

## **U18S PATHWAY**

The U18s Rep pathway for club rugby players has changed remarkably and now for the first time offers a full and valid pathway from club rugby all the way to the Australian U18 Team. Below are some of the key points that can be passed onto players and assist as a valuable tool in recruitment for clubs.

This is an ideal opportunity for players that may have left school young to compete against their own age cohort, or for players at the public, catholic and some independent high schools that don't offer a weekly rugby competition to play in AND it still offers them the opportunity to represent their country via this pathway as well.

Note the vibrant NSW Schools Rep pathway will continue and this club pathway will compliment it to make a complete and fully inclusive rugby pathway for all players.

### **U18 Club Rugby Representative Pathway - Sydney**

Club > District (State Champs) > Sydney > > NSWJRU > NSW Gen Blue Academy > Australian U18

This year the SRU will run an U18 Colts competition that is played on a Saturday and is aligned with the Shute Shield clubs. For 2019 the competition will run for one single round with everyone playing each other once before a finals series to be held late June. This competition will accrue club championship points for the clubs involved and in 2020 will become a mandatory grade that each club must field.

The SJRU will also offer the Sunday Opens (U18) competition again in 2019 which will follow the dates of the Sydney Juniors club competition to start in April.

Players in both these competitions as well as any players that are U18 competing in the NSW Suburban Rugby competition will be eligible to trial for the Sydney U18 team (trial dates TBC April/May).

The Sydney U18 team will play games against NSW Country U18s & NSW CHS (Jun 15/16<sup>th</sup>). Following these games a NSWJRU team will be selected to play AAGPS (Jun 27<sup>th</sup>) and then possibly onto a tour game against the Western Force Academy team (Jul 6<sup>th</sup>).

Note that players that miss the initial Sydney squad are still eligible for selection higher (into a NSWJRU team or Gen Blue Academy) via the U18 NSWJRU State Championships on the June long weekend, which the NSWJRU and NSW Gen Blue selectors will be attending. A number of lads were selected via this route in 2018 to progress further.

All players at each of these games will be eligible for selection into the NSW Gen Blue Academy side. *The NSW Gen Blue Academy side is open for selection to any U18 rugby players either in the schools or club network.*

From here the NSW Gen Blue Academy side will run a number of high performance training camps and games against other state Academies where an Australian U18 side will be chosen to play NZ and tour the UK.

### **Selection Policy**

The various schools and club associations have worked together closely to design these pathways enabling ALL rugby players across NSW to have access to a substantial and meaningful representative pathway.

We have also collaborated to ensure that selection policies are clear, transparent and consistent across both pathways.

Any players that are playing both club and schools rugby may be eligible for selection in either pathway. And this is often accentuated due to the different timing of team selections.

As such the policy around any players selected in a NSW Country or Sydney U18s team AND also in a schools representative team is that they should immediately upon selection choose which pathway they wish to pursue and withdraw from the other. This will avoid any clashes of programs which potentially require a player to be in two places at once and will open a spot for another player to gain representative selection.

***Ben Gregory***  
***President NSWJRU***