

Future Competitions Structure (FCS) - Recommendation Paper FAQ's

Will the FCS Plan be implemented in the event that there is no meaningful league rugby in 2020-21 because of the impact of COVID-19?

The RFU has developed a range of competition models that can be applied to the 2020-21 season dependent upon when there is a [confirmed date to restart community competitions](#) (please see link for specific info on restart dates and how they are applied to the competition models that will be delivered). However, if community competitions do not take place in the 2020-21 season the RFU Council will ultimately determine whether the FCS Plan will be implemented in 2021-22 as planned.

Are the four principles referred to in the FCS Plan weighted or listed in priority?

The principles are equally important and interdependent. So, in short they are not listed in priority or weighted.

Why are cup competitions important?

Recent studies, both through the FCS survey in February, and the National Rugby Survey before, have shown the appetite in the game for cup rugby is strong (over 90% of FCS survey respondents wanted a cup offer). Alongside this a significant proportion would like to consider a change to the current offer either in timing/placement in season, or how it is delivered/what format it is, and this was largely borne out on the webinars.

For the majority of leagues the FCS Plan is recommending a reduction in size. But won't the introduction of a restructured cup/knockout competition only serve to replicate the number of games available for teams to play in previous years?

Entry into cups will be optional. Teams will have the ability of choosing whether they want to play in the cup, thus choose whether they want to play fixtures over and above the league. Teams will be able to make this decision mid-season (this will be when the cup entry window will close) based on their own motivations and needs.

How will the leagues be organised?

In the proposals, the leagues are organised on a regionalised basis within each level. This will involve all teams at a given level being grouped geographically. These groupings may disregard current CB and divisional boundaries in an effort to minimise travel across the country. This regionalisation will be carried out before each season in an attempt to continually minimise travel. Part of the FCS implantation work (Oct-Dec 2020) will be to determine the most effective competitions management model (inclusive of organising committees) for managing the new competitions structure.

Why does the plan recommend that Lower XVs are admitted into the RFU League pyramid in all parts of the country?

Introduction of more teams in the pyramid will support more consistent local competition and club sustainability. This is achieved by allowing Lower XVs entry to the RFU leagues beyond the current scope of regulations and raising the ceiling from Level 8 to Level 7 (which will provide consistency across the country as well as supporting regionalisation and the principle of minimising travel time).

The criteria and application process will be carefully reviewed to ensure any concerns over future regulations are addressed. As part of the FCS implementation work (Oct-Dec 2020), a criteria will be developed in to assess where Lower XV teams will be admitted into the pyramid i.e. which playing they start at.

Given the potential changes discussed, are there any planned changes to the Payment of Players regulations?

The Payment of Players regulations, as per any regulation, are reviewed annually to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Potential changes would be considered alongside other regulation changes that may be necessary, depending on the changes made as a result of the Future Competitions Structure Group's work.

What if I have further questions?

Specific feedback on recommendations within the Plan is being collected via the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8KCJ3N6>

However, if you have specific questions please email them to Competitions-Development@RFU.com