

RFU REGULATIONS

RFU REGULATION 16 – ADULT WOMEN COMPETITIONS

16.1 General

- 16.1.1 RFU Regulation 16 sets out the Regulations relating to the RFU Women Competitions in England from Level 2 (Championship 1) and below. Regulation 16 is supplemental to other RFU Regulations (including RFU Regulation 13) and the Women's Premier 15s Regulations, which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall have full force and effect save that in the event of conflict between Regulation 16 and the other RFU Regulations, the RFU Regulations (to the extent that they affect the teams) are deemed varied by RFU Regulation 16 and the Women's Premier 15s Regulations.
- 16.1.2 For the purposes of this Regulation 16, 'RFU Women Competitions' shall mean the 'Championship 1 North and 1 South', 'Championship 2', 'National Challenge Division 1', 'National Challenge Division 2' and 'National Challenge Division 3' means Level 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively of the structure.
- 16.1.3 There are separate regulations in place for the Women's Premier 15s competition (including for the Second team competition).
- 16.1.4 RFU Regulation 15 (Age Grade Rugby) sets out the Regulations and Rules of Play for Girls Age Grade Rugby.
- 16.1.5 All RFU Women's Competitions shall be organised by such designated Organising Committee to which powers have been delegated by the RFU Governance Standing Committee in accordance with RFU Regulation 13. Should the delegated Organising Committee wish to apply local variations to this Regulation 16, the procedure set out in RFU Regulation 13.1.4 shall apply in the same way that it applies to teams, clubs, Divisional Organising Committees and Constituent Bodies.
- 16.1.6 All matches played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and/or in RFU Women's Competitions or any other competition or merit table must be played in accordance with the World Rugby Laws (including any variations or trials that may be adopted by the RFU, including those set out in Appendix 1), World Rugby Regulations, the RFU Rules, the RFU Regulations and any competition specific Regulations applicable to a competition.
- 16.1.7 The definitions set out in RFU Regulation 1 (RFU Definitions) shall apply to this RFU Regulation 16 unless stated otherwise.
- 16.1.8 The precise format and structure of the competitions, which will conform to the agreed objectives of the competitions, will be determined by the RFU Governance Standing Committee and communicated to participating teams and other stakeholders as soon as practicable in advance of the competitions.

16.2 Eligibility of Teams

- 16.2.1 All clubs/teams participating in the RFU Women Competitions must:
- (a) be affiliated to the RFU;

- (b) have completed and submitted the league entry form by 3rd May of the previous season; and
- (c) have received confirmation from the RFU that the team has been accepted into the league for the next Season.

16.2.2 Only one team per club can participate in each league in the same Season. If the first team of a club is relegated into the same league as the second team of the same club, the second team shall be relegated and this same principle shall apply in respect of all other lower XV teams.

16.2.3 All Women's Premier 15s participating clubs/teams are only permitted to play in the Women's Premier 15s competition and the Women's Premier Second XVs competition and no first team or second team of Women's Premier 15s clubs/teams are permitted to participate in the Women's Competitions set out in this Regulation 16.

16.3 Eligibility of Individual Players

16.3.1 All Players participating in the RFU Women's Competitions must be registered with the RFU on the RFU's Game Management System.

16.3.2 Student players and Services players can be registered with both a student/services team and one club team at any one time provided they comply with the RFU's Student and Service Pass process in all respects and are approved by the RFU for a Student or Services pass prior to the Transfer Deadline.

16.3.3 An application for registration of an Overseas Player wishing to be registered with a club in England must be accompanied by a Clearance (as defined in World Rugby Regulation 1) from her Current Union.

16.3.4 All players must be 18 years of age or over, unless otherwise permitted to play adult rugby in accordance with RFU Regulation 15.

16.4 Player Transfers

16.4.1 A Player may only transfer from one club to another club on one occasion in any one Season, subject to the remaining provisions of Regulation 16 and unless otherwise approved in writing by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.

16.4.2 In the event of a Player transferring from one club to another, a Player transfer form must be completed and signed by the captain or secretary of the current club and the new club prior to it being submitted to the RFU Rugby Growth Department.

16.4.3 A captain/secretary of the current club may refuse to sign the transfer form where:

- (a) the Player has a Contract with the current club which has not yet expired;
- (b) the Player is being disciplined under RFU Rule 5.12;
- (c) the Player owes money to the club under applicable RFU or World Rugby Regulations.

Any such objection must be submitted in writing to the RFU Rugby Growth

Department stating all the grounds upon which the objection is made within 7 days of being notified of the proposed transfer.

- 16.4.4 Once completed, all transfer forms must be submitted to the RFU Rugby Growth Department who will confirm the date from which the transferred Player will be permitted to play for the new club. If a Player has played one or more league or cup match for the previous club in the current Season, there is a 7 day waiting period from the date of receipt by the RFU Rugby Growth Department of the transfer form during which time the Player will not be permitted to play for the new club.
- 16.4.5 The transfer deadline for all clubs to register additional players is 12 noon on the 8th March 2019, unless otherwise approved in writing by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.
- 16.4.6 In relation to any Women's cup competitions, a club/team may not be represented in that competition by any Player who has played or been a replacement (i.e. included in the match squad) for another club in that cup competition in the current Season or such other higher cup competition.

16.5 Movement of Players between teams inside a club

- 16.5.1 A player who has been selected as a player or replacement in 8 or more league matches in the first team or played in the final first team league match must not play for the second team of any league fixture unless:
- (a) she was only playing for the first team to replace an injured regular first team Player; or
 - (b) she has been dropped in favour of a better Player in agreement with the RFU Rugby Growth Department; or
 - (c) both teams are playing a league or cup match on the same day or weekend.
- 16.5.2 A player who has been selected as a player or replacement in 8 or more league matches in the first or second team or played in the final first or second team league match must not play for the 3rd team as with Regulation 16.5.1
- 16.5.3 A Player cannot represent the first and second team on the same day or the same weekend.

16.6 Borrowing and Loaning Players

For the purposes of this Regulation 16:

“Borrowing” shall mean the informal borrowing or loaning of a player on an ad-hoc basis for one match and for which no written agreement is required and applies as between clubs at Championship 2 and below, and in accordance with the borrowing process stipulated by the RFU. ‘Borrow’ and ‘Borrowed Player’ shall be construed accordingly;

“Loaning” shall mean the loaning of a player on a formal basis for which a written agreement is required between the clubs and any loaning of players must be done in accordance with the loaning process stipulated by the RFU. ‘Loan’ and ‘Loan Player’ shall be construed accordingly.

Women's Premier 15s Clubs

- 16.6.1 Women's Premier 15s clubs can Loan players from any club at Championship 1 and below in accordance with the Women's Premier 15s competition regulations.
- 16.6.2 Women's Premier 15s clubs can Loan players to any club at Championship 1 (subject to Regulation 16.6.4) but cannot Loan player to any club at Championship 2 and below.
- 16.6.3 No Borrowing is permitted as between Women's Premier 15s clubs and any other club.

Championship 1 Clubs

- 16.6.4 Championship 1 clubs can Loan Players from any Women's Premier 15s club and from Championship 2 or below. No side can play more than three Loan players in any match day squad.
- 16.6.5 Championship 1 clubs cannot Loan Players down to any other club at Championship 2 and below.
- 16.6.6 No Borrowing is permitted as between Championship 1 clubs and any other club.

Championship 2 Clubs, National Challenge Clubs and all Clubs below

- 16.6.7 Championship 2 Clubs, National Challenge Clubs and all Clubs below cannot Loan Players from any club.
- 16.6.8 Championship 2 Clubs, National Challenge Clubs and all Clubs below can Loan Players to any Women's Premier 15s club and Championship 1 club.
- 16.6.9 Championship 2 Clubs, National Challenge Clubs and all Clubs below can Borrow Players from each other subject to the below conditions:
- (a) a maximum of three Players can be Borrowed from any club that plays in a parallel league or below in any one match
 - (b) a Borrowed Player must be declared to the opposition prior to the start of the fixture;
 - (c) in no circumstances may Players from Women's Premier 15s, or Championship 1 clubs be Borrowed; and
 - (d) a Player can only be Borrowed in order to fulfil a fixture to complete a playing squad or to cover a specific position.

16.7 Match Management

Specific procedures for match management will be circulated by the RFU Rugby Growth Department before the start of the Season.

Date of match

- 16.7.1 All matches must be played on the Sunday designated unless such other date is specified by the Organising Committee or agreed by the teams and RFU Rugby

Growth Department.

Kick Off

16.7.2 All matches shall kick off at the following times:

September, March and April 2.45pm

October and February 2.30pm

November, December and January 2.00pm

16.7.3 Kick-off time may be varied by mutual agreement between two teams and the home team must advise the referee of any changes. If the away team disagrees, RFU Regulation 16.7.2 shall apply.

16.7.4 Any delay to the kick-off of a match may be reported by the non-offending team to the RFU Rugby Growth Department together with confirmation by the referee of any delay. The Organising Committee will investigate and may then take appropriate action, when all the circumstances have been taken into consideration.

16.7.5 If a delay in kick-off occurs, wherever possible every effort must be made by the two teams concerned to play the match on the day of the fixture.

Score Reporting

16.7.6 The home team is required to telephone their results in immediately after the match has finished, and by no later than 6pm on the day of the match. All results for all leagues (even abandoned matches) must be telephoned to the RFU women's result line on 01676 478 080 or text 07797 800102. The RFU reserves the right to introduce electronic match cards which will override the current system and will be implemented as notified to the clubs.

Match Day Forms

16.7.7 Match day forms must be completed by both captains (or their delegates) and each team shall be responsible: (i) for correctly completing the match day form in accordance with these Regulations and any other relevant instructions; and (ii) passing the completed match day form to the Referee (or such person who is designated by him) no later than 15 minutes before kick-off.

16.7.8 The home team is responsible for ensuring that the match day forms are completed and returned to the RFU Rugby Growth Department within 5 days of the match day.

16.7.9 Each team must ensure that information provided on a match day form is accurate, true and legible. 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.

16.7.10 The RFU reserves the right to introduce electronic match cards which will override the current system and will be implemented as notified to the clubs.

Referee Appointments

16.7.11 The home team is responsible for making every attempt to organise the local Referee Society to appoint a Referee, otherwise a qualified Referee must be used.

16.8 Non-fulfilment of Fixtures

NB: Lack of available players is not a valid reason for failing to fulfil a fixture.

- 16.8.1 If a team fails to fulfil an away league fixture then the reverse fixture will, where possible, automatically become an away fixture for the defaulting team.
- 16.8.2 For the Championship 1 teams that fail to fulfil one or more of their fixtures will be automatically relegated at the end of the Season.
- 16.8.3 For Championship 2 and below, teams that fail to fulfil one of their fixtures will have their league status reviewed at the end of the Season. Teams that do not fulfil two or more of their fixtures will automatically be relegated at the end of the Season.
- 16.8.4 The above Regulations set out in this Regulation 16.8 are all subject to this Regulation 16.8.4 which permits matches to be cancelled and re-arranged due to pitch or Weather Conditions, subject to the approval of the RFU Rugby Growth Department.

16.9 Abandonment

- 16.9.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to provide a suitable pitch for the match to be played on. If a team's pitch is prone to being waterlogged or frozen, every effort must be made to secure another pitch within a reasonable distance of the team's ground to try to ensure the fixture takes place on the designated day.
- 16.9.2 If a match is abandoned because of Weather Conditions when 60 minutes or more has been played (or 50 minutes or more of the match has been played in accordance with the World Rugby U19 Law Variations) then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed to be the final score in the match. The Referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played and the time of abandonment shall be final.
- 16.9.3 If a match is abandoned because of Weather Conditions when less than 60 minutes has been played (or less than 50 minutes if the match has been played in accordance with the World Rugby U19 Law Variations), the match shall be replayed on a date to be agreed by both teams and the RFU Rugby Growth Department in accordance with 16.10.
- 16.9.4 If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon the match for any reason other than Weather Conditions, then irrespective of the number of minutes played the result of that match may be determined by the RFU Organising Committee or the match be ordered to be replayed.
- 16.9.5 If the match is abandoned as in 16.9.4 above both teams shall provide a completed match day form signed by the Referee and stating the exact time of the match abandonment, the number of minutes played, the score at the time of abandonment and the reason for abandonment.

16.10 Re-arrangement of Fixtures

- 16.10.1 A fixture may only be rearranged in extreme circumstances in the absolute discretion of the Organising Committee. Both teams must be in agreement and must notify the RFU Rugby Growth Department for approval at least 5 days prior to the original fixture. If both teams are not in agreement the fixture is played on the set date and if it is not fulfilled, a walkover may be awarded if determined by the

Organising Committee. Any fixture that is postponed must be played on the next available reserve date as listed on the RFU Women's League Calendar. If a match is postponed for adverse weather, following the first postponement, the Home Club must take all possible steps to ensure the match is played on the second date. This must include the provision of a suitable alternative pitch and, for the avoidance of doubt, this will include the opponent's pitch if it is available. This will also apply to the return fixture even if that would mean both matches between the two clubs being played at the same venue.

16.10.2 In the event of a league match not being played the Organising Committee in its absolute discretion may award the competition points to either side, divide the competition points equally between the sides, decide that no competition points shall be awarded or if the Organising Committee is of the view that the team has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its obligations, deduct competition points from the team. In addition, the Organising Committee may order the match to be replayed on a specified date or order a match to be counted as a "double header" whereby the outcome of the match will count against both fixtures, this taking into account the promotion and relegation issue in the league concerned, (including the effect on other teams in the league not involved in the league match) the commitments of the teams concerned and giving priority to arguments of the team that was not at fault in the event of a dispute on any re-arranged match date.

16.11 Promotion and Relegation

The principles of promotion and relegation as are set out below:

Championship 1 North and South

16.11.1 Upon conclusion of the league programme:

- (a) The top four clubs from Championship 1 North and the top four clubs from Championship 1 South will combine in a pool of 8 teams in the 'Championship 1 Play-off' pool stage. The Championship 1 North teams will play the Championship 1 South teams once only (to include two home matches and two away matches). Upon conclusion of the Championship 1 Play-off pool stage, the top two clubs will play in the Championship Play-off final.
- (b) The bottom four clubs from Championship 1 North and the bottom four clubs from Championship 1 South will combine in a pool of 8 teams in the 'Championship 1 Plate' pool stage. The Championship 1 North teams will play the Championship 1 South teams once only (to include two home matches and two away matches). Upon conclusion of the Championship 1 Plate pool stage, the top two clubs will play in the Championship Plate final.
- (c) Competition points will be awarded in accordance with Regulation 16.12.1 below.
- (d) Final positions in the Championship 1 Play-off and Championship 1 Plate pools will be calculated in accordance with Regulation 16.12.5 below.

16.11.2 As between Women's Premier 15s and Championship 1, there will be no promotion or relegation until the end of the 2019-20 season.

16.11.3 At the end of the league programme, there will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated, subject to Regulations.

Championship 2 – North, Midlands, South East, South West

16.11.4 Two teams across all leagues in Championship 2 will be promoted to Championship 1 at the end of the 2018/19 Season. The winning teams from the North, Midlands, South East and South West will participate in a play-off for promotion to Championship 1 North and 1 South respectively. The North will play the Midlands for a place in the Championship 1 North and the South East will play the South West for a place in Championship 1 South.

16.11.5 At the end of each Season, there will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated, subject to Regulations 16.8.2 and 16.8.3.

National Challenge 1 & below

16.11.6 Four teams across all leagues in National Challenge 1 will be promoted to Championship 2 at the end of the 2018/19 Season. The winning teams from the 8 leagues will participate in a play-off for promotion to Championship 2 North, Midlands, South East and South West.

16.11.7 At the end of the Season, there will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated.

16.12 League Points

Championship 1, Championship 2 and National Challenge 1

16.12.1 In Championship 1, Championship 2 and National Challenge 1, league points are awarded as follows:

- (a) 4 points for a win
- (b) 2 points for a draw
- (c) 0 points for a loss
- (d) 5 points for a walkover

16.12.2 A bonus point will be awarded to a team:

- (a) on each occasion it scores five or more tries in a league match
- (b) on each occasion it loses a league match by 15 points or less

National Challenge 2 and below

16.12.3 In National Challenge 2 and below, league points are awarded as follows:

- (a) 3 points for a win
- (b) 2 points for a draw
- (c) 1 point for playing and losing
- (d) 0 points for not playing

- (e) 4 points for a walkover

16.12.4 A bonus of 1 point will be awarded to a team that plays 15 Players or more, unless a team has borrowed Players to make up 15 Players in which case a bonus point will not be awarded.

All Levels

16.12.5 Final league positions will be calculated as follows:

- (a) The team scoring the highest number of league points (including bonus points) shall be placed first, and the other teams placed in descending order according to the points gained.
- (b) If two or more teams have equal points, they will be placed according to the match points difference.

Note: For National Challenge 2 and below – to calculate the final league positions where two or more teams have equal league points and defaulted fixtures/walkovers are involved, the points scored for and against in any equivalent fixture for the other team(s) will not be used in the final calculations.

- (c) If two or more teams have equal match points difference, they shall be placed according to the greatest number of match points scored (incorporating note above as applicable).
- (d) If two or more teams have equal match points they shall be placed according to the greatest number of tries scored.
- (e) If two or more teams have scored equal number of tries they shall be placed according to the greatest number of drop goals scored.
- (f) If two or more teams are still equal they shall be placed according to the greatest number of conversions scored.
- (g) If two or more teams are still equal they shall be placed according to the number of penalties scored.
- (h) If two or more teams are still equal they will share the league title and the winner of the league will be decided with a play-off game between the two teams.

16.13 Discipline

16.13.1 All allegations of Foul Play and Misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

16.13.2 Subject to the variations set out below, all allegations of Foul Play or Misconduct shall be shall dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

16.13.3 Any Player ordered-off the field of play, cited by an opposition team (in accordance with RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 4) or subject to an allegation of Misconduct shall

appear before an RFU Disciplinary Panel to answer the charge(s). Any appeal against a decision of an RFU Disciplinary Panel will be to an RFU Appeal Panel.

16.13.4 Any Player ordered-off the field of play will be provisionally suspended until her case has been dealt with by an RFU Disciplinary Panel and, if there is an appeal, until the matter has been determined by an RFU Appeal Panel.

16.13.5 The disciplinary administration fees applicable as set out in RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 3 will apply.

16.14 Breaches of Regulations

16.14.1 Any matters alleged to be in breach of these Regulations shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Organising Committee who shall have the power to deal with and discipline any team, Player or such other individuals for such breach including (without limitation) imposing sanctions such as loss of match or competition points, review of the result, altering league position, match replay, monetary fines or compensation award and/or disqualification. The Organising Committee and/or the RFU Head of Discipline shall also have the power to request that any breach of these Regulations is dealt with in accordance with the RFU Disciplinary Procedures as set out in RFU Regulation 19.

16.14.2 Any alleged breach or complaint should be referred, in writing, to the RFU Rugby Growth Department within 7 days of the alleged breach.

16.14.3 Any appeal of the Organising Committee's decision may be made by a party to the proceedings to the RFU Head of Discipline in accordance with the appeal disciplinary procedures set out in RFU Regulation 19.

16.15 Fixed Sanction

16.15.1 Without prejudice to any of the above Regulations, where it is determined by the Organising Committee that a team has not complied with the Regulations as set out below, the following fixed sanctions shall apply in respect of that breach and such sanctions will be final and binding with no right of appeal:

Failing to telephone result in by 6pm (Regulation 16.7.7)	£25
Failure to send in match day form within 5 days (Regulation 16.7.8)	£25

16.16 Laws of the Game (including replacements and substitutes)

All matches played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and/or in RFU Women's Competitions or any other competition or merit table must be played in accordance with the World Rugby Laws and any such law variations set out in Appendix 1 (and/or otherwise agreed by the RFU).

16.17 Additional Competition Regulations

There are specific competition regulations relating to the following Women's Competitions and these regulations are available upon request from the Rugby Growth Department:

- (a) Women's Premier 15s Competition

- (b) **Intermediate Cup**
- (c) **Junior Cup**
- (d) **League Playoff**
- (e) **CB Representative Programme**