Regulation 8. For the avoidance of any doubt (and without limiting a Union's other obligations and responsibilities for the conduct, acts or omissions of its members and Persons under its jurisdiction pursuant to any other Regulation) Unions are responsible and accountable for the conduct of their Players and all Persons under its jurisdiction in relation to compliance with the provisions of Regulation 8 and any breach of Regulation 8 by such Player(s) or Person(s) shall be deemed to be a breach of Regulation 8 by the Union concerned. Each breach of Regulation 8 by a Union, howsoever arising, will result in a minimum fixed fine being imposed on the Union concerned. The minimum fixed fines for each breach of Regulation 8 are as follows:

(a) For a Union that is represented on the Council £100,000 sterling;

(b) For all other World Rugby Member Unions £25,000 sterling.

Based on the facts and circumstances of any breach of Regulation 8 the applicable minimum fixed fine as set out above may be increased. In addition, other penalties as set out in Regulation 18.6 may also be imposed on the Union concerned.

8.5.2 In exceptional circumstances, a Union in breach of Regulation 8 may make submissions to the relevant disciplinary body appointed under Regulation 18 to adjudicate on the case as to why the Union should not be subject to the applicable minimum fixed fine. For the avoidance of any doubt, however, the relevant disciplinary body shall only be entitled to reduce the applicable minimum fixed fine set out in this Regulation where the Union is able to provide clear and indisputable evidence that truly exceptional circumstances exist and that the Union concerned had taken all necessary steps to comply with Regulation 8.

Players

8.5.3 Notwithstanding Regulations 8.5.1 and 8.5.2 above and without prejudice to any sanction imposed on a Union, Players may also be subject to sanction in accordance with Regulation 18 where they breach Regulation 8 in circumstances where they knew or ought reasonably to have known they were not eligible to play for the relevant Union at the time of participation.

Additional eligibility criteria in relation to Olympic Events

8.6 In addition to complying with the criteria set out in Regulation 8.1 to 8.4 above (which applies equally to all Players), to be eligible to participate in the Olympic Games and/or as part of a potential qualifying team in, Olympic qualification events (together “Olympic Events”) or other events governed by the Olympic Charter all members of the senior National Representative Sevens Team(s) of a Union or the selected Olympic Sevens Team(s) of a National Olympic Committee must be a national of the country of the National Olympic Committee which it is representing in such Olympic Events. For the avoidance of doubt, these Regulations 8.6 to 8.13 do not apply to National Representative Sevens Teams and Olympic Sevens Teams which are participating in an Olympic qualification event but are not able to qualify through that event and/or have already qualified for the Olympic Games via a previous sevens series (save in the case of a pre-qualified team of the host nation of the Olympic Games).

8.7 A Player who is a national of the country or Union for which he has been captured under Regulation 8.2 and who holds the nationality of another country or Union, may apply to participate in an Olympic Event to represent his new country or Union subject to the following conditions;

8.7.1 The application of a Player under this Regulation 8.7 must be submitted by the Union which the Player wishes to next represent in an Olympic Event (or a Union associated with the Olympic Sevens Team the Player wishes to represent) to the Regulations Committee with all relevant supporting documentation at least one month in advance of the Player’s intended first participation for the new Union or Olympic Sevens Team. The application shall be pre-notified to the Player’s Union (namely the Union whose National Representative Team the Player represented or a Union associated with the Olympic Sevens Team, as applicable);

8.7.2 The Player as at the time of the consideration of his application by the Regulations Committee must have observed and be able to demonstrate a stand down period of at least three (3) years since the time the Player last represented his former Union and the time the Player first plays for the second Union or country, which must be in an Olympic Event. The Player may not represent the second Union in any other form of the Game until after he has participated in such Olympic Event.

8.7.3 The Player’s new Union or Olympic Sevens Team must not have already qualified for the Olympic Games (in the same gender as the Player) as at the time of the Player’s intended first participation for the new Union or Olympic Sevens Team, as applicable.

8.8 Where the Player is not a national of the Union for which he has been captured under Regulation 8.2, and he meets the Olympic eligibility criteria (in Regulation 8.6 to 8.13) as determined by the Regulations Committee, he shall be eligible for selection to play for the Union or country of which he is a national, in an Olympic Event, subject to satisfying the three-year stand down period.

8.9 A Player who is eligible or captured for a Union that cannot participate in an Olympic Event because there is no National Olympic Committee solely for the territory of such Union, may, subject to the Olympic eligibility criteria (in Regulation 8.6 to 8.13), be eligible to play for the Olympic Sevens Team of a National Olympic Committee of which he is a national, provided that such team is not associated with any one single Union. In such circumstances the following provisions shall apply.

8.9.1 Where the Player has been captured under Regulation 8.2 for a Union he shall remain captured for such Union notwithstanding the Player’s representation for the Olympic Sevens Team of a National Olympic Committee in an Olympic Event;

8.9.2 Where the Player has not previously been captured under Regulation 8.2 and he represents the Olympic Sevens Team of a National Olympic Committee in an Olympic Event he will be deemed to be captured for one of the underlying Unions which support the Olympic Sevens Team of the relevant National Olympic Committee, and the Player must elect which of those underlying Unions he shall be captured by for the purposes of Regulation 8.

8.10 A Player who has represented one Union or Olympic Team in an Olympic Event and who has changed his nationality or acquired a new nationality, may apply to participate in an Olympic Event to represent his new Union or country provided that at least three years have passed since the Player last represented his former Union or country and the approval of the International Olympic Committee, the relevant National Olympic Committee(s) and World Rugby is obtained. This period may be reduced or even cancelled with the agreement of the World Rugby and the National Olympic Committees concerned and by the IOC Executive Board, which takes into account the circumstances of each case.

8.11 A Player may not represent two different Unions or a Union and an Olympic Sevens Team(s) of a National Olympic Committee in the same Olympic Event(s).

8.12 Once the Player has represented the Union or Olympic Sevens Team of which he is a national, in an Olympic Event, he shall thereafter be tied to that Union (or an underlying Union of the Olympic Sevens Team) for all forms of the Game and in all events but shall only be eligible to participate in an International Match in such other forms of the Game in addition to seven-a-side if:

(a) he participates as a Player in no less than half of the tournaments in a series of World Rugby or Regional Association Olympic qualification tournaments, being for the avoidance of doubt a series of tournaments which provides direct qualification to the Olympic Games for one or more team(s) based on their finishing positions at the conclusion of the series in circumstances where his team is able to qualify for the Olympic Games through that series of tournaments (save in the case of a pre-qualified team of the host nation of the Olympic Games); and/or

(b) he participates as a Player in a standalone World Rugby or Regional Association Olympic qualification tournament, being for the avoidance of doubt a tournament which provides direct qualification to the Olympic Games for one or more team(s) based on their finishing positions at the conclusion of the tournament in circumstances where his team is able to qualify for the Olympic Games through that tournament (save in the case of a pre-qualified team of the host nation of the Olympic Games); and/or

(c) he participates as a Player in the Olympic Games.

Where a Player fails to reach the threshold participation criteria to participate in other forms of the Game set out in (a), (b) or (c) above, the Player is deemed to have been captured for the Union and/or team for which he has participated in the Olympic Event and shall remain eligible for that new Union in the seven-a-side form of the Game only (and for the avoidance of doubt may not participate for any other Union in any form of the Game), until such time as the threshold participation criteria are achieved at which time he shall become eligible to participate for his new Union in all forms of the Game. In a particular case where exceptional circumstances may arise, the new Union of the Player may apply for a Regulations Committee ruling.

8.13 Players who participate in the Olympic Events accept and agree that any disputes relating to eligibility shall first be addressed pursuant to the rules of such Olympic Events and the World Rugby Regulations and that all internal procedures (including applicable National Olympic Committee rules/procedures) and/or World Rugby procedures shall be exhausted first. Thereafter, recourse may be had in respect of Olympic Events only (and not in relation to eligibility matters to which Regulation 8.6 to 8.16 does not apply) to the

Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in accordance with the provision applicable before such court and which will resolve definitively the dispute in accordance with the code of sports related arbitration. World Rugby has the right to appear, attend and/or participate as a party in any appeal to CAS involving eligibility considerations for Olympic Events.

8.14 Any Union wishing to obtain clarification around the eligibility of a Player to represent it in the Olympic Games or Olympic Events may do so by referring the matter to the World Rugby Regulations Committee in accordance with Regulation 2 and Regulation 8.7.1 and 8.7.2.

8.15 The list of Olympic Events is set out in Schedule 2 and shall be updated for each Olympic cycle.

8.16 The provisions of Regulation 8.5 apply equally to any alleged breach of the Olympic eligibility provisions.

(1) The sixty-month residency requirement comes into effect after the cut-off date of December 31, 2020. The residency requirement up to and including December 31, 2020 is “thirty-six consecutive months of Residence immediately preceding the time of playing”.

(2) With effect from January 1, 2018, Unions will no longer be permitted to name its Under 20s National Representative Team as that Union’s next senior fifteen-a-side National Representative Team.