

Rugby - BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR NOMINATING ATHLETES

The Southern Sports Academy (SSA) is a non-profit organisation that assists young athletes in achieving sporting excellence. SSA holistically supports athlete development and recognises the value of education. SSA expects athletes to attend school or tertiary education, be meaningfully employed, or undertake other educational or training opportunities. Rugby programs within the RAS structure aim to provide opportunities for identified athletes in regional NSW to access elite-level coaching, skill development, and pathway progression opportunities.

Who can nominate for the SSA 2025/26 rugby program?

- The program will consist of two age groups: U16 and U18.
- Eligible athletes must be born between 2008 and 2011.
- Athletes must reside or attend school in the SSA catchment area.
- Athletes must be current registered members of their local rugby club

Proposed Program of Events – Guide Only

The SSA Rugby program will run from November 2025 to April 2026, with a presentation night in mid-2026.

- 1st November 2025 – Induction Day, Wagga Wagga. All athletes, returning and new.
- Training Days – athletes can expect regular training days from November 2025 onwards. Sessions will be based primarily in Wagga Wagga, with possible additional venues to be confirmed with selected athletes.
- NZ Global 7s (Selected athletes only) – 15 -22nd December
- Darwin Hottest 7s – (U16s) – 22nd -26th Jan (TBD Tournament Funding Dependant)
- South Coast 7s
- Inter-Academy Camp – Date TBD (based on additional academy programs)
- Mid-2026 – SSA presentation evening.

How are selections made?

- To be considered for selection, athletes must complete the nomination form before the closing date/time and attend the trial.
- Being part of a previous SSA squad does not guarantee selection.
- A detailed selection criterion is used, which includes physical attributes and capabilities, technical competence, tactical awareness, potential to improve, competitive ability, individual application, coachability, behaviour, and performance at specific events.
- A list of selected athletes is placed on the SSA website, and trialling athletes are advised by email.
- Offers must be accepted by the due date, or they may be withdrawn and offered to another athlete.

What is expected of an athlete?

- If selected in a squad, SSA expects that this is the athlete's primary sport of participation.
- Attendance at ALL activities in the SSA program (including presentation evening). SSA aims to avoid clashes with higher-level events run by the State Sporting Organisation where possible. In certain circumstances, exemptions can be applied.
- Athletes are expected to adhere to the SSA Code of Behaviour policy, participate to the best of their ability, display exemplary behaviour, show enthusiasm, and maintain high dress standards.
- SSA athletes are expected to commit to improving their physical profile and should be aware that this includes undertaking physical activities and testing. Squad athletes are also expected to undertake a strength and conditioning training program.

What does the SSA program cost?

The 2025/26 rugby program is heavily subsidised by SSA, reducing the levy to be paid by selected athletes.

An athlete levy will be applied to the program. A 50% deposit will be required as acceptance of a successful athlete's spot in the squad. The number of athletes in the team will determine the levy.

NEW squad athletes' compulsory uniform costs \$175*

Inter-Academy Tour Events – TBC

Academy Games levy \$850 **

*Athletes returning to SSA are not required to purchase new uniforms unless their current items no longer fit or are damaged. Subject to expenditure /pricing variations

** Subject to expenditure /pricing variations and other academy program calendars.