

SCHOOLS & YOUTH REGULATIONS (“SYR”)

1. Definitions

- 1.1 For the purposes of these Schools & Youth Regulations, the definitions set out in the section marked ‘Definitions’ shall apply.
- 1.2 Youth Rugby covers Under 13 – Under 18 age grades. (In the age grades Under 7 to Under 12 games are played in accordance with the rules of the RFU Continuum.)

Note: Schools that have traditionally played 15-a-side in Year 7 may continue to do so for now, with their Head Teacher’s agreement. They should be aware, however, that in all other Schools and Clubs, Year 7s (i.e. Under 12 but may also be in some Under 13 teams) play Midi Rugby which is the RFU preferred mode for delivering rugby in this stage of their development. It is expected that such schools should be planning to switch to Midi rugby.

- 1.3 Youth Rugby is played in accordance with the U19 Law Variations of the iRB and any RFU ELVs in force.

2. Age Grades and Applicable Variations

- 2.1 In Youth Rugby players shall play in their own age grade unless they fall within one of the following exceptions:
 - (a) Very talented or physically developed players in the U13, U14 and U15 age grades may play up one age grade with appropriate permission;
 - (b) Those in the U16 and U17 age grades may play up two age grades;
 - (c) In very exceptional circumstances, where a young person’s safety may be compromised due to a developmental disability (physical or behavioural) that young person may play down one age grade;
 - (d) An England Academy Player may play up into a higher age grade if the RFU Head of Elite Player Development has given his specific written consent.
- 2.2 Players may only play adult rugby, or train with other adults, when they have reached their eighteenth birthday unless they comply with one of the following exceptions:
 - (a) players who are aged 17 may play adult (including Under 20) rugby and train with adults provided they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults. This exception does not apply to playing in the front row of the scrum during contested or uncontested scrummages either during training or in a match, where there is an absolute prohibition on players under the age of 18 playing in adult rugby; or
 - (b) players who have not reached their 18th Birthday who are England Academy Players and who may play adult rugby and train if the RFU Head of Elite Player Development has given his specific written consent. Such consent must be given for playing or training.

- (c) Players of all sexes and of any age may train or play together in non-contact variations of rugby, providing the organizer has assessed the session as safe for all players.
- 2.3 Permission to play must be obtained from either the player's parent, guardian or head teacher before any person under the age of 18 plays adult rugby or plays with players who are not in the same annual age banding. When assessing whether a player under 18 is capable of playing adult rugby, those responsible for making the decision must take account of the guidelines at paragraphs 1.1 – 1.6 below.
- 2.4 The Age limit for all Age Grades is determined as being under the specified age at midnight on 31 August at the beginning of the season in which matches are to be played. The appropriate age group applies for the whole season. At representative level (U17 and U18 only) the age limit is determined at midnight on 31st December of that season.
- 2.5 No player may be permitted to play in matches involving school teams once he has reached his 19th birthday.
- 2.6 The Under 19 Law Variations at Appendix 1 only apply to matches when all players in a team are aged 18 years and under.

3. Season

- 3.1 Players under 18 years of age (unless they fall within Schools & Youth Regulation 2.2) may not play in contact matches between the first Tuesday immediately following the May Day Bank Holiday and 31 August inclusive unless otherwise authorised by the RFU Management Board or persons to whom the Management Board delegates that authority. Overseas tours and Trials are exempt from this regulation.
- 3.2 Summer Camps can only take place subject to the prior approval as appropriate of the RFU.
- 3.3 In the ten (10) days immediately preceding the start of the Season club and school U18 teams (which may include U16 and U17 players) are permitted to participate in pre-season practice matches and Festivals in accordance with Schools & Youth Regulation 7.

4. Eligibility of Players – County Constituent Body (CB) representative age grade teams

- 4.1 A player may qualify to represent the relevant Age Grade team in a CB if he meets one of the following criteria:
- (a) he attends a school situated in that CB;
 - (b) he resides in that CB;
 - (c) he was born in that CB; or
 - (d) he is a member of a Club affiliated to that CB.
- 4.2 Membership of a CB School of Rugby or an Academy does not entitle a player to play for that CB if he does not satisfy one of the previous four criteria.

- 4.3 Where a player is qualified for more than one CB he may have trials and play for a second if unsuccessful for the first CB.
- 4.4 Where a player has not been selected for the CB for which he is eligible the Divisional Chairman of Selectors may allow him to play for another CB for which he is not qualified if it is in the interests of the player's development.
- 4.5 A player may play for a CB at one age level and then a different CB at an older age level provided, however, that player satisfies one of the four criteria in Regulation 4.1 above.
- 4.6 Where a player has represented one CB at 15 Group or above, and moves to a School or Club in a different CB, that player may either play for his new CB or continue to play for the original CB if he wishes to for the rest of the relevant season.

5. Referees

- 5.1 Schools and Clubs are responsible for ensuring that referees appointed to take charge of youth rugby matches are adequately qualified or experienced to officiate at an appropriate level.

6. Matches

- 6.1 Players aged under 18 must not play more than one game of rugby on any one day except where specified at paragraph 7 below.

Note: It is not desirable for anyone to play two games in two days. The day after playing should be a recovery day.

- 6.2 Periods of Play and ball sizes for Age Grade rugby (not including festivals):
 - (a) Under-13 & Under-14: not exceeding 25 minutes each way with size 4 ball total playing time 50 minutes.
 - (b) Under-15: not exceeding 30 minutes each way with size 5 ball total playing time 60 minutes.
 - (c) Under-16 & Under-18: not exceeding 35 minutes each way with size 5 ball total playing time 70 minutes.

7. Festivals and Competitions

- 7.1 7-a-side and 10-a-side and 15-a-side Festivals and Competitions may be played at any time within the Season subject to the approval of CB or CSU in which the festival is played. Subject to Regulation 3.3 any U18 pre-season practice match or Festival must gain approval of the RFU for clubs or ERFSU for schools.

Note: CBs are expected to keep the number of such Festivals under close scrutiny and maintain the teaching of the 15-a-side game as the main purpose of youth rugby.

- 7.2 15-a-side Festivals must be organized in accordance with the following pattern:
 - (a) U13 – not exceeding 4 matches of 10 minutes each way (maximum total playing time being 80 minutes)

- (b) U14 – not exceeding 4 matches of 10 minutes each way (maximum total playing time being 80 minutes)
 - (c) U15 (and over) – not exceeding 5 matches of 9 minutes each way (maximum total playing time being 90 minutes)
- 7.3 All National Schools' Festivals should have the permission of the ERFSU. All National Clubs' Festivals should have the permission from the RFU Playing Development Committee.

8. Coaching

- 8.1 All Clubs and Schools providing youth rugby must provide adequate coaching.

Note: RFU policy is that all Youth team coaches should hold an appropriate Rugby Union coaching qualification. Those coaches without a coaching qualification should coach only under the direct guidance of a qualified coach and should strive to become qualified as quickly as possible.

- 8.2 All coaches must be cleared by the RFU/School CRB disclosure procedures before commencing their appointment.

9. Insurance

- 9.1 No youth player may play rugby unless insured under the RFU Insurance Policies.
- 9.2 All Schools in membership of the ERSFU are insured through the RFU scheme. For a full summary of cover see www.rfu.com.

GUIDELINES

The RFU has prepared the following guidelines to assist in the understanding and interpretation of the Schools & Youth Regulations:

1. Playing out of Age Grade

- 1.1 The decision to allow a young person to play out of age grade lies with the person in the best position to assess all the relevant circumstances.
- 1.2 For guidance in making a decision the following aspects should be considered:
- (a) The physical development of the individual and his playing colleagues
 - (b) The skill level and experience of the individual
 - (c) The individual's playing position in the team
 - (d) The competitive standard of the particular match and playing conditions
- 1.3 The ultimate consideration must be for the welfare and safety of the player and those with whom he will be playing.
- 1.4 Permission to play out of age grade must be obtained from the young person's parent or guardian or head teacher.

- 1.5 There must be clear communication with all those involved in and affected by the decision.
- 1.6 Clear and complete records should be kept of decisions taken and the bases for them. To assist an RFU form is available online at

2. Referees

- 2.1 Constituent Bodies and Clubs should encourage Referees' Societies to provide referees for youth matches wherever it is possible to do so.
- 2.2 Schools and Clubs should encourage their own personnel to qualify as referees.

3. Matches, Fixtures & Training

- 3.1 A player who is under 18 at the start of the season is recommended to play a maximum of 35 matches a year. Ideally, Elite Players should only play 25-30 matches in one season.
- 3.2 If youth players can only play and train on one day in the week then there must be a significant number of days allocated to coaching. If players are to improve their skills, they must not play matches each week if that then precludes their opportunity to train.
- 3.3 The RFU Youth Structured Season (See appendix 4) is now in place in order to help young players and their administrators to avoid clashes and overplaying.
- 3.4 The structured season should enable a balance of fixtures to be created based on local needs, strengths (and weaknesses). It should go some way to prevent overplaying of the most able, whilst providing meaningful events and fixtures for those who will progress no further than School or Club level.
- 3.5 CBs, Schools and Clubs should plan on the basis that their better players might be unavailable to them during the weeks identified for CB, Divisional and International activity. Please note that activities take place during the week commencing the date shown, not exclusively on the weekends. Other important fixtures should be avoided during these weeks.
- 3.6 Attendance at a National Representative Squad Training or Development day or weekend should count as one match.
- 3.7 The RFU and the ERFSU are extremely concerned about the problem of Overplaying and Over-commitment. Those organising District, CB, Divisional and National programmes are asked to consult closely with Head Teachers when preparing such programmes, in order to avoid not only serious overplaying, but also a possible damaging effect on the individual's academic study programme. Overplaying is a major problem, but Over-commitment is accentuating the problem. An example of how CBs might assist is not to put through trial games boys of known quality i.e. an U15A XV player from last season should go straight in to the Final Trial for U16 and miss prelim trials.

4. Liaison between Schools and Clubs

- 4.1 School/Club liaison is essential to safeguard the interests of the player, the School and the Club.

- 4.2 Every effort must be taken to ensure that talented players are not overplayed and youth players should give priority to schools rather than club activities.
- 4.3 Representative matches should normally take priority over School or Club matches.

5. Coaching

- 5.1 School teachers/coaches should remember that their prime role is to teach, coach and/or referee.
- 5.2 Play the game for the right reason - first learn how to play safely and skillfully, and then apply that skill in order to win.
- 5.3 Mismatches can be avoided by talking to the Coach in charge of the opposition before the game.
- 5.4 Seminars, internal courses and working to a regular syllabus are essential steps to proficiency. Coaches should update their knowledge on a regular basis by attending appropriate CB/RFU events. Players must be adequately prepared for any match.
- 5.5 Attention must be paid to pre-season preparation. Players should be conditioned to play rugby rather than hope to become conditioned by playing it. Adequate fitness training, including special exercises for the front row, is vital - necks and shoulders need to be strong. The fatigue factor needs careful watching - see RFU publication, The RFU Guide for Coaches 'Fitness and Conditioning'.
- 5.6 Prime skills like tackling, scrummaging, rucking and line out lifting need to be taught regularly, pre-season preparation being a prime opportunity to develop these skills. See appropriate RFU publications and videos, the RFU Continuum and 'Tackling Safety' booklet. For up to date products contact www.rfu.com or email refereinfo@rfu.com.

6. Provision of Youth Rugby Union Football

- 6.1 All Clubs and Schools are encouraged to provide facilities for the playing of youth rugby. Special care must be taken to honour the RFU/RFUW Policy and Procedures for the welfare of young people in Rugby Union.
- 6.2 The Youth Rugby (and Mini Rugby) section of a Club must at all times be the responsibility of the Club and under the close supervision of the Club Committee. Care should be taken over under-age drinking and gambling on fruit machines.
- 6.3 Particular care needs to be taken on age ranges when Clubs and Schools are involved in organising incoming and outgoing tours from other countries. Clear instructions need to be given to tour operators and tour organisers.
- 6.4 It is recommended that Clubs and Schools consider mouthguards when conducting their risk assessment. At CB, Division and National levels youth players are required to wear a properly fitted mouthguard.
- 6.5 The safety of all players is of paramount importance and Clubs and Schools must ensure that, whenever the game is played or training conducted there is:

- a) appropriate first aid cover and equipment provided
 - b) access to a telephone to ensure emergency assistance can be called immediately
 - c) vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle.
- 6.6 The RFU has adopted iRB Regulation 21 as its anti-doping regulations. Anti-doping provisions can be seen in Appendix 10 of the RFU Discipline Regulations.

APPENDIX 1 – U19 VARIATIONS

(RFU Experimental Law Variations and clarification of iRB U19 Laws of the Game).

The RFU has issued a number of Law Interpretations and Variations for all players who are under the age of nineteen years old at midnight on 31st August each year. They apply to Domestic Matches in England only.

1. Substitutions

Rolling substitutions are permitted in all domestic Schools' and Club Youth matches played within England. A player who has been substituted may replace any player, whether or not that player has been injured.

2. Squeezeball

No player involved in a match at any age level from under 18 downwards shall use in training or in a match the technique known or referred to as Squeezeball. No person involved in the teaching or coaching of the Game may teach or coach players involved in a match from under 18 downwards or encourage such players to use the technique known or referred to as Squeezeball.

At Under 19 Squeezeball is permitted but only if the ball is immediately available or the act will be penalized.

Note: 'Squeezeball' is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents) usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushes the ball back between the legs.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

3. Shoulders Above Hips

Any player at any stage in the scrum, ruck or maul who has or causes an opponent to have, his shoulders lower than his hip joint must immediately be penalised by awarding a Free Kick. The object of this interpretation is to try to prevent a collapse of scrum, ruck or maul. It is to help the coach to coach good technique and the referee to penalise bad technique. Any player who has his shoulders lower than his hip joint can only move downwards unless he has very great strength. The force through the shoulders should be directed forwards and upwards; all players should remain on their feet, thus preventing a pile-up and possible injury.

Penalty: Free Kick

4. Law 14 Ball on the ground: no tackle, and Law 15 Tackle: Ball carrier brought to the ground

4.1 It is illegal for any player to voluntarily fall on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in his possession, to voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them, or near them.

Penalty: Penalty kick at the place of infringement.

Additional Notes to help interpret Laws 14 and 15:

(a) *No advantage shall be played under this Law.*

(b) *A player is assumed to have fallen voluntarily unless the referee is absolutely certain the fall was accidental.*

(c) *In the very rare instances when the fall is accidental, play must be stopped and a scrum awarded. The object of this change in interpretation in Law is to keep players on their feet and to prevent them from falling to the ground; thus removing a dangerous area of play. This will create proper rucks and mauls defined as 'players from each team on their feet' (Law 16, Ruck; Law 17, Maul).*

- 4.2 Should the correctly formed ruck or maul then collapse, the referee must immediately act to prevent a pile-up from developing.

5. Variations for Under 13 and Under 14

The following variations shall also apply to matches at age grades Under 13 and Under 14:

- 5.1 Playing time not to exceed 25 minutes each way with a size 4 ball. After 50 minutes of playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock-out competition.
- 5.2 Teams will be made up of fifteen players, eight of whom will be forwards, with the remaining seven forming the backs.
- 5.3 The hand off/fend off is now permitted.
- 5.4 Kicking the ball on the ground (often called fly hacking) is now permitted.

5.5 Law 20 – Scrum

- 5.5.1 In an eight-person scrum the formation must be 3-4-1, with the single player (normally the number 8) bound on the 2 locks. The locks are now permitted to bind between the legs of the props with their outside arms.

Exception: A team may have fewer than eight players in its scrum when either the team cannot field a complete team, or a player is sent off for foul play, or a player has to leave the field because of injury.

- 5.5.2 Even allowing for this exception, each team must always have at least five players in a scrum and both scrums must always be equal in numbers.
- 5.5.3 If a team is incomplete, the scrum formation must be as follows:
- (a) If a team is without one player, then both teams must use a 3-4 formation (i.e. no No.8).
 - (b) If a team is without two players, then both teams must use a 3-2-1 formation (i.e. no flankers).
 - (c) If a team is without three players, then both teams must use a 3-2 formation (i.e. only front rows and locks).
- 5.5.4 When a normal scrum takes place, the players in the three front-row positions and the two lock positions must have been suitably trained for those positions.
- 5.5.5 If a team cannot field such suitably trained players because:
- (a) they are not available; or

- (b) a player in one of those five positions is injured or has been sent off for Foul Play and no suitably trained replacement is available then the referee must order uncontested scrums.
- 5.5.6 In an uncontested scrum, the teams do not compete for the ball. The team throwing the ball must win it. Neither team is allowed to push the other team away from the mark.
- 5.5.7 Referees should be vigilant to ensure that hookers are in hooking position.
Penalty: Free Kick
- 5.5.8 Wheeling:
- (a) A team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.
Penalty: Penalty Kick.
- (b) If a wheel reaches 45 degrees, the referee must stop play. If the wheel is unintentional, the referee orders another scrum at the place where the scrum is stopped.
- 5.5.9 There is no ‘turnover’ law at U18. If scrums are reset for wheeling beyond 45 degrees the throw-in is to the side in possession at the time it is wheeled beyond 45 degrees.
- 5.5.10 Maximum 1.5 metres push: A team in a contested scrum must not push the scrum more than 1.5 metres towards their opponents’ goal line.
Penalty: Free Kick
- 5.5.11 The scrum-half not throwing the ball into the scrum must not move beyond the middle line of the scrum until the ball has emerged from the scrum or an opponent has placed his hands on the ball. In the event of a strike against the head, the scrum-half who has thrown the ball into the scrum is similarly restricted in not following the ball.
Penalty: Penalty Kick
- 5.5.12 Ball must be released from scrum. A player must not intentionally keep the ball in the scrum once the player’s team has heeled the ball and controls it at the base of the scrum.
Penalty: Free Kick
- 5.5.13 Safety: In the event of one front row being stronger than the other, referees should be mindful to instruct the stronger pack to reduce the power of its shove sufficiently to ensure the opposing front row is able to stay on their feet.

5.6 Law 19 Line-Out

- 5.6.1 Minimum numbers. At least two from each team.
Penalty: Free kick.
- 5.6.2 Maximum numbers. The team throwing in the ball decides the maximum number of players forming the line-out.
Penalty (for the non-throwing in team having too many players): Free Kick.
- 5.6.3 The line-out extends from 5 metres from touch to 15 metres in-field and parallel with the touchline. Lifting/supporting is prohibited at this age group,

i.e. a player may not bind to a jumper until he/she has returned to the ground.
Penalty: Penalty Kick.

5.6.4 There is no longer a requirement to peel close to and parallel with the line-out.

5.7 Replacements

5.7.1 There shall be up to seven replacements. Any number of substitutions or replacements by mutual agreement.

5.7.2 A player who has been substituted may replace an injured player.

6. Variations for Under 15

The variations for age grade Under 15 shall be as per under 13 and 14 except:

(a) Playing time not to exceed 30 minutes each way playing with a size five ball.

(b) After 60 minutes of playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock-out competition.

7. Variations for Under 16, 17 and 18

The variations for age grades Under 16, 17 and 18 shall be:

7.1 Playing time

Playing time not to exceed 35 minutes each way playing with a size five ball. After 70 minutes of playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock-out competition.

7.2 The Scrum

The non-throwing in scrum half is no longer restricted in staying at the middle line after the ball has been thrown in. Whilst remaining on side he may follow the ball round. The offside line for the scrum-halves runs through the line of the ball in the scrum

7.3 The Line-Out

7.3.1 A player must not support a jumping team-mate below the shorts from behind or below the thighs from the front.

Penalty: Penalty Kick.

7.3.2 Players who support a jumping team-mate must lower that player to the ground as soon as a player of either team has won the ball.

Penalty: Free Kick.

7.4 Replacements

7.4.1 There shall be up to seven replacements.

7.4.2 If a team nominates 22 players, it must have at least six players who can play in the front row in order that there is replacement cover for the loose-head prop, hooker and tight-head prop.

APPENDIX 2 – NATIONAL U17 COMPETITIONS REGULATIONS 2009/2010

1 Competition Format

- 1.1 The Competition will be divided into a) Cup b) Plate c) Bowl and d) Shield. There will be two stages to the competition a) Divisional and b) National

A. Divisional Stage

- 1.2 The Divisional Organiser will receive U17 CB/League nominations on a date determined by the Divisional Organiser. Nominations will identify 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Cup KO Competition, 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Plate KO Competition, 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Bowl KO Competition and 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Shield KO Competition (32 teams in total per Division 128 teams nationwide)
- 1.3 Upon nomination to the Divisional KO Stages of the Competition each Club must submit to the Divisional Organiser evidence of all eligible Players' Registrations taken from the computerised record of a Club or Players' registration details held by the RFU on the RugbyFirst database.
- 1.4 Playing dates for the Divisional KO rounds of the RFU National U17 Cup, Plate Bowl, and Shield can be seen below.
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield Divisional | Qtr Finals | Sunday 28th February 2010 |
| Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield Divisional | Semi Finals | Sunday 14th March 2010 |
| Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield Divisional | Finals | Sunday 28th March 2010 |
- 1.5 The Divisional Organiser will have full responsibility for the Divisional KO Stage, and will notify all clubs participating in the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield of the draws for each round of the competition. This information will include date of fixture, venue and recommended kick off time.
- 1.6 The Home team at each Divisional KO stage will contact the visiting team in the week(s) leading up to the match to confirm arrangements and kick off times. Such contact must be at least 96 hours prior to the kick off of the match. The home team will request their referees society provides a fully qualified referee.
- 1.7 Where the Divisional Organiser arranges a neutral venue for a Divisional KO match the Divisional Organiser will arrange a suitable venue and ensure the relevant referees society provides a fully qualified referee. The competing teams must contact the neutral venue to arrange a kick off time and arrange post match catering requirements.
- 1.8 Teams in a Divisional KO match of the Cup, Plate Bowl and Shield must complete a Match Card, listing the first names, surnames and the RFU registration numbers of the team and all replacements in block letters. The card must be presented to the referee for checking before the game. The card must be signed by the Match Referee and officials from both clubs at the end of the match and the final score including - number of tries, conversions, penalties and drop goals added. The match card must be faxed/ emailed to the relevant Divisional Organiser and the Rugby Football Union by the winning team no later than 24 hours after the conclusion of a match.

- 1.9 The Divisional Organiser will forward the draw for the following round of the competition to Tournaments and Competition Department no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of a match.

B. National Stage

- 1.10 The winners of each Divisional KO stage will progress to the next round of the competition; the winners of the Divisional Final (the venue of which will be determined by the Divisional Organiser) at Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield will progress to the National U17 Semi Finals. Winners from the London & South East will play the winners from the South West; and Midlands' winners will play the winners from the North. National Semi Finals and Finals will be played at neutral venues to be decided by the RFU. The dates of the National Semi Finals and Final are specified below:

National Semi Finals Sunday 18th April 2010
National Finals Sunday 2nd May 2010

- 1.11 Teams in a National KO match of the Cup, Plate Bowl and Shield must complete a Match Card, listing the first names, surnames and the RFU registration numbers of the team and all replacements in block letters. The card must be presented to the referee for checking before the game. The card must be signed by the Match Referee and officials from both clubs at the end of the match and the final score including - number of tries, conversions, penalties and drop goals added. The match card must be faxed to the Rugby Football Union by the winning team no later than 24 hours after the conclusion of a match.

C. All Stages

- 1.12 Each game will be 15 aside and be 70 minutes playing time in length (35 minutes each way). Half time will be 10 minutes
- 1.13 A squad of up to 22 players (15 starting players and 7 substitutes) can be registered for each match.
- 1.14 All matches must be played on the dates shown. There will be no variance on playing dates unless agreed by the Divisional Organiser in case of the Divisional Stages of the Competition and the Tournaments and Competitions Department of the RFU in case of the National Semi Final and Final.

2. Competition Organisation

- 2.1 The Competitions will be organised by the Tournaments and Competitions Department of the Rugby Football Union.
- 2.2 The management of the Divisional KO stages for the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield competitions is delegated to the Divisional Organisers. Any playing disputes or transgressions (including breach of these regulations) during the Divisional KO Stages of the competition will be dealt with by the relevant Divisional Organiser in the first instance. If the dispute cannot be resolved at divisional level the dispute will be forwarded to the Tournaments and Competitions Department of the RFU.

3. Eligibility of Clubs

- 3.1 The competition is open to all clubs nominated by their respective Constituent Body who are in full membership of the Rugby Football Union or RFU Constituent Body, and shall be played under the Rules & Regulations of the Rugby Football Union and the IRB laws of the game: Under 19 Variations

- 3.2 If a club nominated by a Constituent Body plays its home fixtures in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, their matches shall, be played on the mainland of England (including for the purposes of this Regulation the Isle of Wight) either on the ground of the opposing Club or, if the Island Club desires, at the ground of any other Club on the mainland of England within its CB. In this event, all arrangements which are to be agreed with the host Club shall be made by the Island Club, which shall be responsible for any ground expenses incurred and at no cost to the host Club involved.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Island club will be responsible for all travel and accommodation costs where two participating clubs agree to play any Divisional KO match on the Island concerned.

4. Eligibility of Players

- 4.1 All players must be 15 years of age or over and under 17 years of age at midnight of the 31st August at the start of the season in which the competition is to take place, and be a genuine player of their club. To be eligible a player must:

- (a) have been effectively registered with the club he is representing on the Rugby Football Union RugbyFirst database or official Constituent Body (CB) database on or before 31st December of the current season.
- (b) be a fully paid up member of the club.

- 4.2 Every participating player must be Registered with the Rugby Football Union on the Rugby First Database or Official Constituent Body (CB) Database for the club they are representing and hold a Personal Youth Registration ID number. Players/Team Managers must hold valid RFU registration cards (with photographs) or an alternative form of photographic identification (passport/provisional driving licence) for each player in a match day squad and have them available for inspection at every match

- 4.3 No player may play for more than one team in the competition during the season.

- 4.4 A player who is a nominated RFU England Academy scholar (as stipulated by the RFU Elite Rugby Department) or a player who has been selected for any England Age Grade representative match squad (or comparable team from another IRB Tier One Nation) during the current season will not be eligible.

5. Postponed & Abandoned Matches

- 5.1 If ground or weather conditions, prevent a match being played at the ground of the club designated as the 'home' side, every effort must be made to play the match either a) at the grounds of the designated 'away' side, should that club have a suitable pitch available or b) at a neutral venue (in which case the first names team will be deemed the 'home side'.

- 5.2 If ground or weather conditions, prevent a match being played at the grounds of either club, (or neutral venue) it may be re-scheduled by agreement between the two clubs and the Divisional Organiser/RFU. In the event of the clubs being unable to agree to a revised date, the Divisional Organiser/RFU may specify the date on which the match is to be played or award the match to one side or the other, dependant on the circumstances of the postponement. A rescheduled match must be played before the due date of the next round of the competition.

- 5.3 If a match is abandoned because of weather conditions (including bad light) when fifty or more minutes 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.

6 Drawn Matches

- 6.1 In the event that the scores are level at the end of a Divisional KO match, the winner of the match will be the team that has scored most tries. If this does not produce a winner, the team that has scored the most goals from tries will proceed to the next round. If this still does not produce a winner the visiting team shall proceed to the next round. Where under regulation 5.1 a match has been played at the designated 'away side' and tries and goals from tries are equal the winning team will be decided by a place kicking competition (see paragraph 6.3) For Divisional KO matches played at neutral venues, if the score tries and goals from tries are equal the winner will be decided by a Place Kicking Competition (see paragraph 6.3 below)
- 6.2 The winner of each Divisional Final (Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield) will progress to the National Semi Final. In the National Semi Finals and National Finals if scores are level at the end of the match, the winner will be the team that has scored the most tries. If this does not produce a result, the team that has scored the most goals from tries will be the winner. If this does not produce a result, the winner of the match will be determined by Place Kicking Competition.
- 6.3 Place Kicking Competition
- 6.3.1 Each team shall nominate one player from its number on the field of play at the final whistle to participate on its behalf in a place kicking competition.
- 6.3.2 Each kicker in turn shall attempt a place kick 1 from pre-determined positions until such time as, after equal attempts; one kicker has kicked more goals than the other.
- 6.3.3 The first kick shall be taken by the team that Kicked-off at the commencement of the match. The attempts will be taken from the following positions in turn, repeating the sequence until a decision is reached: -
- (a) the intersection of the 22-metre line and the centre of the 22-metre line
 - (b) the intersection of 22-metre and 15-metre lines to left of posts facing
 - (c) the intersection of 22-metre and 5-metre lines to left of posts facing
 - (d) the intersection of 22-metre and 15-metre lines to right of posts facing
 - (e) the intersection of 22-metre and 5-metre lines to right of posts facing

7. Referees & Touch Judges

- 7.1 The home team will provide a Society appointed Referee (and a team of three where possible) for the Divisional KO stages for the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield Competitions.
- 7.2 Where a Referee Society cannot provide a team of three, competent touch judges, who shall not be substitutes or team officials, will be provided by the participating teams. Further it is the home Club's responsibility to liaise with the appointed official(s) directly to ensure that such official(s) is aware of the arrangements e.g. kick off time, regulations and has the appropriate directions to the venue for the match (or any change of venue).

7.3 For the National Semi Finals and Final, (Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield) Referees and Touch Judges will be provided by the RFU Referee Appointments Secretary.

8. Replacements

8.1 Replacements will be allowed under the relevant IRB law. A player who has been replaced must not resume playing during the match (unless permitted under the IRB Laws of the Game U19 Variations).

8.2 In the interests of safety a team fielding a squad of less than 22 players in a Competition match must ensure that they have a suitable number of Front Row replacements in accordance with IRB Law 3 (suitably trained and experienced players in the front row). For the avoidance of doubt if a team nominates 22 players, it must have at least six players who can play in the Front Row in order that there is replacement cover for loose head prop, hooker and tight head prop.

8.3 If in any match including a Final a team cannot comply with the requirements of IRB Law 3 such that when a front row player requires to be replaced, his team cannot provide a suitably trained and experienced replacement player to enable the team to continue to safely play with contested scrums the referee having made enquiry and confirmed this fact with the captain of the team and the manager or adult official from the Club responsible for the team the match will continue with uncontested scrums, and (subject to the provisions of Regulation 8.6) the final result of the match will stand.

8.4 Temporary Absence during match
Where during a match,

(i) a player is temporarily suspended from the field of play (which includes a blood injury) and that suspension results in a replacement on any occasion, and his team cannot provide a replacement or suitably trained and experienced player to enable the match to safely continue with contested scrums; and

(ii) the Referee has made enquiry of and confirmed this fact with the Manager of the team or such other person nominated by the club as the manager or other person responsible for the team); then the match shall continue with uncontested scrums only for the duration of the temporary suspension. The match result will be unaffected.

8.5 The Divisional Organiser/RFU will review the circumstances in every case where a match in the Competition is completed with uncontested scrums. The Divisional Organiser/RFU will be entitled to take any such action as it deems appropriate.

(Such action may include:

- reversal of the match result
- a fine and/or payment of compensation, and/or
- disqualification from the Competition in the Season and/or the following season the inclusion of the non offending team in the next round of the Competition and/or
- requiring that the match be replayed)

8.6 Where the Divisional Organiser/RFU Tournaments and Competitions Department finds that there has been a breach of any Regulation governing the Competition or that a Club in a match in the Competition acting other than in good faith has

taken advantage of the provisions of this Regulation. They may take action against that Club as described above, in 8.5.

9. Clash of Colours/Identification of Players

- 9.1 In the event of Clubs having similar or clashing colours, the home team shall be responsible for changing its colours subject to the satisfaction of the appointed referee. If a match is being played at a neutral venue or the competition has reached the national semi-finals/finals the home team will be decided by the toss of a coin at least two days before the match concerned.
- 9.2 All teams in the National U17 Competition must wear numbered shirts in accordance with IRB requirements to ensure the correct identification of all players and replacements during a match.

10. Finance

- 10.1 The RFU will provide financial assistance to each Divisional Organiser as set out in the agreed 2009/10 U17's Competitions budget.
- 10.2 A financial contribution (up to 60% of total travel costs (not including flights, accommodation or meal/drinks) will be made available to clubs playing away from home, where travel exceeds 200 miles (round trip).
- 10.3 To receive a financial contribution for travel the club concerned must submit an invoice to the Rugby Football Union by June 1st 2010. All invoices must be made out for the attention of the Rugby Football Union, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, TW1 1DS.
- 10.4 Home teams will retain any revenue generated from hosting a National/Divisional U17 fixture.
- 10.5 Consideration will be given to any potential sponsor, who may find the finals day an attractive marketing opportunity

11. Protests, Disputes and Transgressions

- 11.1 Any matters in dispute or any transgressions of these Regulations shall be referred immediately to the Divisional Organiser by telephone if necessary within 24 hours following the conclusion of the match, providing written confirmation follows within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match, setting out the grounds of the complaint in full. Any dispute or transgression during the Divisional KO Stages of the competition will be dealt with by the relevant Divisional Organiser in the first instance. If the dispute cannot be resolved at divisional level the dispute will be forwarded to The National Schools and Youth Disciplinary Secretary at the RFU, who will establish an Appeals Panel consisting of three of the four Divisional Organisers. A Divisional Organiser from the division where the appeal originated would not be a member of the panel. Any dispute will be resolved not less than 5 days prior to the next round of the competition.
- 11.2 From the National Semi Final Stage onwards disputes or any transgressions must be referred immediately to the Age Grade Competitions Manager at the RFU (Tournaments and Competitions Department) by telephone if necessary but no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the match, providing written confirmation follows within 48 hours setting out the grounds of the complaint in full.

- 11.3 The RFU shall have absolute discretion to resolve any such protests or disputes as it shall think fit and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing may decline to act upon a protest validly made if it considers doing so to be in the interests of the Competition generally.
- 11.4 The RFU shall have power to amend alter or vary these Regulations as it deems necessary (but not with retrospective effect), to deal with any matter not dealt with by these Regulations, to resolve any ambiguity herein or if it considers it to be in the interests of the Competition.

12. Right of Appeal

- 12.1 Any interested party aggrieved at the decision of the RFU under Regulation 11.2 above may, within 48 hours from the receipt of the letter informing it of the RFU's decision, lodge an appeal in writing or request a further review of the decision in writing to The National Schools and Youth Disciplinary Secretary, c/o Tournaments & Competitions Department, Rugby Football Union, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham TW1 IDS, stating the grounds on which the appeal or complaint is made. Any such appeal must be accompanied by a payment of £100 payable to the RFU; this fee is refundable in the event the appeal is upheld unless the Appeals Panel decides otherwise.
- 12.2 The NSYDS will establish an Appeals Panel whose three members will exclude The Age Grade Competitions Manager and the four Divisional Organisers. The NSYDS will establish what the issues are and canvass to see whether, if parties agree, an Appeal can be heard by way of a written submissions rather than oral evidence/submissions. If a 'live' hearing is necessary he will oversee and determine the timing and venue of the Hearing ensuring minimal delay
- 12.3 Any individual with a connection to any party involved in such a dispute, breach hearing or with a clear interest in the outcome will not adjudicate on that case.
- 12.4 The Appeal Chairman will determine the conduct of proceedings and their scope. The Panel will provide written reasons for their decision. The Appeals Panel can vary or impose sanctions as is appropriate. For the sake of the competition schedule adjournments will be for exceptional circumstances only.
- 12.5 In any appeal the Appeal Panel shall have discretion, only in exceptional circumstances, to act in any manner it sees fit provided that it is of the opinion that the application of these National Under 17 Cup Regulations has resulted or would result in a perverse and/or unfair outcome. In all cases where the Appeal Panel exercises that discretion, or where it fails to follow its own procedures, any party to the proceedings may, within 72 hours of the publication of the Appeal Panel's decision, refer the matter to the RFU Disciplinary Officer for review. The Disciplinary Officer will then review the decision and may affirm it or substitute an alternative finding and his decision shall be final and binding.

13 Terms & Conditions of Participation

- 13.1 Each Club by agreeing to enter the competition and/or by commencing its first match in the Competition agrees that it will:
 - (a) fulfill its fixtures in the Competition and comply in every particular with these Regulations 1 - 12 (inclusive).

- (b) will play in each game in the Competition for which it qualifies.
 - (c) permit access to its premises during before or after a match to any person authorised by the Divisional Organiser/RFU (with or without notice) to check compliance with all and/or any of these Regulations and to provide to any such person such documentation and information as might be reasonably required to identify any player in any match in the Competition and produce evidence of such players Effective Registration with the Club.
- 13.2 Each Club by commencing its first match in the competition agrees it has entered into a legally binding obligation with the RFU and as a separate covenant with each other Club in the Competition, Referee, Touch Judge or Match Official involved in any match in the competition or cancellation or abandonment thereof that it will not hold liable or make any claim against such official, the Divisional Organiser or the Rugby Football Union:
- (a) for any loss cost charge compensation or expense arising out of or in connection with any kind of injury or illness suffered by any player, spectator or other person.(insofar as is permitted by law)
 - (b) for any damage to property of any kind.
 - (c) for any other loss cost charge expenses or damages be it for loss of profit expense incurred or otherwise and whether directly or consequential or in relation to the result of any match.
 - (d) arising out of or due to any decision or action that such official may take under the Laws of the Game these regulations or any other rules or regulations published in the Handbook or which have been properly introduced by the RFU or in respect of the normal procedures to hold play control, cancel or abandon a match.
 - (e) that it will take reasonable steps to control the conduct of its players and their supporters at all matches.

APPENDIX 3 – ERFUSU KNOCKOUT COMPETITION REGULATIONS (Daily Mail)

For a copy of the ERFUSU Knockout Competition Regulations please contact the RFU Tournaments and Competitions Department.