LEAGUE STARS
SCHOOLS CHALLENGE

HANDBOOK - QUEENSLAND

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the League Stars Schools Challenge Handbook – your guide to supporting and delivering a dynamic and inclusive Rugby League experience for Primary Schools across Queensland.

This event has been designed with a clear purpose to provide meaningful participation opportunities for all schools, regardless of size, location, or experience level. Through the League Tag and Tackle format, we aim to foster the development of individual players and school teams alike, encouraging skill growth, teamwork, and a love for the game.

These events feature mixed and single gender divisions in a 9-a-side League Tag and Tackle format, promoting inclusivity and engagement while maintaining an environment that promotes effort and enjoyment. Whether you're a Game Development Officer or a school representative, your role is vital in ensuring that every participant feels supported, challenged, and inspired.

Together, we're building a platform that champions development, celebrates diversity, and strengthens Primary School Rugby League across Queensland.

CHALLENGE STRUCTURE

1. **STRUCTURE OF THE CHALLENGE EVENTS**

    1.1 League Stars School Challenge Handbook divisions include:
      - Year 3/4 Mixed League Tag
      - Year 5/6 Mixed League Tag
      - Year 5/6 Girls Tackle Division
      - Year 5/6 Boys Tackle Division
        For age eligibility of each division, please see point 4 below.

    1.2 All divisions will be offered within your local event for 2026.

    1.3 Your local NRL Game Development Officer will be responsible for conducting each regions League Stars School Challenge events. This includes the pre-event support such as training, scheduling of game and supply of match officials, venues, first aid, timekeepers and other officials for each match and/or event.

    1.4 At the local and regional level, the format of the events can be adjusted to suit the area and can be held as round robins, gala days or carnivals. The regional structure will be determined by the local NRL Game Development Officer.

2. **TEAM NOMINATIONS**
    2.1 Participation in the League Stars Schools Challenge is on a school basis.

    2.2 Entry into the League Stars Schools Challenge and participation must be via the online nomination form.

2.3 Schools are permitted to combine where individual School numbers aren't sufficient to field a team in the League Stars Schools Challenge, however this must first be approved by the NRL.

2.4 All schools participating in the League Stars All Schools Challenge must adhere to the rules and conditions outlined in this document.

3. REGIONAL DATES

3.1 The NRL will be responsible for the regional and state events.

3.2 For schools to qualify to attend the State event, a School must register and participate in the local event offering.

2026 Hosting Locations	
SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGION	
Gold Coast	
Ipswich	
South Brisbane	
North Brisbane	
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND REGION	
Clermont	Sunshine Coast
Rockhampton	Toowoomba
Gladstone	Roma
Bundaberg	Western Downs
Maryborough	St George
Hervey Bay	Stanthorpe
Gympie	Warwick
South Burnett	

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND REGION	
Mackay	
Townsville	
Cairns	
QUEENSLAND EVENT	
Any school who attends their local offering can progress to the State Event	QLD State Event Venue: SEQ Region **Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd October, Term 4**

To confirm your local event date and register your school, please contact your Game Development.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

4.   **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

4.1 Age eligibility:
- ○   Year 3/4 Mixed born – 1st July 2016 – 30th June 2018
- ○   Year 5/6 Mixed born – 1st July 2014 – 30th June 2016
- ○   Year 5/6 Girls born – 1st July 2014 – 30th June 2016
- ○   Year 5/6 Boys born –1st July 2014 – 30th June 2016

4.2 It is the responsibility of the participating schools to ensure all players meet the outlined age eligibility criteria when participating at your local, regional or State event.

4.3 At the local phase of the events, a player may participate in more than one team should your school experienced reduced numbers during the event.

5. COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

5.1 At a minimum, all coaches must have a current NRL Community Coach 8-12's accreditation.

5.2 As a minimum, each team must have a current teacher from the school involved as a coach or assistant coach and be present at every match.

6. TEAM STAFF EXPECTATIONS

6.1 All team staff must comply with any reasonable request made by the ground manager, convenor or match official.

6.2 All on-field team staff must comply with the requirements outlined in the NRL Community On-Field Policy.

6.3 All matches are played in accordance with the NRL National Code of Conduct.

7. BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

7.1 It is emphasised that the highest standards of behaviour should always be observed and followed by players, coaches, team staff, officials and spectators at all League Stars Schools Challenge events.

7.2 Spectator groups must always be under strict teacher/school supervision.

7.3 Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour, on or off the field, should be immediately reported to the local NRL Game Development Officer.

7.4 Strong action will be taken against any player, school staff or spectators who breach the NRL Code of Conduct, this may include but not limited to suspension and possibly exclusion from future Rugby League offerings.

GAME DAY OPERATIONS AND MATCH INFORMATION

8. MATCH DURATION

8.1 Match duration at the local and regional stage will be 15min straight game with a 5 min break between games. Matches played at the State based event will be 2 x 15min halves with a 5min half time.

9. FAIR PLAY MATCH SYSTEM

9.1 The concept of a 'fair play' match scoring system is an innovative approach to promoting sportsmanship and teamwork in youth sports. In each game, team players, staff and parents will be evaluated and scored on a scale by NRL Game Development staff that marks levels of conduct, teamwork and sportsmanship. Tries and other traditional scoring are not considered. Through rewarding players and teams through this system instead of winning, the NRL can encourage positive behaviours that align with the values of the NRL Player Development Framework.

9.2 Fair Play Match System criteria is outlined below:

Criteria 1

On field team performance as well as attitude and behaviour of players towards match officials and opposing players.

Criteria 2

Performance and attitude of coaching staff.

Criteria 3

Performance and attitude of parents and supporters.

SCORING

Criteria 1 will be given a rating from 1 to 10 (1 being poor, 10 being exceptional).

Criteria 2 and 3 will be given a rating from 1 to 5 (1 being poor, 5 being exceptional).

All matches will be scored by a designated NRL ground manager.

10. **LAWS OF THE GAME**

    10.1   Rule Modifications

- Subject to the modifications below, game will be played in accordance with the Junior League Laws (6-12s).
  https://www.playrugbyleague.com/laws-of-the-game-community/

    10.2   2 x 15min straight game, with a 5-minute break between games.

    10.3   Field Size

- 60m x 40m. Fields will run across ways on a normal international Rugby League sized field.

    10.4   Players

- The total number of players on the field at any one time, in each time, shall not exceed nine (9).

- Each team's squad size must not exceed twelve (12). Unlimited interchange.

10.5   Tag Division Rules

- The attacking team has the ball for 6 (six) tags
- To retain possession the attacking team must have performed at least 1 pass before they get tagged. They can score or run from dummy-half, however, if they are caught during this process, it is a change-over
- The defenders may not approach the other team until the first receiver has caught the ball or the dummy half has run
- A tap from half-way will be used to start each half (teams to have 1 tap off each)
- The non-scoring team 'taps off' from half way after the opposition scores
- No markers allowed
- No kicks are permitted at any time & no conversions will be taken

A player is tagged;

- When at least one of the tags is removed by an opposing player
- When a tag falls off or is accidently removed by the player in possession

A player in possession cannot.

- Fend off defenders or protect the tag by using the arm or ball to fend
- Jump through/at the defensive line to avoid being tagged
- Run directly at a defender & initiate contact

- Perform a 360 degree turn through/at the defensive line to avoid being tagged

Penalties can be awarded as per rules and for above mentioned actions, also including.

- Failure to abide by the NRL Code of Conduct
- Deliberate throwing oppositions tag away from the mark (Interpretation of the referee)
- Deliberate grabbing of clothing
- Late tag

10.6   Tackle Division Rules
Start of the Game

- The non-kicking team to retire 10 metres.
- Football to travel 10metres in a forward direction before either side touches the football.
- If the ball travels out, non-kicking team to play the ball 5metre in field from where it entered touch.

Restarts of Play

- The non-kicking team to retire 5 metres
- The non-scoring side to restart play with a tap. From the central of halfway.

Play the Ball

- One marker is to be always present.
- Football to be played backwards with foot.

- Defensive team, apart from the marker, must retire 5 metres from the play the ball.
- Defending team is not to move till the first receiver has caught the ball. Please note there will be NO DH, FR bibs worn during games.

Passing
- Minimum of 1 pass.
- Dummy Half may run however if he/she is tackled without 1 pass a changeover will occur.

Tackle Count
- Possession is retained for six (6) tackles, unless nullification of the count occurs.

Kicks in General Play
- Allowable (no bomb like kicks & no field goals).

Goal Kicks
- No conversions

Goal Line Drop Out
- The non-kicking team to retire 10 metres

Try
- Scores will no be kept during games. The Fair Play Match System will replace tradition scoring methods.

Sin Bin
- Not applicable

Send off
- A player may be replaced for the balance of a half or for the rest of the game.

○ However, a player who is replaced for misconduct and resumes playing later in the game and is guilty of further misconduct must be dismissed without replacement.

11. FIRST AID AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

11.1 The NRL will appoint trained First Response and/or Medical Personnel to oversee each event for the League Star Schools Challenge.

11.2 Any appointed Medical Personnel will work in addition to the standard team staff, who will remain responsible for the monitoring and treatment to their team.

11.3 In the event of a serious injury or suspected serious injury, the appointed personnel will work with team staff, the ground manager and NRL staff to ensure an appropriate response.

11.4 NRL appointed Medical Personnel will have the final say regarding serious injury and the decision on players returning to the field.

12. FILMING/VIDEO FOOTAGE

12.1 There will be no live streaming of matches during these events.

13. SITUATIONS NOT COVERED BY THE RULES

13.1   Should any situation or matter arise that is not covered by the rules and conditions in this handbook, the matter shall be referred to the NRL for decision, which will be final.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Insurance Statement

It is the responsibility of each school that participates in any program to ensure that it has in place all insurances required to cover its student in the case of accident, injury, loss and/or damage arising out of a student's participation in the programs or that its student players have made their own arrangements. The NRL accepts no responsibility for a failure by a school to have in place any such insurance policy which would otherwise cover an accident, injury, loss and/or damage that arises out of a student's participation in a program. Additionally, we recommend schools inform parents that they obtain private health insurance for their child (for things such as general medical expenses and dental) to the extent necessary to meet any gap and to cover any accident, injury, loss and/or damage to their child which would not be covered by the mandatory insurances held by the school.

GAME DEVELOPMENT OFFICER CONTACTS

Name	Role/Area	Email	Mobile
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For more information visit

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