****

**ARMY RUGBY UNION – POLICY FOR AN OVERSEAS VISIT**

References:

A. [Army Sport Control Board-Overseas Visits Guidance](https://armysportcontrolboard.com/overseas-visits/).

B. The Values and Standards of the British Army.

C. The ARU Discipline Policy, issued annually by ARU Chairman Discipline.

D. The Overseas Application Form is available here: [OSV Application Form](https://armysportcontrolboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AGAI-5-Annex-L-OSV-Application-Form.docx).

E. 2019 Din 10-015 Application for Army Sports Lottery Grant.

F. [ASCB Army Sport Sponsorship Directive](https://armysportcontrolboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/20190827-ASCB_ARMY_SPORT_SPONSORSHIP_DIRECTIVE_SEP-19.pdf).

G. JSP 462 Part 1 Chapter 7.

**Introduction**

1. The purpose of this Army Rugby Union (ARU) policy document is to provide supplementary guidance to **Ref A** for teams wishing to undertake a rugby tour to an overseas location. Rugby tours are a popular means of maintaining the balance in the military covenant for Service Personnel (SP), and in so doing they must be considered a powerful recruiting and retention tool for the Functional Chain of Command (FCoC). This document will provide advice on the specific details for rugby union tours that is applicable to all levels.

**Defence Diplomacy**

1. The success of the Army representative sides over the years, at a national and international level, has raised global awareness of the ARU brand and at the highest levels. Therefore, every team from within the British Army that conducts an Overseas Visit (OSV) must, by association, reinforce this legacy at the appropriate level of competition. A vital aspect of any touring team must be to engender the development of rugby in that location. At its most basic this is achieved by playing games, but it should also consider the ability to support local community initiatives as representatives of the British Army abroad. The image of any team must reinforce and support the Army brand of ***‘Being the Best’*** and ensure that ‘best and fairest’ is extended to being seen as a force for good in its touring environment. Certainly, strong liaison with other nations’ military teams is to be encouraged and contact with other civilian teams must be examined for wider advantage or consequence, to optimise opportunity and avoid any unintended embarrassment – the ARU are always available and are a valuable source of information and advice on these matters.

**Standards of Behaviour and Discipline**

1. It is self-evident that the Army requires all its members to conduct themselves in accordance with **Ref B** and there will be no compromise of these during a rugby tour. Indeed, increased awareness and exposure to the general public, often in foreign countries, requires all members of a touring party to act as ***‘ambassadors’*** of the British Army and ARU both on, and off the pitch. **Ref C** covers the detail of what is expected on the pitch by players and how discipline matters are to be handled and reported where necessary using [ARU-Admin-Governance-Discipline](https://www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk/game-admin/governance-discipline/) . Any significant matter of discipline off the pitch needs to be dealt with by the Officers Commanding (OC) of the touring party, who in turn requires to be of the requisite rank and have the authorised power to deal with the immediate discipline action. Matters of a serious nature must be reported as soon as practicable to the Chain of Command (CoC) and to the Defence/Military attaché of the United Kingdom (UK) High Commission/Embassy in country.

**Development of a Touring Plan**

4. To commence an OSV firstly complete **Ref D** which demands foresight and rigorous adherence to several mandatory steps. There is no such thing as an unofficial tour, and a tour consists of three or more matches to qualify for Army Sports Lottery (ASL) funding **(Ref E)**. The military estimate and orders processes provide a useful framework for planning and execution of a successful rugby tour.

**Timeline**

5. The timings that a tour organiser requires to consider are outlined below, with the detail provided below:

a. T – 12 Months. Gain broad agreement within the club and with the chain of command to tour. Write to the Defence Attaché (copy to ARU) of the country to be visited with an outline plan;

b. T – 9 Months. Contact ARU Secretariat for any additional tour specific advice.

c. T – 8 Months. Apply to Army Sports Lottery for Tour Grant, Ref D & E relates, noting that all personnel must be members of the Army Sports Lottery in order to qualify for a grant.

d. T – 6 Months. Apply to the Operations Officer of the Army Sports Control Board (ASCB) for permission to tour enclosing written agreement from the Defence Attaché. Apply to ARU, using forms in **Ref D**, for permission to tour enclosing proof of:

(1). tour insurance;

(2). permission from overseas Union;

(3). tour fixtures complete with contacts in country;

(4). agreement from ASCB.

**Aims and Objectives**

6. The broad aim of an OSV might be to win a particular event or series of fixtures to prepare/develop the club or team. The associated objectives might consider the specific playing or developmental outcomes as well as the wider effects that may be achieved. These wider effects could well be linked to a unit/formation plan or Army initiative. OSV’s are retention positive activities and wherever possible this should be measured and quantified in the resultant Post Tour Report (PXR). Furthermore, the objectives might consider the third order affects that it wishes to have in the country to be visited. Again, these might seek to promote and assist in the development of rugby union but may also include enduring association and support to a community that has hosted them. A strong and worthy set of aims and objectives will garner more support for an OSV than generic and ambiguous statements.

**Financial Support**

7. There is a raft of opportunities for financial support available to rugby tours, ranging from individual and unit contributions to ASL grants and ARU Community Tour Fund grants, and including corporate grants from industry – often referred to as *‘sponsorship’*. Army representative teams must conform to the corporate support agreements that have been established for the relevant season by the ARU, where they apply. Units are at liberty to find their own corporate financial support but are reminded to ensure that it is appropriate and follows the Direction and Guidance (D & G) contained at **Ref F and G**; if in doubt the ARU Secretariat can and will provide direction.

**Insurance**

8. All teams must have insurance cover for both playing and touring. This is mandatory and the level of insurance required will often be dictated by the medical facilities and cost available in the destination country. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) in conjunction with their current Tour Insurance Provider provide an OSV insurance policy that covers most eventualities likely to be encountered on an OSV. The ARU recommends that touring teams take out this policy in preference to those offered by tour operators which may not provide a sufficient level of cover. If OSV organisers take out insurance policies in preference to the RFU backed scheme they must ensure that a level of cover is commensurate to that offered by the RFU.

**Training Camps**

9. These are not covered by the ARU OSV policy other than for the Army representative sides where a training camp in preparation for the Inter-Services competition may be considered.

**Publicity**

10. All OSV’s must consider information operations – how, who, what, where and when they might be influencing the wider community. This work should align with and support the aim and objectives of the OSV. OSV OC’s must plan and be ready for engagement with interested press to best exploit opportunities and protect the reputation of the British Army and the ARU.

**Post Exercise Report**

11. All OSV OC’s must produce a Post Exercise Report (PXR) in accordance with **Ref E** and the completed document must be sent to the RFU and copied to the ARU with 4 weeks on completion of the OSV. An important aspect of any such PXR is a cost benefit analysis of the OSV and the use of a best practice tour operator for subsequent recommendation. This can provide empirical or objective data that helps to ensure the future of OSV’s and is likely to be useful to other teams wishing to undertake similar enterprise in the future.

**Army Representative Teams OSV Schedule**

12. The ARU Management Board have agreed the following OSV schedule for the based on a four year rotational basis:

a. Year 1- 2023. Army Men’s XV - if no IDRC then as agreed by the Board;

b. Year 2 - 2024. Women’s XV - if no IDRC then as agreed by the Board;

c. Year 3 - 2025. Army XXXV - ideally linked with World Masters games;

**d.** The Army Sevens team will be allowed to take part in European competitions and the ARU Management Board will permit an OSV every four years which meet the following criteria:

(1). The competition must be within the authorised sevens season (1 June – 31 Aug annually);

(2). The competition must be of sufficient standard against similarly elite opposition;

(3). The competition must be included in the annual budget submission;

(4). Travel and accommodation should not be prohibitively expensive.

**Summary**

14. The opportunity for members of the Army to undertake OSV’s is one that can deliver disproportionate benefit across a range of Army, regimental/battalion, and individual measures, and it is something that every player should aspire to. The organisation and execution of OSV’s requires a good deal of commitment (FCoC, individual and financial) in order to achieve the very best results. The ARU policy is to support overseas rugby tours wherever practicable, and this policy document provides the salient points that must be considered. Much of the detailed work that must be undertaken in organising an OSV is provided in **Refs A-G** and further advice is always available from the ARU website or the ARU Secretariat.