



SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY UNION ("SARU")

SARU Covid-19 Risk Management Policy for SARU Competitions, Tournaments, Training, and Matches

Date	Description	Name of Policy
Thursday, 17 March 2022	Approved by the SARU Executive Council	SARU Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination Policy for SARU Competitions, Tournaments, Training, and Matches
Friday, 06 May 2022	Updated to provide more options for school players.	SARU Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination Policy for SARU Competitions, Tournaments, Training, and Matches
Wednesday, 8 June 2022	Amended to accommodate the changes and considerations made in the regulations provided for by the minister of the Department of Health on 4 May 2022.	SARU Covid-19 Risk Management Policy for SARU Competitions, Tournaments, Training, and Matches



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1. Context

SARU is committed to ensuring an environment in which employees, rugby players, team management members, operational staff, members of the media and match officials can safely participate and work. To that end, this policy caters for the implementation of the legally required standard of care required by government by the application of a **Covid-19 Risk Management Policy** in all SARU competitions, including SARU Youth Weeks.

This policy applies to all rugby players, team management members, operational members, members of the media and match officials and other stakeholders as may be relevant from time to time.

2. Preamble

This *Covid-19 Risk Management Policy for SARU Competitions, Tournaments, Training, and Matches* aligns with SARU's broader approach to keeping employees and other stakeholders safe in the workplace. This approach is guided by research, evidence-based clinical insights and data as well as legislative provisions.

COVID -19 vaccines have proved to protect against serious illness and death as well as decrease the rates of transmission of the virus. They also provide more robust protection against infection than the antibodies a person produces after they've been infected with COVID-19. Unvaccinated persons have a much higher infection rate transfer than vaccinated persons.

However, an individual's rights to bodily integrity, their cultural beliefs, and practices as well as religious freedom and pre-existing medical conditions may cause some to decline to be vaccinated. For this reason, alternative risk mitigating measures are provided for in paragraph 6.3. This policy acknowledges those rights, however, the decision not to vaccinate or to adhere to the alternative risk mitigating measures may prevent an individual from involvement in SARU-approved competitions, tournaments, training, or matches as well as continued employment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all rugby players, team management members, operational members, members of the media (print, online, photographic, and broadcast), and match officials, referred to as Connected Persons from herein, who are involved in SARU approved competitions, tournaments, training or matches. Other stakeholders not specifically identified but to whom this policy should reasonably apply shall also be within scope.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Observe rugby's duty of care to those people engaged in its pursuit and its support
2. Minimise the chances of its participants being prejudiced from a health and safety viewpoint
3. Reduce the chance that matches, and events may be impacted or cancelled because of the outbreak of COVID-19 infections
4. Create the most propitious environment for the sport to return to commercial viability
5. Support the national and international campaign to make the COVID-19 Coronavirus an endemic and

manageable condition and not a global pandemic.

6. Conduct the above within the legal framework provided from time to time.

5. Definitions

Connected Persons: Rugby players, team management members, operational members, members of the media (print, online, photographic and broadcast) and match officials and other stakeholders not specifically identified but to whom this policy should reasonably apply.

COVID-19: This means Coronavirus Disease 2019, an infectious disease as a result of infection of SARS - Cov-2 Virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine: means the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters that have been scientifically evaluated and recommended by the WHO and registered or authorised by SAHPRA to be effective in preventing severe disease and death;

Fully Vaccinated: means vaccinated with vaccines and includes an additional dose or booster and “vaccination” has the same meaning

Employee: Any person who conducts work for an employer involved with SARU Competitions and who is entitled to remuneration.

Rugby Player: This means any player selected who forms part of a group, squad or team to prepare for and/or participate in a specific SARU competitions, tournaments, training or matches.

Team Management Member: Means any person appointed to serve on the management of a specific squad, group or team to prepare for and/or participate in any SARU competitions, tournaments or matches.

SARU Competition: This means all matches played in competitions that form part of SARU’s competition structures, including Provincial Youth Weeks and the Gold Cup or its successor competition or tournament. (Listed as appendix 1)

Affiliated competitions, tournaments or matches: This means all matches played on an amateur level by club teams of Unions and Associations, that do not form part of this Policy. Schools' rugby that falls under the auspices of the Department of Basic Education is automatically excluded from this policy.

Match Official: This means any person appointed as a match official for a specific SARU competitions, tournaments or matches.

Members of the media: This means print, online, photographic and broadcast

Operational member: means any other person at a match and training venue, including but not limited to the following: citing commissioners, match doctors, contracted medical personnel, stadium managers, stadium staff members, franchise or stadium management company, stadium service providers permanent

or temporary staff members including cleaning services, waste management, security, vendors, caterers and hospitality suite staff, volunteers and commercial stakeholders, sponsors and/or equity partners and shareholders.

Vulnerable employee: means any employee, as contemplated in the Department of Health Guidelines:

- a. With known or disclosed health issues or comorbidities or any other condition that may place the employee at a higher risk of complications or death than other employees if infected with SARS-VOC-2 virus; or
- b. Above the age of 60 years who is at a higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease or death if infected.

6. Guidelines and Process Description

6.1. SARU will require all Connected Persons to register on the National Electronic Vaccine Data System Registration Portal for the COVID-19 vaccine when they participate in any SARU competitions, tournaments, training, or matches.

6.2. Subject to availability of vaccines, all Connected Persons not yet vaccinated must make arrangements to be vaccinated;

6.3. Should the Connected Person choose not to be vaccinated then the following alternative risk mitigating measures must be adhered to:

- 6.3.1. At the cost of the individual, undergo a COVID-19 test every 72 hours or,
- 6.3.2. Provide a laboratory report as proof of having had COVID-19 within six (6) months or,
- 6.3.3. Proof of a positive COVID-19 antibody test.

6.4. If a Connected Person fails or refuses to adhere to the requirements set out in this policy, then it shall be considered to be a contravention of this policy and the individual will not be permitted to participate in any organised rugby squad, group, training and/or match competition or tournament

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1. Proof of full vaccination OR any of the above mentioned alternative risk mitigating measures will be captured on the SARU Footprint system for all SARU Competitions.

7.2. Objections to the Covid-19 Risk Management Policy as well the findings and recommendations of the independent review panel must be kept on record at the responsible and applicable rugby body (union, club and association).

7.3. Where the SARU MyPASS Accreditation system is used to manage a SARU match, competition, tournament, or group then proof of vaccination or one of the listed alternative risk mitigating measures must be loaded onto this system.

7.4. The following shall be regarded as acceptable proof of vaccination status:

- 7.4.1. The record of immunization from a healthcare provider or pharmacy;
- 7.4.2. A certified copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card;
- 7.4.3. Proof of the official digital COVID-19 Vaccination Record (Version 2 for MyPASS digital

verification);

7.4.4. A certified copy of medical records documenting the vaccination;

7.4.5. A certified copy of immunization records from recognised public health, or government immunization information system.

7.5. The proof of vaccination record or one of the listed alternative risk mitigating measures must include the person's name and identification number or passport number and date. In the case of a vaccination certificate it must include the type of COVID-19 Vaccine administered, the date of administration and the name of the healthcare professional or clinic site administering the COVID-19 Vaccine.

8. Refusal to adhere to the SARU Covid-19 Risk Management Policy

Connected Persons who refuse to adhere to the SARU Covid-19 Risk Management Policy must submit requests for exemption/objection timeously in writing to the applicable Union CEO, General Manager or match/tournament accreditation manager.

An independent expert panel, identified and appointed by the Union will review the request for exemption and, having solicited as much relevant information, establish the facts of the case and provide this back in writing to the Union CEO or General Manager

The correspondence submitted in this regard must ensure that all necessary information is recorded in relation to the reason for the request for exemption/ objection. Please note this information may be required to be validated.

This feedback must be considered in the context of legal provisions guiding the SARU Covid-19 Risk Management Policy. The Union CEO or General Manager must then make a final decision on the matter, in accordance with the governance structures that the Union operates within. For example, if it is a contracted player, the Union may then have to hold a separate disciplinary or incapacity hearing, and if it is a service provider the Union can then exercise their Right of Admission rights.

9. Implementation date

This policy must be implemented with immediate effect following the SARU Executive Council's approval. The date for automatic exclusion from SARU matches, tournaments, and competitions are 1 July 2022.

Changes and amendments to the policy

SARU may from time to time amend this policy and communicate it to all employees, players, team management, operational members and match officials to update them on any new applicable guidelines and rules.

10. Compliance with SARU Policies

Connected Persons who will participate in SARU approved matches, competitions and tournaments are required to comply with this policy.

SA Teams that play in international competitions must adhere to the COVID-19 regulations of those specific countries. This may at some stage include a mandatory vaccination policy and the provisions of that policy will have to be adhered to if a player wants to participate.

Appendix 1:

Teams that participate in SARU Matches, Competition and Tournaments

Teams that participate in SARU Matches, Competitions and Tournaments
Springboks
SA A Team
Springbok Women
SA Men and Women Sevens
Sevens Academy
Junior Springboks
SA U20 Women
U20 Academy
U20 Women
European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR) knockout competitions, the Heineken Champions Cup and the Challenge Cup.
United Rugby Championship
Currie Cup – Premier Division
Currie Cup – First Division
U21 SARU Championships – Cup
U21 SARU Championships - Shield
U20 SARU Championships - Cup
U20 SARU Championships – Shield
U19 SARU Championships - Cup
U18 Craven Week
U18 Academy Week
U16 Grant Khomo Week
U13 Craven Week
LSEN Week
Women’s Premier Division
Women’s First Division
Girls U16 and Girls Under 18 Youth Weeks
Club Championships/ Gold Cup or successor tournament

- ✓ *Competitions are subject to change between years.*
- ✓ *Affiliated competitions, tournaments or matches played on an amateur level by club teams of Unions and Associations, do not form part of this Policy. Each Provincial Union and Association can implement a mandatory vaccination policy applicable to their needs.*
- ✓ *Schools' rugby that falls under the auspices of the Department of Basic Education is automatically excluded from this policy, except for SARU Youth Competitions, where SARU has direct control.*