

## REGULATIONS

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# RFU Regulation 6 – Adult competitions

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## **Principles of this competition regulation**

1. These regulations seek to generate fair, safe and enjoyable rugby matches. They seek to prevent poor behaviours and encourage the playing of rugby in line with our core values. It is expected Organising Committees (as defined in RFU Regulation 1 and including National League Rugby (NLR),

RFU Women's Competition organisers, and Regional Organising Committees (ROC)) will supplement these regulations with their own clarification where appropriate.

## General

2. All matches played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and/or in RFU Competitions or any other competition, merit table or friendlies must be played in accordance with this RFU Regulation 6, such supplemental competition specific regulations as applicable, the RFU Regulations, the RFU Rules, World Rugby Regulations, the Laws of the Game (as defined in RFU Regulation 1) and any domestic law variations as determined by the Committee. This RFU Regulation 6 is also supplemented by the following Appendices:

- (a) Appendix 1 - England Rugby Women's League Structure
- (b) Appendix 2 - England Rugby Men's Leagues Structure
- (c) Appendix 3 - Non-fulfilment of fixtures disciplinary framework (Non-Covid)
- (d) Appendix 4 – Sanction table
- (e) Appendix 5 – Criteria for Lower XV's league entry for the 2025-26 Season
- (f) Appendix 6 – National and Regional League Play-Offs for the 2025/26 Season

Where there is conflict between this RFU Regulation 6 and an Appendix, the Appendix shall prevail

3. If the Committee (as defined in RFU Regulation 1) considers it is in the interests of rugby union or an RFU Competition, it may:

- (a) further supplement these regulations in respect of one or more RFU Competitions (including the men's Premiership and Championship competitions, the Premiership Women's Rugby competitions and such other Cup competitions as it considers appropriate) and in the event of any conflict between this RFU Regulation 6 and such supplemental regulations, the provisions of the supplement regulations will prevail; and/or
- (b) amend or vary RFU Regulation 6 and the appendices and/or make further regulations during a season: specifically, where exceptional and material circumstances have occurred during any RFU Competition which either have not been provided for or cannot be equitably dealt with under RFU Regulation 6, particularly if promotion or relegation is likely to be materially affected and may include the Committee determining the results of matches that have not been played for reasons related to the above exceptional and material circumstances and/or determine which Clubs should or should not be relegated or promoted. Any regulation or decision made or taken by the Committee under this Regulation 3(b) shall become final and binding unless any person or club affected has given notice of an appeal to the RFU Head of Discipline within 48 hours (as per Regulation 19) of that person or club affected being made aware of it and an Appeal Panel rules that the regulation or decision of the Committee shall not apply.

4. The Committee shall have the power at any time prior to or during the season to impose conditions upon the membership or continued participation of any Club or Constituent Body in any RFU Competition. Any Club or Constituent Body failing to comply with such conditions shall not be entitled to enter an RFU Competition or to continue to participate in it.

5. The Committee shall:

(a) have discretion to decide on matters not provided for in, as well as on the interpretation of, these Regulations in the context of the RFU Competitions. This discretion shall include the interpretation of these Regulations in accordance with the underlying principles and intent (insofar as it can be ascertained) of the relevant regulation and in the interests of rugby union football.

(b) in addition to the powers of the RFU set out in RFU Regulation 19, have power to discipline any Club for breach of any of these Regulations (and may further delegate such disciplinary powers accordingly), subject to any rights of appeal set out in RFU Regulation 19.

6. The Committee may delegate such powers as it deems appropriate in relation to the day-to-day operation and administration of the RFU Competitions and/or such other leagues and competitions under the jurisdiction of the RFU, including to the relevant Organising Committees and/or RFU staff or other committees as appropriate, save that the Committee shall not be entitled to delegate any powers contained in RFU Regulation 6.3 and 6.9.

7. Subject to the approval of the Committee, powers may be further delegated to any Organising Committee, Constituent Body or other person, firm or company, media agency or competition administrator. Such delegated bodies may also produce Administrative Instructions for the operation and administration of RFU Competitions for which they are responsible provided that any such Administrative Instructions are approved by the Committee.

8. Where possible this Regulation 6 applies equally to the men's and women's competitions save that playing levels and the Organising Committee of each level varies as set out below:

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANISING COMMITTEE</b>
<b>MEN</b>		
1	Prem	Premier Rugby Limited
2	Champ Rugby	RFU
3 and 4	National League Rugby	National League Rugby

<b>5 and below</b>	Regional and Counties Leagues	Regional Organising Committees
<b>WOMEN</b>		
<b>1</b>	Premiership Women's Rugby	Premier Women's Rugby Limited
<b>2 and 3</b>	Championship 1&2	RFU
<b>4, 5 and 6</b>	National Challenge 1,2 and 3	RFU

**Power to vary, disapply or amend RFU Regulation 6 on a local basis prior to the Season (applicable to men's National League Rugby and below (formerly Level 3 and below) and women's Level 2 and below).**

9. If a Club, Organising Committee or Constituent Body wishes to seek the amendment or variation of RFU Regulation 6 on a local basis, they must:

- (a) by 1 August (or such other deadline as agreed by the Committee), provide written notice (explaining the proposed amendment or variation) to all those Clubs affected; and
- (b) give reasonable notice (at least 14 days) to other Clubs that might be affected so that adequate opportunity is given for Clubs to express their views. Meaningful and adequate consultation must take place with all Clubs that might be affected. Special care must be given to consider any Club that is also indirectly affected in any way, to prevent unintended consequences.
- (c) consult with any other interested party (which it deems appropriate) together with the appropriate Organising Committee and, if applicable, sponsor; and
- (d) in the case of a Club, it should submit to the Committee a written application, together with full detail and supporting evidence, supported by its Constituent Body.
- (e) the Committee will only approve the amendment, variation, or new regulations if it is satisfied that:
  - 1) written notice under paragraph (a) above has been given to all those Clubs affected prior to the commencement of the Season; and
  - 2) that any amendment, variation or new regulation is in the interest of the Game and does not adversely affect or prejudice an RFU Competition, any sponsor, or other Clubs in an RFU Competition.

## RFU Competitions

10. The precise format and structure of the RFU Competitions, including league sizes and how many clubs will be promoted or relegated at the end of each Season will be determined by the Committee, and will be set out at Appendices 1 and 2 of this Regulation 6 and will be communicated to participating teams and other stakeholders each year along with the fixtures.

## RFU Consent to Different Name of Competition

11. The RFU may from time to time decide to change the name of any RFU Competition, which may include the names of sponsors.

12. Additionally, with the prior written consent of the Committee, an RFU Competition (or certain Levels or leagues or leagues in certain geographic areas) may carry separate names or titles which may include the names of sponsors.

13. The current League Competitions shall be called:

- England Rugby Women's Leagues
- England Rugby Men's Leagues

## Pre-Season

### Eligibility – Players

14. The regulations pertaining to player registration are contained in RFU Regulations 13 and 14 and all Clubs shall comply with those Regulations (as applicable).

### Eligibility – Clubs and Constituent Bodies

15. The League Competitions shall be open to:

- (a) any Club in membership of the RFU; or
- (b) a Club, which is not a member of the RFU, subject to the requirement that it must be able to demonstrate for the Season that it will be (and in the season previous it was) capable of satisfying the criteria for membership of the RFU. In addition, the Club and players must agree to be bound by RFU Regulation 19. A Club that is not a member of the RFU must in the opinion of the Committee have demonstrated in the previous season that it can fulfil a League programme but was not able to satisfy criteria for membership of the RFU for the previous one year; or
- (c) a Club permitted to play in a league by the RFU on a temporary basis; or
- (d) a University Club (or any other educational establishment) provided that (i) the Club can demonstrate to the Committee that it has completed a regular weekend fixture list for over one

Season; and (ii) it has a separate constitution to the University's (or other such establishment's) Athletic/Student Union.

16. Any Club applying to join the League Competition(s) will normally be placed in the bottom League of its Region subject to the following exceptions:

- where a Constituent Body/Organising Committee considers that a new Club has generated a prospective player base which is too talented for the lowest level, it may feel it is safer and more appropriate for that Club to play higher than the lowest level. If so, the Constituent Body/Organising Committee will engage the Club and obtain agreement of at least two thirds of the Clubs in the relevant league. In the event that such agreement is obtained and if the Constituent Body/Organising Committee still recommends the higher placement of the Club, the matter will be presented to the Committee for approval; or
- where there has been a bona fide corporate restructure of a Club in compliance with RFU Regulations and the consent of the Committee (which it may in its absolute discretion withhold) has been granted in which case that restructured Club may be entitled to retain the League position of the Club prior to its restructure; or
- in respect of new Lower XVs, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6, Appendix 5, provided that such Lower XVs on application may not be placed in a League above Counties 1; or
- otherwise approved by the Committee, in respect of the women's game only.

17. No application for entry to the League Competition will be accepted if it is made later than 1 April preceding the season (unless otherwise approved by the Committee). The approval of the Committee and of the appropriate Organising Committee must be obtained.

18. Only one team per club can participate in each league, and/or level, in the same season. If one team of a club is relegated into the same league as another team of the same club, the lower team shall be relegated, and this same principle shall apply in respect of all other Lower XV teams.

## **Match and Fixture Management**

19. League Competitions fixture lists shall be prepared by the relevant Organising Committees. That Organising Committee shall send a copy to the RFU by 14 June in each year for approval (or such other date as agreed by the Committee). Such fixtures shall be deemed to have been approved by the RFU (which has the right to object to such fixtures) unless notice to the contrary is given within seven days of the RFU's receipt of the League Competitions fixture lists.

## **Pre-Match**

### **Suitability of the Pitch or Weather conditions**

20. It is understood that Weather (as defined in RFU Regulation 1) conditions may preclude the safe playing of rugby and regulations 20-24 inclusive of this Regulation may be further supplemented by an

Organising Committee's Administration Instructions. In all cases, save as provided for in Regulation 21 below the Match Official, or their representative, has primacy of decision as to whether a match should be played. The deciding Match Official must be independent of both clubs (unless otherwise agreed by the Organising Committee) and the decision must be made in as timely manner as possible with the travel considerations of the away team taken into account. Where practicably possible, a decision by 5pm the day prior to a match should be taken, noting the practicalities of changing Weather.

21. When a decision as to the fitness of a pitch is required to be made when the Referee and both teams are present at the ground:

- (a) the decision shall be made by Captains of the relevant teams;
- (b) If both Captains agree that the Match should proceed, the Referee shall also determine if the Match should proceed and remains entitled, in their sole discretion, to decline to officiate that Match on the grounds of safety or any other substantial reason; and
- (c) If one or both of the Captains do not agree that the Match should proceed, the Match will not be played and the provisions of regulation 23 shall apply.

22. A Club whose home ground is unfit to play must seek an alternative venue. In the event of Clubs failing to agree on the suitability of the alternative venue, a ruling can be made by the Organising Committee. During the first part of the season, Clubs playing in home and away Leagues will be expected in the first instance to exchange the venue to the one originally scheduled for the second half of the Season, as determined by the Organising Committee.

23. Any match that is not played on the grounds that the pitch was unfit and/or for any other substantial reason, shall be notified by the home Club to the Organising Committee within four hours of the decision with the view of the Referee on the fitness of the pitch.

## Grounds

24. It is the responsibility of the home Club to ensure the availability of a suitable pitch and to mark its pitch correctly and clearly. It must be dressed with flags and corner flags, post protectors, and Technical Areas. The Committee shall have discretion (via the approval of any required variations in accordance with World Rugby Law 1.3(b)) to permit a match to take place on a pitch which does not meet the minimum dimension requirements set out in World Rugby Law 1.

25. The home Club must ensure that where an Artificial Pitch is to be used it must comply with World Rugby Regulation 22.

## Technical Areas

26. The home Club must make provision that two Technical Areas (as defined in RFU Regulation 1) are marked out on the same side of the pitch, one for each team, to which Permitted Personnel (when not undertaking their duties) are to be restricted during the match other than for the period of half-time. At Regional 1 and below, and only where the Club committee is satisfied, it is unnecessary or impractical

for Technical Areas to be in place, each Club in a match must (unless the referee agrees otherwise) ensure that Permitted Personnel (when not undertaking their duties remain on the side of the pitch designated by the home Club within an area bounded by the centre and ten metre line on the pitch and two metres from the side line of the pitch at the end of the pitch in which it's team plays the first half of the match.

27. Where there are permanent dugouts or shelters, team, replacements and coaching staff must confine themselves to them or remain outside the pitch-side barriers, or if none, the playing enclosure (as defined by the Referee) other than when a player is about to replace a player on the pitch, or when a player is temporarily suspended or for the periods of half-time.

## **Permitted Personnel**

28. No more than four people per team acting as water carriers (including medical staff and replacement players), are permitted within the pitch side or perimeter fencing or other barrier. Water carriers may only be permitted onto the playing area for the purposes of taking water to the players at such times as shall be approved by the Referee (on any other occasion players must come to the touchline to get water).

29. Any player temporarily suspended when playing must remain in the Technical Area or leave the playing enclosure and be clearly and readily identifiable to a Fourth Official.

30. Any player sent off must leave the playing enclosure.

## **Touch Judges –Women's Level 2 and below and Men's Regional 1 and below (formerly Level 5 and below)**

31. As per RFU Regulation 12, in the absence of appointment, each Club shall provide a competent touch judge who should not be a replacement. In an emergency and with the consent of the Referee, a replacement may act as a touch judge. If the appointed touch judge becomes unavailable during the match, the new touch judge must make themselves known to the referee immediately.

## **Clash of Colours**

32. All Clubs must make themselves aware of their opposition's colours prior to travelling. In the event of clashing or similar colours the away team shall be responsible for changing its colours subject to the satisfaction of the appointed Referee.

## **Numbering**

33. Each Club must ensure that its teams' jerseys are in accordance with RFU and/or World Rugby requirements to ensure the correct identification of all players and replacements during a match.

## **Referee Appointments**

34. Match Officials shall be appointed as per RFU Regulation 12. It is the home side's responsibility to

confirm such appointments in accordance with RFU Regulation 12.1.3.

## League Points

35. In all RFU Competitions (unless otherwise approved by the Committee), the following will apply:

- 4 points for a win
- 2 points for a draw
- 0 points for a loss
- 5 points for a walkover (which includes a single bonus point)

In addition, at Women's Level 5 and below

- 1 point for playing and losing
- 1 point for fielding 15 players

36. In addition to the above, in all RFU Competitions (unless otherwise approved by the Committee) a bonus point will be awarded as follows:

- If a team scores four or more tries in any match
- If the team loses a League match by 7 points or less

## Movement of Players between teams inside a Club

37. In respect of the women's game only,

**(a)** A player cannot represent more than one team including within the same Club, on the same day or same weekend unless the player is a Dual Registered player and has played zero minutes in the first match in that day or weekend;

**(b)** a player who has been selected as a starting player or replacement in 50% or more league matches in a higher team or have played in the final fixture of a team in a higher league in the current season must not play for a lower team in any league or cup fixture unless:

- they are only playing for the higher team to replace an injured higher team player.
- they are returning from a period of injury, which needs to be more than 4 playing weekends.
- they have been dropped in favour of a better Player in agreement with the RFU Player Experience Department.
- both teams are playing a league or cup match on the same day or weekend.

## During the Match

38. Every Club must play its strongest possible first XV in all matches in any League Competition (except where a match involves a Lower XV at Men's Regional 2 and below (formerly Level 6 and below) or Level 4 Women's or below) unless agreed otherwise by the Committee.

## Home and Away

39. All League Matches shall be played on a home and away basis unless agreed otherwise by the Committee.

40. Where a Club is forbidden from playing on its home ground for disciplinary reasons the match must still take place on the scheduled date and on such other pitch as the Club may use and for the purposes of this Regulation will be deemed to be the Club's home ground.

## Kick Off

41. All matches shall kick off between 2-3pm (as determined by the home Club). Matches played in November, December, January, and February, shall kick off at a time specified by the Organising Committee. In the event of adverse Weather conditions, matches may kick-off between 1-4pm to allow for multiple matches to be played on Artificial Pitches, at all times at the discretion of the Organising Committee.

42. Kick-off times within a weekend scheduled for a fixture may be varied by mutual agreement between the two teams and the home team must advise the Match Officials of any changes.

43. Matches played in the week (e.g. Thursday or Friday night matches) must have agreement between the two teams prior to the proposed kick-off and the Match Officials. The default kick-off time will be 7pm unless otherwise approved by the Organising Committee.

44. If kick-off is delayed due to adverse travel or injury, wherever possible every effort must be made by the two teams concerned to play the match on the day. This may include the reduction of the playing time and or half/time interval to complete the fixture in the best light conditions. A reduction in playing time is to be agreed by the Match Official.

## Clubs unable to fulfil fixtures (League Competitions only)

45. A Club must fulfil its matches in League Competitions in compliance with these Regulations.

46. If the Organising Committee considers that a Club has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its obligations, it shall have regard to Appendix 3 of this Regulation and the Club may be liable to have League points deducted and/or order the match to be replayed or such other sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Organising Committee. For the avoidance of doubt, lack of players or insufficient front row players with Effective Registration whether through injury, illness or because of work or other commitments shall not be deemed to be a justifiable reason for not playing or seeking a postponement of a League Match.

47. At Regional 1 and below (Mens) and Championship 1 and below (Womens), where a Club declines

and/or unjustifiably fails to fulfil 25% of its scheduled fixtures or 4 (four) scheduled fixtures (whichever is higher) as communicated to Clubs at the start of the Season, the Organising Committee may determine that Club's results be expunged from the League tables with immediate effect, save in respect of exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the Club. Clubs may play any remaining scheduled fixtures as friendlies, but results will not be included in the League tables.

48. In 'Home and Away' leagues when the first fixture is defaulted by the 'away' team the return fixture will be reversed and take place at the ground of the non-offending Club.

## **At men's National League Rugby and below (formerly Level 3 and below) and Level 4 women's and below**

49. The result of an unplayed League Match shall be as determined by the Organising Committee in accordance with the disciplinary framework for non-fulfilment of fixtures is set out in Appendix 3.

## **Re-scheduling Matches**

50. A League Match shall be replayed as follows:

(a) In Men's Competitions, on the Next Available Weekend unless the Organising Committee exceptionally agrees otherwise; and

(b) In Women's Competitions, Clubs shall have seven (7) days to mutually agree a date, to be approved by the Organising Committee. In the event no agreement is reached between the Clubs, the Organising Committee will nominate the Next Available Weekend.

51. League Matches (including rearranged matches) take precedence over all other matches other than RFU Cup Competitions, unless otherwise notified by the RFU.

## **Laws of the Game**

### **Applicable Laws of the Game**

52. Subject to the Regulations below or as otherwise varied by these Regulations, all matches must be played in accordance with the World Rugby Laws of the Game save that at Women's Level 6 and below, the World Rugby Under 19 Law Variations will apply.

### **Game On Principles**

53. The Game On Principles (as set out below) may apply as follows:

(i) Men's League matches at Counties League 1 and below (formerly Level 7 and below) provided prior approval of the Organising Committee is obtained;

(ii) Women's League matches at National Challenge 2 and below without further approval; and

**(iii)** in non-RFU Competitions (including merit tables and friendlies) without further approval.

subject in all cases to both teams agreeing which of the Game On Principles will apply to the match, and notifying the Referee accordingly at least 30 minutes prior to kick-off. If both teams cannot agree whether a Game On Principle will apply, the match will proceed without the application of that Game On Principle.

54. The Game On Principles are as follows:

LAW	GAME ON PRINCIPLE
<b>Law 3.2: Team Numbers</b>	A match can take place with a minimum of 10 players on each team at the start of the match. It is encouraged that the number of players on each team is equal, subject to the laws of the game.
<b>Law 5.3: Match Duration</b>	A match can be a minimum of 40 minutes in duration.
<b>Law 3.34: Rolling substitutions</b>	Rolling substitutions are permitted in accordance with regulations 61 and 62 below.
<b>Law 3.34: Half Game rule</b>	Where rolling substitutions are adopted, teams are encouraged to apply the half game rule to ensure each player in every match day squad plays at least half of the Available Playing Time (as defined in RFU Regulation 1).
<b>Law 18: Line outs</b>	Teams may agree not to contest or lift in the line out

**Law 19: Scrums**

Teams may agree that scrums can be contested push and strike (maximum 1.5m push) or uncontested.

## Additional Law Variations requests by Organising Committees

55. Should an Organising Committee wish to request any further Law variations, the following process will apply:

- a) The Organising Committee must write to the RFU Head of Regulations (via [regulations@rfu.com](mailto:regulations@rfu.com)) setting out the request including the proposed variations, the level and matches to which the variations will apply and the rationale for requesting such variations;
- b) The variations/request will be presented to the Committee for approval. Any approval granted by the Committee may be subject to additional conditions being imposed on the competition organiser in respect of the application of the variations.

## Squad Sizes and Replacements

56. Subject to the remaining provisions of RFU Regulations 6, the maximum number of replacements in the below League Competitions will be as set out below, unless otherwise set out in competition regulations:

- a) Men's National League and National 2 League (formerly Levels 3 and 4) - Not more than five
- b) Men's Regional League 1 and below (formerly Level 5 and below) - Not more than three
- c) Women's – all Levels - Not more than seven

57. At Women's Level 5 and below, there must be the same number of players from each team on the field of play, subject to the Laws of the Game. If a team drops below 10 players, the match will be abandoned and the team responsible for causing the abandonment shall be deemed to have lost the match. The winning team will receive 5 League points with a 0 points difference. A team only being able to start a fixture with less than 15 players is not a reason for non-fulfillment of a fixture (provided that team is able to start a fixture with no fewer than 10 players).

58. The term 'replacement' shall have the same meaning as the definitions set out in World Rugby Law 3.

59. The provisions pertaining to replacements and the number of replacements permitted are as set out in the World Rugby Law 3.

60. Replacements must be named to the Referee or Match Official no later than 15 minutes before the commencement of a match as per the Electronic Match Card (as defined in RFU Regulation 1)

## Rolling Replacements

61. Organising Committees may, in their discretion, permit rolling replacements in League Matches at men’s National League and below (formerly Level 3 and below) and women’s Level 2 and below as set out below:

a) each team shall be permitted to use rolling replacements of not more than the maximum number of the Player interchanges (“Player Interchanges”) set out in the table below:

Number of Replacements	Player Interchanges
Up to 3	8
4	9
5 or 6	10

7

12

**b)** Save as permitted by the Laws of the Game, after the Player Interchanges have been made no other replacements or Player Interchanges will be permitted for any reason (including temporary or permanent injuries, sending offs and suspensions) and if a Player is injured, sent off or suspended from the field the team will play with one less Player and with uncontested scrums if this involves a front row Player, and the game cannot continue safely with contested scrums.

**c)** For the avoidance of doubt, Player Interchanges replace the “blood bin” which means that if a Player has uncontrolled active bleeding and thus must leave the field, this will be classified as a Player Interchange if that Player is replaced by another Player. If a team has used all its Player Interchanges, that Player may not be replaced, and the team shall continue with one less Player than was on the pitch prior to the injured player leaving the field. The Player is permitted to return once the wound has been treated and the bleeding stopped.

**d)** Not more than two Player Interchanges per team may occur at any one time and may only occur during a stoppage in play and in all cases with the permission of the Referee.

**e)** A Player must enter the field of play from the half-way line under the agreement of the Match Official.

**f)** A Player who is previously injured in the match may return to play as a Player Interchange provided the Player is fit to continue playing in the match save that a Player who suffers two injuries in a match which has necessitated that Player being replaced on each occasion is not permitted to act as a replacement following the second injury.

**g)** In addition to the powers set out in the Laws of the Game, Referees are entitled in their sole opinion to prohibit or postpone a Player Interchange if they believe either that the Player Interchange would prevent the opposition from restarting the game quickly or where the replacement Player is not fit to continue playing in the match.

62. In respect of non-RFU Competition matches (such as merit table matches and friendlies) rolling replacements are permitted in accordance with the Game on Principles set out in this Regulation 6.

### **Front row forward requirements and uncontested scrums**

63. The provisions pertaining to front row forward replacements, number of front row forwards and uncontested scrums are as set out in the World Rugby Law 3 (or the World Rugby Under 19 Law Variations if applicable), unless Game On is permitted in accordance with this Regulation 6.

64. In respect of the RFU Competitions, the RFU has exercised its discretion under Law 3.17 to invoke the ‘player-off’ rule in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

### **Sanctions for failing to field a qualified front row/uncontested scrums**

65. If a League match is completed or contains uncontested scrum(s) and a Club has failed to comply with the requirement to replace a front row Player with another suitably trained and experienced front row Player in accordance with the Laws of the Game, that Club shall forfeit the match which will be awarded to the other team who shall be deemed to have won with a bonus point. The match will be recorded as a 5 League point win with a 0-0 scoreline. This regulation will not apply at Women's Level 6 and below, or in cases where the Game On Principle regarding uncontested scrums apply.

66. If a match contains uncontested scrum(s) the Organising Committee will investigate any suspected or alleged breaches of these Regulations and/or Law of the Game and, will be entitled to take such action and if in the event of a breach, issue such sanctions as it deems appropriate (including without limitation altering the result, awarding points to the opposition, match forfeiture or ordering a replay of the Match) and it shall notify the relevant Clubs. The Referee and the Clubs must provide such information and assistance as may be requested by the Organising Committee. Any Club may appeal against the decision of the Organising Committee in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

67. Prior to the match, each team must advise the appropriate Match Official of their front-row players and possible front-row replacements and which position(s) in the front row they can play. Only these players may play in the front row when the scrum is contested and only in their designated position(s).

68. A replacement front-row player may start the match in another position.

69. It is a team's responsibility to ensure that all front-row players and front-row replacements are suitably trained and experienced.

## **Post-Match**

### **Non-fulfilment of fixtures – Disciplinary Framework**

70. The disciplinary framework to deal with non-fulfilment of fixtures is set out in Appendix 3. This framework does not prevent any matter being considered as a breach of RFU Rule 5.12, or any other RFU Regulation, and therefore being dealt with under Regulation 19.

### **Abandoned Matches**

71. Weather conditions may include bad light, or other circumstances of reduced visibility such as fog, heavy rain in the sole opinion of the Referee.

### **Less than 60 Minutes Played – or 50 Minutes for Women's Level 5 and below who play U19 Laws**

72. If Weather conditions prevent a match being played or result in a Match being abandoned with less than sixty minutes (fifty minutes for Women's Level 5 and below) having been played, then the match will be replayed on the Next Available Weekend unless otherwise determined by the Organising Committee.

## 60 or more Minutes Played

73. If a match is abandoned because of Weather conditions when sixty or more minutes (fifty or more minutes for Women's Level 5 and below) have been played, then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed the final score in the match. The Referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played at the moment of abandonment shall be final.

## Other Reasons

74. If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon a match for any reason other than Weather conditions, then, irrespective of the number of minutes played, the match will be reconvened on another pitch at the hosting venue if a suitable pitch is available and safe in accordance with World Rugby Regulations.

75. If no alternate pitch is available (as deemed by the Match Official) then the result will be reviewed and determined by the Organising Committee (or its delegate). The Organising Committee (or its delegate) may order the match to be replayed, award bonus points or impose such other sanction as it deems appropriate.

## Notification

76. When a match is abandoned, the home Club must notify the Organising Committee (or its delegate) of the reason for non-playing or non-completion of the match within 4 hours of the event in accordance with regulation 83 of this Regulation.

77. Following notification to the Organising Committee (or its delegate), the EMC must be submitted noting the time and reason for abandonment, agreed by both the Match Official and team captains.

## Notification of Match Results/Match Day Forms

78. All League matches must use EMCs. Each team must ensure that information provided is accurate and true. The provision of false or misleading information on players or replacements shall be a serious breach of this Regulation and may give rise to a severe penalty.

79. The home team is responsible for ensuring that the Match Result Card is completed and submitted within 48 hours of match kick off or as required by the Organising Committee.

## Club Responsibility

80. If applicable, where a Club is unable to input the details of any non-Effectively Registered player on the Match Result Card before kick-off, they shall notify the Organising Committee of the non-Effectively Registered player's details before kick-off and shall update their team selection as soon as possible following the completion of the match (and in any event no later than 24 hours following the completion of the match, unless otherwise approved by the Organising Committee).

81. Once a Match Result Card has been submitted it cannot be altered unless the other Club and

Referee agree. If a Club refuses to agree to an alteration to a Match Result Card, this must be reported to the Organising Committee within 48 hours of the completion of the match and the position will be considered by the Organising Committee.

## Score Reporting

82. If a club is unable to complete the EMC, then the home Club is required to telephone the result in by no later than 1730 on the day of the match or 2200 for an evening match to their results agent. This includes all relevant bonus point information and where appropriate squad sizes. Where an EMC is used, the club is not required to report the score as above providing the score section of the EMC is completed by the above deadlines.

83. Any abandoned, postponed, or unplayed matches should be reported in the first instance by telephone by the home Club.

84. The contact details for the results agents are as advised by the Organising Committee and/or the RFU.

## Disciplinary action in respect of breaches

85. The Organising Committee and the RFU has the power to investigate, bring disciplinary action and determine sanctions in respect of any alleged or actual breaches of these Regulations and may impose such sanction as it deems appropriate, unless a fixed sanction is stipulated in Appendix 4.

## Breach notified by Committee

86. Any alleged breach of any of RFU Regulation 6 by a Club or a Player shall be notified to that Club or Player by or on behalf of the Organising Committee within 48 hours of knowledge of the occurrence or facts giving rise to the allegation and thereafter confirmed in writing within 96 hours of knowledge of the occurrence. The Club or Player shall have seven days from receipt of notification to respond, or such other time period as stipulated by the Organising Committee. The Organising Committee shall give a ruling within such period as determined by the Organising Committee.

## Breach notified by Third Party

87. Any alleged breach of RFU Regulation 6 or other complaint or dispute under RFU Regulation 6 shall be referred to the relevant Organising Committee by phone or email within 48 hours of knowledge of the occurrence giving rise to the complaint and if by phone, thereafter submitted in writing within a further 48 hours.

## Review by Organising Committee

88. If the Club or Player or either party to the complaint or dispute or any other person or Club is dissatisfied with any ruling made pursuant to regulation 86 and 87 above there shall be a right to request a review of the decision.

89. A right to a review shall only apply provided notice in writing specifying the grounds of appeal is given to the Organising Committee within seven days of receipt of the decision referred to above and the notice is accompanied by such payment as is stipulated by the Committee (or such other person as the Organising Committee may have stipulated). The fee will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

90. If the Club or Player or either the complaining Club, or the other party to the complaint or dispute, or the Club or Player against whom the complaint is made, wishes for an oral hearing, it must be requested in writing at the time the application is made (or in the case of the other party within 5 days of being made aware of the application being made).

91. If the Organising Committee considers (in its absolute discretion) an oral hearing to be appropriate, it shall, within five days of receiving notice of such request, appoint a time, date, and place for the hearing to take place of such review. The person who has given a ruling shall not be entitled to take any part in the review of a ruling they have given other than to explain the reasons for their ruling. This oral hearing may be organised face to face or over a digital communication.

92. Where a complaint is heard before the Organising Committee, it shall be the obligation of the complainant to establish that on the balance of probabilities the complainant has an interest in the matter and the complaint is justified. If the Organising Committee considers that the complaint is not justified it may dismiss it without hearing the representations of the Club or person against whom the complaint is made. The Organising Committee cannot deem a complaint proved without considering the evidence submitted by the person or Club against whom the complaint is made, or where an oral hearing has been requested and approved by the Organising Committee, providing an opportunity for the person or Club against whom the complaint is made to make representations or call relevant evidence.

93. The outcome of any complaint must be given in writing to the complainant within 35 days of receipt of the written complaint (together with the appropriate bank transfer) by the Organising Committee.

## **RFU Appeals**

94. Appeals from a decision shall be in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.5.

## **Sanctions**

95. Where the Organising Committee finds there has been a breach of RFU Regulation 6, it may impose such sanction as it deems appropriate. Sanctions available to the Organising Committee may include:

- loss of match or League points.
- transfer of League points.
- review of result.
- deduction of League points to be effective at the commencement of the following Season.

- deletion of Club's results from its League table.
- placing a Club at the bottom of its League.
- relegation of a Club by one or more Leagues.
- a financial sanction, including monetary fine or compensation award payable to any third party, sponsor, or Club.
- expelling or suspending any Club from participation of a Competition.
- or any such other penalty as the Organising Committee deems appropriate.

96. Where the Organising Committee imposes a financial sanction on a Club or a player in respect of a breach of RFU Regulation 6, any or each of the financial sanctions imposed under these Regulations must be paid within 14 days of notification (subject to any appeal). Where payment of a financial sanction is not made in accordance with these Regulations, the Organising Committee may impose a further sanction, which may include the deduction of League points.

97. This further sanction is in addition to the fine which shall remain payable; and where any financial sanction remains outstanding at the end of the Season, the Organising Committee may make a recommendation to the Committee that the Club or a player be suspended from the Competition in the following Season and/or be deducted points in respect of the following season or deny promotion.

98. Where there is a second or subsequent breach of RFU Regulation 6, the Organising Committee shall have the power to impose an additional sanction and/or take this into account when determining the appropriate sanction for the second or any subsequent breach.

## Dispute Resolution

99. In the event of any dispute (including as to the amount of gate receipts to be paid) between any Constituent Body, or Club with another Constituent Body, County or Club, the Committee may direct both Constituent Bodies, Counties or Clubs to submit to mediation or arbitration.

100. If the Constituent Bodies, Counties or Clubs are directed to arbitrate, both Constituent Bodies, Counties or Clubs shall comply with any procedures or directions given by the arbitrator selected by the Committee; the decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on both Constituent Bodies, Counties or Clubs.

## Post Season

### Promotion and relegation

101. In respect of League Competitions, the number of Clubs to be automatically promoted and relegated, along with the principles of promotion and relegation at the end of each Season will be as more specifically set out in Appendix 1 and 2. In respect of the Men's National Leagues and Regional

Leagues any further promotion and relegation from these leagues by virtue of play-offs shall be as determined by Appendix 6.

## Final Club League Position

102. If two or more Clubs have the same number of League points at the end of the Season, final league positions shall be determined firstly by the number of wins achieved, then the number of draws and then based on match points scored.

103. A Club with a larger number of wins in the League shall be placed higher than a Club with the same number of League points but fewer wins.

104. A Club with a larger number of draws shall be placed ahead of a Club with the same number of League points and wins but with a fewer number of draws.

105. If Clubs have equal League points and an equal number of wins and draws in the League, then a Club with a larger difference between match points 'for' and match points 'against' shall be placed higher in the League than a Club with a smaller difference between match points 'for' and match points 'against'.

106. Should two Clubs have the same number of League points and an equal number of wins and draws, and the same match points difference, a Club having scored more match points 'for' shall be placed higher in the League than a Club having the lesser number of match points 'for'.

107. If this still does not establish the positions then the Clubs involved shall be ranked according to the number of matches won, excluding the first League match of the season. If necessary, this process shall be extended to exclude the second match, third match and so on until the final positions are established.

## Reduction in Number of Clubs

108. At Championship to Regional 2 (inclusive) in the Men's game, where at the end of the Season, and subject to any exceptional circumstances at the discretion and approval of the Committee, a League finishes with fewer Clubs than it started with due to merger, liquidation, or other reason then the number of Clubs relegated from that League may be reduced accordingly by the number of Clubs it is missing. This regulation 6.108 shall also apply to a League or Level where such League or Level would have a fewer number of Clubs than the number set out in Appendix 2, Paragraph 1 in the following Season as a result of the application of this regulation 6.108 to the League above. This shall apply as follows:

- (a) In the Championship, no Club shall be relegated;
- (b) In National League 1, one fewer Club shall be relegated for each Club the League is missing;
- (c) At National League 2 to Regional 2 (inclusive), one fewer Club shall be relegated from each

League for each Club the League was missing;

**(d)** At National 2 to Regional 2 (inclusive) where fewer Club(s) have been relegated from the higher League in accordance with (b) and/or (c) above, equivalent fewer Club(s) shall be relegated from that League. The Club(s) reprieved from relegation which would otherwise have occurred in accordance with Appendix 2, Paragraph 4 will be determined at each League below by the 'Best Playing Record' of all Clubs that would normally have been relegated from the Leagues that feed into the League above where reprieve(s) have been applied, save that a second Club cannot be reprieved from the same League until the other League has had the same number of teams reprieved from relegation;

**(e)** where the number of Clubs which would be reprieved from relegation exceeds the number of Clubs which would be relegated under Appendix 2, Paragraph 4, the decision as to relegation and any additional promotion shall be determined by the Committee in consultation with the Organising Committees which would apply to the Leagues involved;

**(f)** Appendix 2, Paragraph 2 (g) and (h) shall take precedence over the provisions of this regulation 6.108.

109. In the Women's game, where at the end of the Season and subject to the discretion and approval of the Committee, if a League finishes with fewer Clubs than it started with due to merger, liquidation, or other reason (including reprieve from relegation of a Club(s) in the League above), then the number of Clubs relegated from that League may be reduced accordingly by the number of Clubs it is missing.

## **Power to Vary Promotion and Relegation**

110. Where in exceptional circumstances the regulations pertaining to promotion and relegation create a significant disadvantage to the Club or Clubs, the Committee can effect a variation which removes or reduces the significant disadvantage for the benefit of the Game of rugby union overall and the Committee may at its discretion take such factors as it deems appropriate into account.

111. A Club is permitted to apply to the Organising Committee to request an exemption from promotion if the club deems it would be harmful. Such requests must be submitted by the end of January each season (unless otherwise approved by the Organising Committee) and supporting evidence provided to make the case for retention of league status. However, if a Club foresees promotion after the mid-way of the season, that Club should make its intent of turning down promotion known as soon as practicable. If the Committee approves a request and a Club is granted an exemption from promotion for the next season the following will apply:

- if the Club finishes in an automatic promotion place, the highest placed Club in the league above who was due to be relegated the following season will be reprieved from relegation or in the event there is no relegation in the league above, any additional promotion shall be determined by the Committee.
- If the Club finishes in a play-off place, then their opponents shall be awarded a walk-over.

## Other administrative points

### Match Footage

112. At Men's National League 1 and National League 2 (formerly Levels 3 and 4) the home Club is responsible for providing an un-edited digital copy of the match footage on the Elite Hub system. The footage must be uploaded by 1200 on the Monday following the match. Clubs must also comply with RFU Regulation 19 regarding the provision of any match footage to a Disciplinary Panel.

### Sponsorship, Financial Assistance or Gifts

113. Any proposal involving an offer of sponsorship, financial assistance, or gifts for a RFU Competition or combination of RFU Competitions must be submitted to the RFU for approval which it will not refuse or delay unless such offer or the terms thereof would cause the RFU to be in breach of any other contract or commitment it may have to a third party.

### Terms and Conditions

114. Each Club agrees that by commencing its programme of matches in any RFU Competition it has entered into a legally binding obligation to comply with the provisions of this Regulation 6 and its appendices.

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### Documents

**Competition Appeal Judgments**



### Appendices

**Appendix 1: England Rugby Women's League Structure**



**Appendix 2: England Rugby Men's League Structure**



**Appendix 3: Non-fulfilment disciplinary framework**



**Appendix 4: Sanctions**



**Appendix 5: Men's Lower XVs entry for the 26-27 Season**

