

Background

In the 2013-14 season, the RFU introduced a trial in England that would enable the wearing of certain sport goggles by players playing contact rugby at the Under 13 age grade and below if certain conditions were satisfied. This trial was a variation of the RFU's current regulations which prohibits all types of goggles to be worn in contact rugby. Please note that this trial is different from the World Rugby trial.

The trial continued for the 2014-15 and 2015-2016 seasons and was further extended to permit U14s and above to wear sports goggles in exceptional circumstances if certain additional conditions are satisfied. The trial will continue for the 2016-2018 seasons and players shall be entitled to participate in the trial if the below conditions are satisfied.

Conditions of the trial for Under 13s and below

The trial will permit players playing contact rugby at the Under 13 age grade and below to wear specially designed and manufactured sports goggles subject to the following conditions (all of which must be met):

- (a) The sports goggles must be dispensed by a registered dispensing optician who is a member of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians* ("ABDO"); and
- (b) The player must have written confirmation from the ABDO dispensing optician that the sports goggles:
 - i. Are required to correct the vision of the player or are required to protect the player's eyes due to a medical condition, to enable the playing of Rugby Union; and
 - ii. Do not substantially restrict any normal field of vision and are suitable for use in evasion contact sports; and
 - iii. Do not constitute a physical danger to the player or other players; and
- (c) The match referee is entitled to object to the player wearing the sports goggles if the referee reasonably believes that they are unsafe; and
- (d) Clubs/schools must notify the RFU Legal Officer of all players participating in the trial by emailing AnnieDavis@rfu.com or AlysLewis@rfu.com; and
- (e) Clubs/schools must report any injuries caused as a result of the sports goggles to the RFU Community Medical Team by emailing sportsinjuriesadmin@therfu.com and the player's parents must report the injury to the ABDO dispensing optician who prescribed the goggles.

*If an optician is registered with the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, the optician will be listed on the General Optical Council's list of registered members which is available at <http://www.optical.org/>. Please check the list by inserting the name of the individual optician or opticians practice.

Under 14s and above

The above trial is currently limited to U13s and below. We recognise that this means that players at U14s and above are not able to play contact rugby using goggles but may require goggles for medical reasons.

To enable these players to continue to be included in rugby, it has been agreed that the RFU Governance Standing Committee may, in exceptional and limited circumstances, grant dispensations for goggles to be worn by players over the age of 13 in limited cases and subject to all relevant supporting documentation being provided.

Queries

Should you have any queries or require further clarification and guidance in relation to the proposed trial, please contact your local Constituent Body, AnnieDavis@rfu.com or AlysLewis@rfu.com.