



NATIONAL CLUB ACCREDITATION POLICY

Indian Rugby Football Union

VER: 27TH JANUARY 2026



1. Introduction

- A. The Indian Rugby Football Union, the governing body for Rugby in India (“**IRFU**”), has been working with the vision & mission to make rugby one of the most attractive sports for the youth, both from the personal and the professional points of view. To that end, creation of opportunity at the school level, development of grassroots talent, identification of elite players and their induction into the high-performance protocol, are the stated aims of IRFU. To achieve this, the grassroots/youth structure of the sport needs to be strengthened, creating exciting new talent in the country and talent that learns rugby the right way from an early age.
- B. It will only be possible to achieve this objective if the rugby club system in the country is robust as it is the first level of exposure to the sport for any player. IRFU is introducing for the first time its National Club Accreditation Policy (“**Policy**”) which offers clubs national recognition helping them earn qualification for the different divisions of National Rugby 15s Clubs’ Championships. With this Policy every rugby club in the country that applies for accreditation as per the various criteria detailed below (“**Club**”) will be eligible to participate in the various divisions of National 15s Clubs’ Championships or any other club championships that may be envisaged and organised by IRFU in the future (“**Competition(s)**”) there by providing a national platform for clubs working towards growth & development of Rugby in India.
- C. This Policy shall be effective from 27th January 2026.

2. Club Accreditation Criteria

- 2.1. Each Club intending to apply for accreditation under this Policy shall:
 - (a) be a registered entity as a company, trust, society, or LLP under Indian law and shall possess a valid certificate of registration or incorporation that is suitable for operation as a Club as per this Policy;
 - (b) ensure it has a minimum of thirty (30) players registered with the Club before the respective Competition as per the stipulated timeline;
 - (c) be recognised by the applicable state/district level rugby association with a formal letter of recognition from such association to be submitted by the Club as proof of such recognition;
 - (d) have verifiable access to a suitable rugby playing facility via rental/ownership/pay to play/free access that is suitable for the sport of rugby without any hindrances to players training any matches and risk of injury; and;
 - (e) have participated as a team in the last National 15s Championship in applicable division they intend to apply for as held under the aegis of IRFU, subject to section 2.4 of this Policy.
- 2.2. In addition to the above, the Clubs shall have to fulfil additional criteria based on the Competitions’ division that they intend to apply to as laid out specifically below:
 - (a) Division 1 Club Accreditation Criteria: A Club intending to apply for Division 1 Accreditation shall:
 - (i) have a IRFU Level 2 certified coach as a part of the Club on a permanent or contractual basis;
 - (ii) have played a minimum of two (2) practice or competitive 15’s matches in the last twelve (12) months preceding its application.

- (iii) have verifiable access to medical personnel who is well versed with First Aid in Rugby/ Immediate Care in Rugby protocols; and
 - (b) Division 2 Club Accreditation Criteria: A Club intending to apply for Division 2 Accreditation shall:
 - (i) have a World Rugby Level 1 certified coach as a part of the Club on a permanent or contractual basis;
 - (ii) have played a minimum of one (1) 15's/12's/10's practice or competitive match in the last twelve (12) months preceding its application.
 - (iii) have verifiable access to medical personnel who is well versed with First Aid in Rugby protocols; and
 - (c) Division 3 Club Accreditation Criteria: A Club intending to apply for Division 3 Accreditation shall:
 - (i) have a IRFU Level 1 certified coach as a part of the Club on a permanent or contractual basis; and
 - (ii) have played a minimum of one (1) 15's/12's/10's practice or competitive match in the last twelve (12) months preceding its application.
- 2.3. No affiliated member state rugby associations with IRFU or state's affiliated district-level associations shall be eligible for accreditation under this Policy as a Club in order to maintain clear separation. Any entity applying for accreditation as a Club must be a separate registered entity (as required under this Policy) from a state rugby association.
- 2.4. Clubs that did not participate in the preceding National 15s Championship remain eligible to apply for accreditation under this Policy, provided they successfully demonstrate compliance with all other required criteria applicable to Division 3 Clubs.
- 2.5. Women Clubs must satisfy all standard all accreditation criteria under this Policy. However solely for the 2026 accreditation cycle, such Clubs are exempted from meeting the criteria related to minimum participation in practice or competitive games twelve (12) months preceding the application.
- 2.6. Deadline for application for Division 1 club accreditation shall be 10th February 2026, however, Clubs who provide confirmation that they have begun the process for registering as a separate legal entity prior to 15 February, 2026 shall be provided accreditation for the 2026 cycle provided that they meet all the other applicable criteria as relevant to such Club under Clause 2.2 of this Policy.
- 2.7. Deadline for application for Division 2 & 3 club accreditation shall be 28th February 2026.
- 3. Applications:**
- 3.1. All Clubs interested in applying for accreditation shall, on an annual basis, submit the following documents via IRFU's online registration system on its website on the link <https://onlineregistration.rugbyindia.in/club/register>:
- (a) copy of registration certificate of entity operating the Club;
 - (b) details of the coach with valid certification as per the specific criteria for each division as laid out in section 2.2 of this Policy;
 - (c) letter of recognition from the state or district association;

- (d) image & details of facility under section 2.1 (d) of this Policy used for training to the satisfaction of IRFU; and
 - (e) details of practice matches/competitions played in last twelve (12) months.
- 3.2. IRFU reserves the right to request for any additional information, documents, or clarifications from the Club as may be reasonably required for the purposes of accreditation, verification, or compliance under this Policy.
- 3.3. IRFU will provide timelines for accreditation, along with the seasonal calendar for the Competitions, on an annual basis at least two (2) months prior to the start of each season. These will be issued via separate notification by the Club Committee in accordance with this Policy. Any exceptions to these timelines will be at the discretion of the board of IRFU (“**Board**”).
- 4. Evaluations and Appeals**
- 4.1. Evaluation of all applications for accreditation under this Policy shall be undertaken by the IRFU club committee (“**Club Committee**”)
- 4.2. The Club Committee shall evaluate any application and recommend its decisions regarding grant of accreditation, reviews, approvals, renewals, suspensions, or terminations to the Board, which shall make the final decision.
- 4.3. In the case of any grievance related to the accreditation of the club, the concerned Club may write to IRFU and request such grievance to be examined by the accreditation appeals committee formed under this Policy (“**Accreditation Appeals Committee**”) who shall evaluate such grievance related to a Club’s accreditation and shall comprise of the following:
 - (a) Chief Executive Officer, IRFU;
 - (b) Director - Development & Operations, IRFU;
 - (c) One (1) representative from the Club Committee; and
 - (d) One IRFU board member;
- 4.4. The Accreditation Appeals Committee shall reconsider the decision in accordance with its established procedures, principles of natural justice and communicate its determination to all relevant parties, with such recommendation forwarded to the Board of IRFU (“**Board**”), which shall take the final decision, which shall be binding.

5. Miscellaneous Terms

- 5.1. All the criteria defined for accreditation of a Club in this Policy under section 2.2 are mandatory. Any changes that may be made to a from time to time will be in consultation with the Club Committee followed by ratification of the Board.
- 5.2. All deliberations, discussions, evaluations, and related documentation pertaining to Club accreditation selections, reviews, or decisions under this Policy shall remain strictly confidential. No party - including Clubs, the Club Committee or Accreditation Appeals Committee members, may disclose such information publicly, to media, or to third parties without prior written authorization from IRFU. Notwithstanding the above, Clubs agree that by in case of successful accreditation under this Policy, IRFU may make the details of the Club (i.e. name, address and contact details of the key personnel) available on the IRFU website for public access.
- 5.3. It is clarified that this Policy is neither intended to nor does it create any right in favour of any Club, Club Committee or Accreditation Appeals Committee member, management executive, personnel contributor of the IRFU or any other person or entity, whatsoever.