

## PREMIERSHIP WOMEN LEAGUE AND COMPETITION RULES

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## 1. COMPETITION

### 1.1 Name

The name of the competition is the Nan Fung Group Sewit Premiership Women. The Premiership Women shall be played in accordance with these Rules and Regulations.

Hong Kong China Rugby (HKCR) controls and is responsible for the running and administration of the competition. The entry procedures, format, divisions, sequence, timing, and duration of the competition shall be determined by HKCR.

Save for any exception set out in the rules and regulations of any competition, the League & Competition Rules shall apply to all Premiership clubs and all Premiership competitions during the season with effect from 1 August 2023.

### 1.2 Membership

The membership of the Premiership Women's league shall comprise in season 2023/24 of:

- SCAA First Pacific Causeway Bay
- Gai Wu
- Natixis Hong Kong Football Club
- DAC Kowloon
- Kroll USRC Tigers RFC
- Société Générale Valley RFC

### 1.3 Structure

Each team shall play each other team on a home and away basis over 15 rounds during the season which shall include one round played at a neutral venue, known as Super Saturday. The top Premiership Women's team after 15 rounds will be the Nan Fung Group Sewit League Winner.

The top 4 teams in the League after 15 rounds will contest the Grand Championship. The Premiership Women Grand Championship shall consist of the Premiership Women Semi-Finals and the Premiership Women Final. The winner of the Premiership Women Final shall be the Premiership Women champion.

### 1.4 Women's Premiership Governance Board

The Women's Premiership Governance Board will be established as the primary governance body for the Premiership Women's competition. The Women's Premiership Governance Board will comprise:

- Chris Brooke, HKCR Chairman (Chair)
- David Scott, HKCR Elected Director (Alternate Chair)
- Tony Karton, HKCR Elected Director
- Robbie McRobbie, HKCR CEO (Secretary)
- Andrew Brown, HKCR Head of Events
- Chairs of the Premiership Clubs

The Women's Premiership Governance Board is responsible for overseeing the management of the competition and for advising the HKCR Board of Directors regarding policy and strategy in relation to Premiership rugby. The roles and responsibilities will include:

- To draft and recommend a set of annual objectives for Premiership Women's rugby
- To review and approve the Premiership Women's season structure and fixture list
- To review the Premiership Women's League & Competition rules and regulations on an annual basis

## 1.5 Premiership League Fixture Control Panel (LFCP)

The Premiership LFCP has the responsibility to make determinations on issues arising under the League & Competition rules and the Premiership LFCP's decision shall be final and binding. The Premiership LFCP will comprise:

- Peter Else (Chair)
- Don Rider
- Kim Boreham

## 2. KEY DEADLINES

The following table outlines key dates as a reference for all Premiership Women clubs.

DATE	ACTIVITY
1 Apr – 1 Dec 2023	Transfer window open (closes 17.00 HKT on 1 Dec 2023)
16 Aug 2023	Club kit design submission
Wed 4 Oct 2023	Premiership Launch
9 Oct 2023	25-person Premiership Women's Squad submitted
21 Oct 2023	Opening round of Nan Fung Group Sewit Premiership Women
18 Dec – 10 Jan 2024	Deregistration of Premiership Women's Squad window open
23 March 2024	Grand Championship Finals (subject to change)

## 3. PLAYER REGISTRATION

### 3.1 Effective Registration

A player shall hold Effective Registration with HKCR once they have been registered by a club online in the GameDay database for the relevant season. The only evidence admissible of a player's Effective Registration with a club on any date is the computerised listing held by HKCR.

- New players (currently not registered to any other club) must be registered with the club before Wednesday 24 January 2024.
- Except for Loaned, Player Permit and Dual Registered Player, no player may hold Effective Registration with more than one club at any time unless approved by the Premiership Operations Team.
- No club may field a player for a team in any competition match who is currently under suspension under the League & Competition rules or the Laws of the Game.

### 3.2 Loss of Effective Registration

A player will cease to have Effective Registration with a club:

- Upon having Effective Registration with another club (save and except for Dual Registered Players); or
- Upon having Effective Registration cancelled or suspended by the LFCP for any reason; or
- Where Effective Registration is invalidated pursuant to the Player loan, Player permit, Dual registration L&C Rule; or
- Where and from the date upon which a club, with whom a player is currently registered and to whom a club had applied for consent to register a player (who had been granted Effective Registration pending a response from that Union), advises that any consent or clearance is refused, withdrawn, or delayed.

### 3.3 False or misleading information

If a club or player supplies incorrect or misleading information to HKCR on the online player registration system, the Effective Registration will be void. A financial penalty may also be imposed as the LFCP considers appropriate.

## 4. PREMIERSHIP WOMEN'S SQUAD REGISTRATION

### 4.1 Premiership player submission

Each Premiership club must register a Premiership Women's Squad of twenty-five (25) players with the Premiership Operations Team, whom it lists as its Premiership Women's Squad no later than 9 October 2023.

- All twenty-five (25) registered players within the club's declared Premiership Women's Squad must be eligible to be selected within the match day team and fulfil all league eligibility rules prior to the first Premiership Women's league fixture of the season.
- Each Premiership club must register a minimum of six (6) front row forwards within its Premiership Women's Squad.
- Each Premiership club must identify its top 12 performing players within its Premiership Women's Squad.
- If requested, a Premiership club must submit all supporting documentation verifying the visa status of all players as part of the Premiership Women's Squad registration.
- All Senior National players must be registered with a Premiership Women's Squad.
- Each Premiership club is allowed to register a maximum of two (2) international capped players within its Premiership Women's Squad.  
(Note: A 3rd capped player is allowable at the discretion of HKCR's Head of Women's Performance Rugby)
- Each Premiership club is allowed to register a maximum of six (6) Dual Registered Players.

### 4.2 Trained Front Row Players

Each Premiership club must identify and register a minimum of six (6) Trained Front Row Players within its 25-person Premiership Women's Squad.

- It is the club's responsibility to ensure that all front row players and potential front row replacements are suitably trained.

### 4.3 Performance List

Each Premiership club must identify its top 12 performing players within its Premiership Women's Squad that will be referred to as the Premiership club Performance list.

- Each Premiership club must register its Performance list no later than 9 October 2023
- Each Premiership club's Performance list is to be approved by the Head of Women's Rugby Performance
- No Performance list player can play down in the Championship or lower leagues

### 4.4 HKID Requirement

All Premiership Women's Squad players must have a Hong Kong Identity Card.

- A player on a visitor's visa is not eligible to be registered in the Premiership Squad or play in the Premiership competition.

- Each Premiership club must confirm that it has checked the Hong Kong Identity Cards of all Premiership Squad players and any other player who plays for the Premiership club in the Premiership League competition.

#### 4.5 Senior National Players

All Senior National players must be registered with a Premiership Women's Squad.

#### 4.6 International Representative Players

A Premiership club may register a maximum of two (2) capped international players (with a 3rd capped player at the discretion of HKCR's Head of Women's Performance Rugby) in its Premiership Women's Squad.

- This also applies to the match day squad of 23.

#### 4.7 Changes to a Premiership Women's Squad

During the period of 18th December 2023 to 10th January 2024, a Premiership club may make the following changes to its Premiership Women Squad and to the players registered in its Premiership Women Squad:

- De-register and replace up to a maximum of three (3) players within its Premiership Women's Squad
- Change any of the six (6) Dual Registered players.

A request to replace a player within the Premiership Women Squad may be made at any time based on medical grounds (long term injury or pregnancy) or if the player leaves Hong Kong on a long term or permanent basis.

- The request will be referred to the LFCP and must be fully supported with relevant documentation.
- If a replacement is approved, the replaced player cannot play again at any lower level of the League in the same season, without prior LFCP approval.

### 5. PLAYER TRANSFER

A player who wishes to transfer clubs may do so by completing and submitting to HKCR a Player Transfer Form signed by all relevant parties, within the transfer window of 1 April – 1 December 2023.

A copy of the Player Transfer Form can be found in **Appendix 4: Player Transfer Request Form**.

#### 5.1 Transfer Window

The Player Transfer window for the Nan Fung Sewit Premiership Women 2023/2024 season is from 1 April – 1 December 2023. A player can move clubs during the transfer window, unless they:

- Have an outstanding debt to his current club; or
- Have a current and valid contract with his current club; or
- Are subject to any outstanding disciplinary or conduct case.

After 1 December 2023, through to the end of the relevant season, a player may not transfer clubs, irrespective of whether the clubs concerned agree.

## 5.2 Transfer Dispute

If the current club refuses to sign the Player Transfer Form for any reason, it will be treated as a registration dispute and will be referred to the LFCP for resolution. In the event of a registration dispute, the player may not transfer to or play for the new club unless and until permitted by the LFCP.

## 6. PLAYER LOAN, PLAYER PERMIT, DUAL REGISTRATION

### 6.1 Player Loan (Appendix 3 – Section A)

A club with which a player is registered may loan that player to another club on the agreement of all clubs concerned and the player. The Loan Scheme will operate as follows:

- When the loan has been registered in writing with the Premiership Operations Team, the player will be eligible to play in the competition for the club which has taken the player on loan, if registration is completed three (3) days before the match in which the player is first required by that club.
- A player may be loaned for a stated period or a maximum period of up to the end of the current playing season.
- Whilst on loan, the player may still play for their “parent” club.
- A player may be loaned to only one club per season, but the initial period of loan may be extended until the end of the current playing season.
- A club may take no more than six (6) players on loan or permit at any one time.
- The period of a player’s loan may not commence later than 8th January in any season.
- No Working Holiday Visa player may be loaned.

### 6.2 Player Permit (Appendix 3 – Section B)

A Permit is required to allow a player to play for a club, other than the club with which the player is registered, in any fixture. The Permit Scheme will operate as follows:

- Permits may be granted to allow players to play in a named competition.
- A club may take no more than six (6) players on permit or loan at any one time.
- No named Premiership Women Squad Player is permitted to play in the Championship or National League competition.

The procedure for granting Player Permits will be:

- A permit is a letter of permission written by an official of the club with which the player is registered. All permit requests will be acknowledged in writing by the HKCR.
- A permit must be sought for each match in which a player plays, and such a permit may be granted for a match at any time in the season. Any permit issued must be made in writing by both the club with which the player is registered, and the club with which the player is to play on permit and lodged with HKCR three (3) days before the match takes place.
- HKCR will confirm to the requesting club that a permit has been granted.

### 6.3 Dual Registration (Appendix 3 – Section C)

A Premiership club may register up to a maximum of six (6) Players registered from a non-Premiership club with prior agreement of the player and her club and with approval from the HKRU Head of Women’s Performance Rugby. These players must be registered by name with HKCR and be clearly identified as “Dual Registered Players” with the Premiership club by 1 January 2024.

- A Dual Registered Player is eligible to be selected for either or both clubs for which the player is registered on any given match day and may play in the Premiership Women throughout the season without limitation.

- A Dual Registered Player may not play in the Championship or National League competition for the Premiership Club.
- Should a Premiership club breach the Dual Registration Rule, any forfeiture of League competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the club team that played the Dual Registered Player only. No additional forfeiture of League competition points may be imposed in relation to the Premiership team.

## 7. PREMIERSHIP MATCH DAY TEAM SELECTION

A Premiership club must adhere to the following rules when selecting their match day team:

- Players must hold effective registration with HKCR.
- A minimum of fifteen (15) Hong Kong Qualified (HKQ) players.
- Up to a maximum of six (6) players registered with the club who hold dual registration.
- Players who comply with World Rugby Law 3

### 7.1 Hong Kong Qualified Players

A player designated as Hong Kong Qualified (HKQ) means a player who is World Rugby eligible to represent Hong Kong, China in an international Test Match and must have a valid HKID, work visa, spouse visa, holiday work visa, and/or student visa.

- Each match day team must select a minimum of fifteen (15) Hong Kong Qualified players.
- A player shall not be Hong Kong Qualified for the purposes of the Premiership women's team unless and until the player's registration status with HKCR has been changed to Hong Kong Qualified.

## 8. PREMIERSHIP MATCH DAY TEAM SUBMISSION

The match day team sheet must be submitted via GameDay no later than 12.00 on the day prior to scheduled match. A Premiership club must adhere to the following when submitting their match day team:

- The match day team sheet must clearly identify a minimum of fifteen (15) Hong Kong Qualified (HKQ) players; and
- The match day team sheet must clearly identify their trained front row players; and
- The match day team sheet must clearly indicate the number of each player.

A final match day team sheet must be submitted to the sideline manager no later than thirty (30) minutes prior to kick off. Any changes to a club's submission the day prior to the scheduled match must also be updated via GameDay.

If a Premiership club fields a non-compliant match day team, the sanction for such a breach will be:

- Five (5) League competition points will be awarded to the team that is not in breach.
- The team that is not in breach will receive Forty (40) match points for and Zero (0) match points against.
- Five (5) League competition points will be deducted from the team is in breach.
- The team in breach will receive Zero (0) match points for and Forty (40) match points against.

## 9. PREMIERSHIP WOMEN'S SQUAD PLAYERS DROPPING DOWN TO CHAMPIONSHIP AND/OR BELOW

Excluding those 12 players listed in the Premiership club's Performance List, a maximum of six (6) registered Premiership Squad players may drop down to play in the Championship each week.

- Named Hong Kong, China Senior National players cannot play down in the Championship league unless granted special dispensation by the HKCR's Head of Women's Performance Rugby.
- Current non-Hong Kong, China International Representative players cannot play in the Championship league.
- Named Premiership Women's Squad players are not permitted to play in the National Leagues.

N.B. 'Named Senior National player' is defined as a player who is capped by HKCR in its senior team(s) within the last 12 months prior to the 2023-24 Premiership season (10 October 2022 – 9 October 2023) and/or within the current 2023-24 season (9 October 2023 – 23 March 2024).

N.B. 'Current non-Hong Kong, China International Representative player' is defined as a player who is capped within the last five (5) years prior to the 2023-24 Premiership season (10 October 2018 – 9 October 2023) and/or within the current 2023-24 season (9 October 2023 – 23 March 2024).

Should a Premiership club breach this rule, any forfeiture of League competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the club team that played the Premiership Squad player only. No additional forfeiture of League competition points may be imposed in relation to the Premiership team.

## 10. UNDER-AGE PLAYERS

No team may select or play in any adult competition any player under the age of 18 unless the following application process has been completed:

- The applicant player has applied to HKCR in writing using the application form provided, that can be downloaded [here](#) and from Appendix 5: Underage Player Form.; and
- Endorsement from the chairman or general manager of the club where the player wishes to play adult rugby; and
- A letter from the applicant player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) supporting the application; and
- Reference from the current coach or coach of the adult rugby team for whom the applicant wishes to play clearly stating how the player's safety and welfare will be taken into consideration.

The application and recommendation should be submitted to [welfare@hkrugby.com](mailto:welfare@hkrugby.com).

Note:

- Under no circumstance may a player aged under 17, or a front row player aged under 18 participate in any adult competition.
- HKCR reserves the right to make the final decision as to whether to allow the applicant to play adult rugby.

## 11. COMPETITION RULES



The Premiership competition shall be played in accordance with the HKCR policies and procedures and the World Rugby Laws of the Game and the World Rugby Regulations Relating to the Game, subject to additional specifications contained in these L&C Rules and subsequent communications of HKCR. The World Rugby Laws and Regulations can be found on the World Rugby website: [www.worldrugby.org](http://www.worldrugby.org)

#### 11.1 Omission or Error

Where there has been any omission or error in the L&C Rules, the PGB and/or the LFCP has the power to correct such error or omission in the manner they see fit.

#### 11.2 Contravention of Competition Rules

Contravention of any of the competition rules, code of conduct, and/or match day will be dealt with by the PGB, the LFCP, the Judiciary, the Appeals Tribunal, the Code of Conduct Sub-committee, the Chief Executive Officer, or the Head of Rugby Operations. The authority dealing with a contravention is at the discretion of the PGB.

Premiership clubs and/or individuals in contravention of the Competition Rules are liable to:

- Be expelled or suspended from the HKCR and its competitions; and/or
- Be fined and/or placed on a bond; and/or
- Suffer loss of competition points; and/or
- Suffer any other penalty that the PGB, LFCP, the Judiciary, the Appeals Tribunal, the Code of Conduct Sub-committee, the Chief Executive Officer, or the Head of Rugby Operations see fit to impose.

### 12. MATCH DURATION

The duration of Premiership matches will be forty (40) minutes each half with a five (5) minute half time interval. Stoppage time, including injury time and water breaks, shall be determined by the referee.

- If a team is not prepared to commence a match within 10 minutes of the scheduled kick-off time as adjudged by the match referee, the opposition team has the right to claim a forfeiture should they wish to do so.

### 13. WORLD RUGBY LAW 3

Premiership teams will follow World Rugby Law 3 with respect to Team: Numbers, Uncontested Scrums, Permanent Replacement, Permanent Replacement – Recognise and remove, Temporary Replacement - Blood injury, Temporary Replacement – all, Tactical replacements joining the match.

#### 13.1 Replacements

Premiership teams can nominate up to eight (8) replacements. Replacements can only be made when the ball is dead and only with the permission of the match referee and via the 4th Official, in line with World Rugby Law 3.6.

- Premiership teams that are made up of twenty-three (23) players must contain at least six (6) trained front row players, there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement is required in each front row position, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

- If a team is only able to nominate two (2) front row replacements, then that team may nominate only twenty-two (22) players in their match day team.
- If a front row player must be replaced and his team cannot provide a replacement or other suitably qualified player from those who started the match or from the nominated replacements to enable the match to continue safely, the match referee will order uncontested scrums.
- Should this happen, the team concerned shall not be entitled to replace the player whose departure caused uncontested scrums.

## 14. MATCH RESULTS

All Premiership women's teams are required to submit a results sheet on the Monday following a Saturday match. If the match is played on day other than a Saturday, then on the first working day following.

- Results sheets must clearly show the names of all players that participated, along with point scorers and the recipients of any yellow and/or red cards.

## 15. MATCH POINTS SYSTEM

Match points will be awarded for each match on the following basis:

Win	4
Draw	2
Bonus point for a loss by 7 points or less	1
Bonus point for scoring 4 tries or more	1
Loss by more than 7 points	0
Bye	0

### 15.1 Ranking at the conclusion of the 3 round robin rounds

The total accumulated points by each club at the conclusion of the three round robins shall determine the final rankings for the Premiership Women's League. The Premiership club with the most points after 15 rounds will be anointed as the Nan Fung Sewit League Winner.

### 15.2 Teams tied on points at any stage of the season

Where one or more teams have equal League competition points at any stage of the season, the position of each team in the relevant League competition at that stage shall be determined, in order, by:

1. Number of wins achieved and then based on match points differential; followed by
2. Highest match points differential; followed by
3. Most match points scored "for"; followed by
4. Highest aggregate match points scored against the other team(s).

## 16. INCOMPLETE SEASON

If the Premiership Women league cannot be completed due to Force Majeure or factors outside of the control of HKCR, a league winner will only be considered if one full round robin of fixtures has been completed.

- This means that each Premiership club has played each other Premiership club at least once.

- Thereafter a league winner will be declared based on league standings of the number of fully completed rounds played to date.
- e.g., for example, if during Round 8 there is a Friday night match and on Saturday the league is shut down, this would be classed as an incomplete round and the Round 7 standings would be the final standings to declare a league winner.

## 17. MATCH FORFEITURE

If a team forfeits a League competition match:

- Five (5) League competition points will be awarded to the team that receives the forfeiture.
- Five (5) League competition points will be deducted from the team that forfeits the match.
- The team receiving the forfeiture will receive Forty (40) match points for and Zero (0) match points against.
- The team forfeiting the match will receive Zero (0) match points for and Forty (40) match points against.

### 17.1 Forfeiture of three (3) or more matches

Any team which forfeits three (3) or more matches in the same competition shall, in addition to any other penalty, be liable to disqualification from that competition, to be decided at the absolute discretion of the LFCP.

## 18. FAILURE TO HONOUR FIXTURES

Where the LFCP is of the view that a club has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its competition fixture obligations, the club shall be treated as having forfeited each remaining match in the relevant competition in accordance with the Match Forfeiture Rule and may be deducted up to a further five (5) League competition points and receive a monetary fine, as the LFCP considers appropriate.

## 19. GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

The top 4 teams in the league after 15 rounds will contest the Grand Championship. The Premiership Women's Grand Championship shall consist of the Premiership Women's Semi-Finals and the Premiership Women's Final. The winner of the Premiership Women's Final shall be the Premiership Women's champion.

- Semi Final 1: 1st vs 4th
- Semi Final 2: 2nd vs 3rd
- Final: Winner of Semi Final 1 vs Winner of Semi Final 2

The higher ranked teams (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) will secure home advantage for semi final 1 and 2 and the Final will take place at King's Park.

### 19.1 Grand Championship qualification criteria

To be eligible to participate in the Premiership Women's Semi-Finals and/or the Premiership Women's Final, a player must have played in at least two (2) league matches for that club during the 15-round league competition.

Should a player, having been brought in as injury or medical cover, not meet the qualification criteria, a Premiership club may apply for dispensation for a player from the LFCP. The application must be in writing to the Head of Rugby Operations, and it must outline:

- The player injured, their position, the nature of the injury, and the medical diagnosis regarding return to play timelines; and
- Proof that no other player registered in the 32-person Premiership squad can cover the position.

Once a player has played 10 or more matches in a higher division, they cannot play down in a lower division during the Grand Championship

- e.g., if player A has played a total of 16 games during the league season of which 10 were at Premiership level and 6 at Championship, they cannot participate in the Championship League Grand Finals, unless they receive dispensation from LFCP. (Note: this rule does not apply to dual registered players).

## 20. KNOCK OUT MATCH RESOLUTION

In the event of a knockout match being drawn at the end of normal time, sudden death (next score wins) / extra time will be played until a winner is determined.

- Following an interval of five minutes after full time of the knockout match, two x extra periods of 10-minute halves shall be played with a 5-minute half-time interval.
- The first period of extra time shall start with a kick-off from the team that started the match, and the second period shall start with a kick-off from the team that received the kick-off.

If after extra time, there is still a draw, then the team having scored the most tries during the match will be declared the winner.

If the match is still drawn, then:

- The team that scored the first try in the match will be declared the winner.
- If no tries were scored, then the team with the higher positive points difference played between the two teams in the League shall be declared the winner.
- If the teams have the same differential, then the winner will be decided by way of a coin toss between captains.

## 21. MATCH ABANDONMENT

Apart from the willful abandonment of a match, if a match is abandoned after its commencement under the provisions of the Laws of the Game, the following procedure applies:

- Where a match has been abandoned at either half-time or any time in the second half, the result and any match points and tries scored by each team in the match will stand.
- If a match has begun but is then abandoned before half time, the HKCR/LFCP shall decide, in its absolute discretion, whether the match will be replayed in full, in which case:
  - The HKCR shall select a date, kick-off time and venue for the replayed match; and
  - The procedure regarding any Citing Commissioner Warnings, Temporary Suspensions and red cards received in respect of the match and/or any incidents in the match that are the subject of citing or misconduct complaints will be the same as if the match had been completed; and
  - For the avoidance of doubt, a club participating in a replayed match may select a different team and/or squad from the team/squad it originally selected for the abandoned match.
- Where a match has been declared a draw, then for that match, each team will be awarded two (2) competition points, and any match points and tries scored will count towards the total match points and tries scored by each team in all their round robin matches.

If a team refuses to play or leaves the match during play without authority of the match referee, that team will be taken to have abandoned the match. In these circumstances, that team will be awarded no points and the opposing team will receive the four points for a win (regardless of the score) and any bonus points to which it is entitled up to the time of abandonment.

## **22. POSTPONEMENT OF MATCHES**

Subject to Rule 21, a club must fulfil its competition fixture obligations in respect of any match on the date and at the time appointed for such fixture.

- Subject to the approval by the HKCR, a match may be rearranged where both teams agree a match should be postponed to another date.
- If a match is to be rearranged in accordance with the Match Abandonment rule, the match will be rescheduled for a designated "make-up" weekend. In the event one or both teams are already scheduled to play on all available "make-up" weekends, then the game will be rescheduled at a time, date, and venue either as both teams shall agree, or in the absence of agreement as determined by the HKCR in its absolute discretion.

## **23. MATCH CANCELLATION**

If a match is cancelled prior to match day, the Premiership Operations Team will prepare a detailed report to the HKCR CEO for consideration by the LFCP to decide, based on all facts, the outcome of the match.

## **24. EXPELLED TEAMS**

If a team is expelled from the competition for whatever reason, then:

- That team is deemed to have been awarded no competition points and to have scored no tries or points in matches; and
- All match results against such team are deemed null and void. This means that all competition points awarded in matches against the expelled team and tries and points scored or conceded in matches against such team will not be considered in determining standings in the competition table.

## **25. MATCH REFEREE**

A match referee will be appointed by the Head of Match Officiating for all Premiership Women's matches.

## **26. CITING COMMISSIONER**

A Citing Commissioner will not be appointed for any matches in the Premiership Women. Therefore, clubs and teams will follow HKCR Disciplinary Procedures and Guidelines regulation 4.4.

For matches where it is not reasonably practicable for a Citing Commissioner to be appointed, each team participating in a match, or any of its authorised officials, may cite:

- A player(s) for an act(s) of Foul Play committed during that match provided that such act(s) have not been detected by the match officials; and
- A player for more than one incident of alleged Foul Play in the same match; and

- More than one (1) player in any match.

## **27. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

The Premiership shall follow the Disciplinary Procedures and Guidelines that can be found on the Hong Kong China Rugby website under 'More and Download'. In addition, and where applicable, the Premiership shall also follow World Rugby Regulations 17, 18 and 20.

Any changes to Regulation 17, 18 and 20 will be notified to all clubs by HKCR and the updated and/or amended World Rugby Regulation 17, 18 and 20 will be posted on the World Rugby website.

Note: a player who has been red carded or cited cannot participate in any form of the game until their case has been heard by a judicial officer or disciplinary tribunal.

## **28. RECOGNISE AND REMOVE**

For the Premiership competition, the HKCR adopts a Recognise & Remove protocol for players who are concussed – there is no Head Injury Assessment (HIA) protocol at the Premiership level of the game.

## **29. FIRST AID AND PHYSIO REQUIREMENT**

Clubs should ensure that they have sufficient First Aiders or Physio and equipment present at each fixture. Neither HKCR, nor any match referee is obliged to provide or be responsible for First Aid.

Where a First Aider or Physio is present, the match referee should do no more than allow an injured player to leave the field to receive treatment or allow the First Aider or Physio onto the field to administer treatment. The First Aider or Physio may come onto the field to administer treatment without notice when required.

Also, the wearing of a mouth guard is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** by HKCR at Premiership level.

## **30. TEAM KIT**

Clubs must inform the Premiership Operations Team, no later than 16 August 2023 of their proposed colours and design of their team uniform; jersey, shorts, and socks.

- In the event of a kit clash, it is the responsibility of the designated away team to wear an alternate kit.
- In the event of any dispute the match referee will be the arbitrator of whether a kit clash exists.

If the match official becomes aware that a Premiership team has duplicate numbered jerseys on the field of play, the match officials will request that one of the players be removed from the field until such time as a different numbered jersey, which none of the other players on the pitch are displaying, is worn.

### **31. MATCH BALLS**

Each Premiership club is provided with match balls for the 2023/2024 season.

- The first-named team must provide the HKCR match balls for the Nan Fung Sewit Premiership league matches.

### **32. BALL RETRIEVAL**

Each Premiership club must provide a minimum team of four (4) ball retrieval persons for each of their home fixtures.

- For a neutral fixture, the first-named team is responsible for providing the ball retrieval team

### **33. INTERPRETATION AND BREACH OF L&C RULES**

The LFCP shall have absolute discretion on the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules, including determination of any breach of the L&C Rules, or any matter not provided for in the L&C Rules (including rectifying any administrative error) and shall give directions or make rulings as appropriate. The LFCP's decision shall be final and binding.

Any dispute or request for a determination relating to the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules shall be referred to the LFCP. Applications should be submitted in writing to the Head of Rugby Operations, Andrew Li, or his/her nominee addressed to the LFCP along with all supporting documentation. Where a determination is sought in advance of a particular fixture being played, the application must be submitted to the LFCP at least 72 hours before the relevant fixture. The LFCP's decision shall be final and binding.

Where there has been any omission or error in the L&C Rules the LFCP will have power to correct such error or omission in the manner they see fit.

Should a Premiership club breach any of the L&C Rules, in addition to any express forfeiture provisions set out above, the relevant club/team that breached the L&C Rules may be deducted up to a further four League competition points and/or the club may receive a monetary fine, as the LFCP considers appropriate.

### **34. RELEGATION TO CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE**

For the seasons 2023-2025, the PWGB has introduced a 2 year 'Floor' on the Premiership Women under which the existing 6 Clubs at the start of the 2023/2024 season will not be subject to relegation.

## APPENDIX 1: LEAGUE AND COMPETITION DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these League & Competition Rules, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

1. **Championship League** means the Competition within the League below the Premiership League
2. **China Work Visa** means a Player who has acquired a work permit that allows the player to live and work in Mainland China
3. **Club** means a rugby club represented by a team participating in any HKCR competition
4. **Competition** means any competition administered by HKCR
5. **Current non-Hong Kong, China International Player** is defined as a player who is capped within the last five (5) years prior to the 2023-24 Premiership season (10 October 2018 – 9 October 2023) and/or within the current 2023-24 season (9 October 2023 – 23 March 2024)
6. **Dual Registered Player** means a Non-Premiership Club Player who is dual registered with a Premiership club and listed in a Premiership squad
7. **Effective Registration** means the player has been registered by the player's club online in the HKCR's GameDay database for the relevant season
8. **Hong Kong, China Rugby (HKCR)** means the administrative governing body
9. **Hong Kong Qualified (HKQ)** means a player who is World Rugby eligible to represent Hong Kong in an international test Match. The player must have a valid HKID, Work visa, Spouse visa, Working Holiday visa, and/or Student visa
10. **Hong Kong Work Visa** means a visa that entitles a player to work in Hong Kong other than a WHV
11. **L&C Rules** means these Premiership League and Competition rules
12. **League** means the domestic fifteens rugby competitions administered by HKCR
13. **League Competition** means a competition within the League
14. **LFCP** means the League Fixture Control Panel, which is authorised to make determinations on issues arising under the L&C Rules. The LFCP can consist of up to eight members of the rugby community appointed by HKCR each season to represent a cross section of clubs. The HKCR will nominate one of the members to perform the role of Chairperson
15. **Loaned Player** means a club with which a player is registered may loan that player to another club on the agreement of the clubs concerned and the player
16. **Macau Work Visa** means a player who has acquired a work permit (i.e., "blue card") that allows the player to live and work in Macau
17. **Match** means any rugby match administered by the HKCR
18. **Named Hong Kong, China Senior National player** is defined as a player who is capped by HKCR in its senior team(s) within the last 12 months prior to the 2023-24 Premiership season (10 October 2022 – 9 October 2023) and/or within the current 2023-24 season (9 October 2023 – 23 March 2024).
19. **Non-Premiership Club** means any club that is not a Premiership Club
20. **Non-Qualified Player (NQ)** means a player who is not World Rugby eligible to represent Hong Kong in an international test match and who must hold a Hong Kong Work Visa, Student Visa or WHV for the player's Premiership club.
21. **Performance Governance Board** has full responsibility for ongoing management oversight of the Premiership and Premiership A competition
22. **Premiership Club** means HKU Sandy Bay, Hong Kong Football Club, HK Scottish, Kowloon, Valley and USRC Tigers
23. **Premiership Women's Squad** means the squad of 25 players that each Premiership club has registered with HKCR and listed as its Premiership Women's Squad
24. **Premiership League** means the highest League competition within the League
25. **Player Transfer Form** means a form the player must sign and have counter signed by the player's current club chairman or club coaching officer and new club chairman or club coaching officer
26. **Player** means a player playing a match administered by HKCR
27. **Player Permit** means a permit which is required to allow a player to play for a club, other than the club with which the player is registered, in any fixture.



- 28. **Season** means the League season, which typically runs from September to March
- 29. **Student Visa** means a visa that is granted to a player entitling the player to study in Hong Kong
- 30. **Trained Front Row Player** means a player who is suitably trained and experienced to play in the front row for the division and match in which the player is playing.
- 31. **Union** means Hong Kong, China Rugby
- 32. **Working Holiday Visa (WHV)** means a visa that is granted to a player under the Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme
- 33. **World Rugby Eligible** means the player is eligible to represent Hong Kong in an international test match based on the criteria specified by World Rugby
- 34. Any reference to anything to be submitted and/or completed by a particular date, must be done at or before 17.00 Hong Kong time on that date.

## APPENDIX 2: DISCIPLINARY DEFINITIONS

For HKCR's Disciplinary Rules, Code of Conduct, Scrum Safety Directive and League and Competition Rules, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

1. **Appeal Panel** means the appeal panel appointed by HKCR under the Disciplinary Rules
2. **Appellant** means a player who appeals against a finding of, or a penalty imposed by a Tribunal
3. **Board of Directors** means the current board of directors of HKCR
4. **Chairman** means the chairman of a Tribunal
5. **Challenged Finding** means a finding of the Tribunal and challenged by the Appellant
6. **Challenged Penalty** means a penalty imposed by the Tribunal and challenged by the Appellant
7. **Club** means a club represented by a team participating in any competition
8. **Code of Conduct** means the HKCR's code of conduct as amended from time to time
9. **Head of Rugby Operations** (or his/her nominee) means the Head of Rugby Operations (or his/her nominee) appointed by HKCR from time to time
10. **Competition** means any rugby competition administered by the HKCR
11. **Complainant Club** means a club or association which seeks to cite a player
12. **Decision** means a decision of a Tribunal
13. **Deposit** means a remittance for HK\$2,500
14. **Disciplinary Administrator** means the disciplinary administrator appointed by HKCR from time to time
15. **Disciplinary Administrator's Decision** means the written decision of the Disciplinary Administrator
16. **Disciplinary Definitions Appendix** means these disciplinary definitions appendix as amended from time to time
17. **Disciplinary Rules** means the HKCR's disciplinary rules as amended from time to time
18. **Effective Registration** means the player has been registered by the player's club online in the HKCR's GameDay database for the relevant season
19. **Fixtures Appeals Committee** means the fixtures appeals committee appointed by HKCR under the L&C Rules
20. **Grand Championship** means the competition organised by HKCR under Rule 20 of the League and Competition Rules
21. **Hearing** means a hearing convened by the Tribunal
22. **HKRRS** means the Hong Kong Rugby Referees Society
23. **Incident(s)** means the incident(s) or alleged incident(s) giving rise to the relevant disciplinary proceedings
24. **WR** means World Rugby
25. **L&C Rule** means a rule in the League and Competition Rules as amended from time to time
26. **Laws of the Game** means the WORLD RUGBY laws governing the playing of rugby union, as amended from time to time
27. **League Commissioner** means the Chairman of the League Fixtures Control Panel
28. **League Fixtures Control Panel** means the league fixtures control panel appointed by HKCR
29. **Match** means any rugby union match administered by the Union
30. **Notice of Appeal** means a written notice of appeal submitted by an Appellant
31. **Notice of Citing** means a citing complaint
32. **Panel Chairman** means the chairman of a Penalty Review Panel
33. **Panel Member** means a member of a Penalty Review Panel other than the Panel Chairman
34. **Participant** means any player, referee, assistant referee, touch judge or other match official, selector, coach, trainer, manager or other team official, or any individual involved in the organisation, administration or promotion of rugby union including a director, other officer or employee of HKCR, of any member or associate member of HKCR
35. **Player** means a player playing a match administered by HKCR
36. **Player's Club** means the club or school the player was representing at the time of the Incident

37. **Referee** means a HKRRS-registered match referee officiating in the match administered by HKCR in which the Incident took place
38. **Referees' Appointment Board** means referees' appointment board established by the HKRRS
39. **Rugby Citing Commissioner** means a citing commissioner (match official) appointed by HKCR under Rule 4A for the purpose of exercising citing functions in accordance with WORLD RUGBY Regulation 17
40. **National Referees' Manager** means the current National Referees' Manager appointed by the [HKCR/HKRRS] from time to time
41. **Referee's Report** means a written report submitted by a Referee
42. **Registration Form** means the registration form issued by HKCR from time to time
43. **Rule** means a rule in the Disciplinary Rules
44. **Scrum Safety Directive** means the HKCR's scrum safety directive as amended from time to time
45. **Season** means August to March inclusive
46. **Sub Committee** means a subcommittee of HKCR convened by the HKCR to consider a possible breach of the Code of Conduct
47. **Assistant Referee** means an assistant referee officiating in a match administered by HKCR, registered with the HKRRS, officially appointed by the HKRRS or HKCR and not appointed by either of the participating clubs
48. **Assistant Referee's Report** means a written report submitted by an Assistant Referee
49. **Trained Front Row Player** means a player trained and qualified to play in the front row of a scrum in rugby union
50. **Transfer Period** means the transfer period as specified in the L&C Rules
51. **Tribunal** means a disciplinary committee established by HKCR under the Disciplinary Rules
52. **Tribunal Member** means a member of a Tribunal who is not the Chairman
53. **Tribunal's Report** means a report on the case submitted by the Chairman of the Tribunal to Penalty Review Panel
54. **Union** means Hong Kong, China Rugby
55. **Union Committee** means the Union Committee established under the HKCR's articles of association.
56. Words in the singular include the plural and vice versa; a reference to a gender includes the other gender

### APPENDIX 3: PLAYER LOAN/ PERMIT/ DUAL REGISTRATION \*delete as appropriate.

This form is to be completed and e-mailed to [andrew.li@hkrugby.com](mailto:andrew.li@hkrugby.com), Head of Rugby Operations of HKCR as well as the Transferring club by verifiable means.

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#### SECTION A. PLAYER LOAN

As agreed, upon by the 2 clubs – maximum period up to the end of the current playing season

We ..... have agreed to loan ..... to  
..... with effect from ..... until.....

Signed.....  
Name.....  
Position Held Within Club.....  
Club .....  
Player's Signature .....

NB. No player may represent a club in the Premiership, Championship and National League Competitions unless he is a registered playing member of that club, or he is on loan.

---

#### SECTION B. PLAYER PERMIT (TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE MATCH)

We .....have agreed to grant a permit to allow.....  
permission to play for ..... on.....

Signed.....  
Name.....  
Position Held Within Club.....  
Club .....

Countersigned.....  
Name.....  
Position Held Within Club.....  
Club .....

NB. No named premiership squad player may be permitted to play down for another club. No player may represent a club in the Premiership, Championship and National League competitions unless he is a registered playing member of that club, or a permit has been granted for them to play.

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## SECTION C. DUAL REGISTRATION

We ..... confirm that we hold the primary registration of ..... and that ..... hold the player's secondary registration with effect from .....

Signed.....  
Name.....  
Position Held Within Club.....  
Club ..... (Primary Registration Holder)

Countersigned.....  
Name.....  
Position Held Within Club.....  
Club ..... (Secondary Registration Holder)

NB. No player may represent a club in the Premiership, Championship and National League competitions unless he is a registered playing member of that club, he is on loan to the club, or a permit has been granted for them to play.

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### HKCR USE ONLY

Acknowledged: .....  
Date: .....

#### APPENDIX 4: PLAYER TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

This form is to be completed and e-mailed to [andrew.li@hkrugby.com](mailto:andrew.li@hkrugby.com), HKCR Head of Rugby Operations as well as the Transferring club by verifiable means.

---

Date: ...../...../.....

Player Name: .....

Contact Number: .....

Contact E-mail: .....

From:

Current Club: .....

Current Club Chairman/Director of Rugby: .....

To:

New Club: .....

New Club Chairman/Director of Rugby: .....

Club Approval:

I hereby approve the transfer of the above listed player from ..... to ..... He/she is in good standing with our club and is eligible to participate in all activities with his/her new club.

Does the named player fall under the Premiership Player Transfer Compensation Scheme?

Yes / No

If yes, please provide additional comments below:

Current Chairman/Director of Rugby Signature: .....Date: .....

New Chairman/Director of Rugby Signature: .....Date: .....

Player Declaration:

I certify that I am in good standing with my current club and the HKCR. I understand that this transfer is not finalised until it is approved by the HKCR.

Player Signature: .....

---

#### HKCR USE ONLY

Acknowledged: .....

Date: .....

## APPENDIX 5: UNDERAGE PLAYER FORM

# 中國香港欖球總會 HONG KONG CHINA RUGBY

Members: ARC, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China

中國香港欖球總會



HONG KONG  
CHINA RUGBY

### Player Dispensation Form – 17-year-old Youth Playing Up to Senior Rugby (2023-24 season)

- THE HKCR ONLY SUPPORTS AN EXCEPTIONAL PLAYER PARTICIPATING IN THE ADULT GAME.
- AN 17-YEAR-OLD PLAYING ADULT RUGBY HAS NO COVERAGE UNDER THE HKCR YOUTH INSURANCE POLICY AND FALLS UNDER THE HKCR CATASTROPHIC INSURANCE POLICY ONLY.
- UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE PLAYER PLAY IN THE FRONT ROW.
- WORLD RUGBY DOES NOT ENCOURAGE UNDERAGE PLAYERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ADULT GAME.

#### (1) Player Information

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>			
<b>Playing position:</b>	<b>Club:</b>			
<b>Playing experience (seasons):</b>	<b>School:</b>			
<b>Height &amp; Weight:</b>	<b>HKID Card No.:</b>			
<b>Request for player to play in:</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Men's Premiership		<input type="checkbox"/> Women's Premiership		
<input type="checkbox"/> Men's Premiership A		<input type="checkbox"/> Women's Championship		
What other rugby playing activity is the player involved with?				
U18 Youth Rugby <input type="checkbox"/>	Schools Rugby <input type="checkbox"/>	Representative Age Grade Rugby <input type="checkbox"/> U20's <input type="checkbox"/> U18's	HKCR / HKSI Junior Academy <input type="checkbox"/>	Other(s) – Please Specify <input type="checkbox"/>

#### (2) Senior Club Coach

I hereby declare that:	
a) I hold a current Level 2 Coach Accreditation.	
b) I have considered the skill level and physical attributed of the player. As well as the players experience and standard of opposition within the competition. I would recommend that the player mentioned is suited to play at senior level. I support and endorse this submission and am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind.	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
<b>Print Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

# 中國香港欖球總會 HONG KONG CHINA RUGBY

Members: ARC, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China

中國香港欖球總會



HONG KONG  
CHINA RUGBY

**(2.1) To ensure the players transition into senior rugby is both safe and effective, please provide evidence and details on the following areas:**

- Physical attributes (S+C exposure, load, program etc.)
- Technical skills (Contact & breakdown etc.)
- Position specific skills
- Details of how the player has been prepared to play up (training & contact exposure etc.)
- Individual development plan to best support/manage player (training timeline, gametime etc)





# 中國香港欖球總會

## HONG KONG CHINA RUGBY

Members: ARC, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China

中國香港欖球總會



HONG KONG  
CHINA RUGBY

### (3) Cub Support: Certified Medical Lead (Senior Club)

I have considered the medical background and physical capability of the player. I would recommend that the player mentioned is suited to play at senior level. I support and endorse this submission and am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind.

Signature:

Position:

Print Name:

Date:

### (3.1) Cub Support: Certified Medical Lead (Senior Club)

Please provide detail of any previous injuries sustained by the player, this should date back three years prior. Please include details of the players medical conditions.

# 中國香港欖球總會

## HONG KONG CHINA RUGBY

Members: ARC, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China

中國香港欖球總會



HONG KONG  
CHINA RUGBY

### (3.1) CLUB SUPPORT: Chairman/ General Manager (Youth Club or Section)

I support and endorse this submission and am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind.

Signature:

Position:

Print Name:

Date:

### (3.2) CLUB SUPPORT: Chairman/ General Manager (Senior Club)

I support and endorse this submission and am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind.

Signature:

Position:

Print Name:

Date:

# 中國香港欖球總會

## HONG KONG CHINA RUGBY

Members: ARC, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China

中國香港欖球總會

HONG KONG  
CHINA RUGBY

### (4) PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

I hereby declare and understand that:

- a) I am a parent or legal guardian of the above-mentioned player.
- b) The above-mentioned player and I have been notified of the World Rugby Guidelines and HKCR Policies in relation to participation of underage players Adult Rugby.
- c) The above-mentioned player and I have been notified that they are acting outside the World Rugby Guidelines and HKCR Policies and all inherent risks associated with doing so.

Signature:

Relationship to the player:

Print Name:

Date:

**Supporting  
Statement**

A statement from the applicant Player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) provide rationale and support of the application:

**Players note, submission of this form does not confirm authorisation of dispensation. Authorisation for an Underage Player taking part in adult rugby will be granted by the HKCR Performance department. Please send this form to: [welfare@hkcrugby.com](mailto:welfare@hkcrugby.com) Allow a fourteen-day window for HKCR to process submissions.**



## HKCR WOMEN'S PREMIERSHIP MINIMUM STANDARDS CRITERIA (2023-24)

### **PART A: HONG KONG WOMEN'S PREMIERSHIP AIMS AND AMBITIONS:**

**VISION:** To inspire a generation of players and supporters through top quality, engaging domestic competition.

**MISSION (HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE IT):** By being the most competitive, progressive, and sustainable women's domestic league in Asia.

To support this, we have the following objectives:

1. Collaborate with the rugby community to drive the growth of the women and girls' game in Hong Kong
2. Identify, develop, and retain a quality workforce of coaches, officials and operational staff
3. Be part of a coherent player pathway from grassroots through to elite competition across Hong Kong
4. Improve the overall standard of play and produce sufficient talent for the Hong Kong National Teams (7s and XV's) through high quality training environments and prioritising player welfare
5. Support access to the right facilities at the right times
6. Grow audience engagement through live streaming and social media campaigns, reaching new fans and deepening connections with our current audience
7. By aligning with the international XV's calendar

### **PART B: PREMIERSHIP MINIMUM STANDARDS CRITERIA**

These standards are in place to ensure that any team entering the Women's Premiership has the infrastructure, resources, and a plan for growth, to be competitive and sustainable within the League.

The HKCR will work with clubs to support the development of their plans to meet the necessary criteria for future promotion into the Premiership.

#### **WORKFORCE**

- ☐ Head Coach - Level 2, working towards level 3
- ☐ Assistant Coaches – Level 2
- ☐ Dedicated match day Team Manager
- ☐ Training and match day physio
- ☐ S&C coach lead + S&C programming for all Premiership players
- ☐ Women's club representative/s (consistent link between club and HKCR)
- ☐ Workforce attendance and engagement at HKCR meetings and workshops

## HKCR WOMEN'S PREMIERSHIP MINIMUM STANDARDS CRITERIA (2023-24)

### PLAYERS & PATHWAYS

- ☐ Total senior player base of minimum of 50+ players
- ☐ Minimum of 6 trained front row players of a Premiership standard
- ☐ Second tier senior feeder team
- ☐ Credible connections and partnerships with feeder clubs/organisations (e.g. smaller clubs, youth club, tertiary institutions etc.)
- ☐ A player recruitment plan

### ROADMAP

- ☐ A clear club development strategy
- ☐ A Premiership performance plan (short and longer-term objectives and a plan to raise the standards within the club and women's game in Hong Kong)
- ☐ Board-level support and engagement in the women's game

### VISIBILITY

- ☐ Social media activity/campaigns to promote the women's game
- ☐ A focus on the match day experience, driving up match attendances and audience engagement

### PLAYER SAFETY AND WELFARE

- ☐ Players physically ready to play Premiership-level rugby
- ☐ Clear prioritisation of player welfare at all times
- ☐ All coaches and management with current First Aid qualification
- ☐ Club follows HKCR medical/injury protocols (inc. concussion policy)
- ☐ Club proactively completes HKCR medical reports for all injuries

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- ☐ Provides a safe, open and inclusive environment for players

