



**GIRLS' UNDER 16s & 18s NATIONAL CUP COMPETITION REGULATIONS
2023-24**

PART A: COMPETITION REGULATIONS SCHEDULE

A. Competition(s)	For the purpose of these regulations, 'Competition' shall mean: Girls' Under 16s & 18s National Cup.
B. Competition Organiser	The Competition will be organised by the RFU Competitions Department.
C. Disputes Committee	For the purpose of these regulations 'Disputes Committee' shall mean: Disputes Committee (Community Competitions).
D. Competition Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Competition will be based on pool matches followed by straight knockout. The knockouts will split nationally and regionally, depending on finishing position in the pools. The National knockouts will consist of 4 rounds. The Regional knockouts will consist of 2 rounds. 2. There will be 64 places in the competition 3. The Competition Organiser will carry out the draws. When conducting the draws, every reasonable endeavour will be made to minimise travel. 4. In all rounds of the Competition the first-named team in the draw is the home team and the second-named team is the away team, irrespective of where the game is played. 5. The Competition matches will be played in accordance with the dates set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool Stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U16 Round 1: 15th October 2023 • U18 Round 1: 22nd October 2023 • Round 2: 19th November 2023 • Round 3: 10th December 2023 Regional Competition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Semi-Finals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under 16 - 21st January 2024 ○ Under 18 - 4th February 2024 • Regional Finals: 3rd March 2024 National Competition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last 16: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under 16 - 21st January 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under 18 - 4th February 2024 • National Quarter Final: 3rd March 2024 • National Semi-Final: 31st March 2024 • National Final: 28th April 2024 (TBC) <p>6. All matches must be played in accordance with dates set out above unless otherwise agreed by the Competition Organiser.</p> <p>7. Where a match has not been played, or the result of a match remains unresolved, by the end of the stipulated week, the Competition Organiser may, in its sole discretion, determine which team (if any) will progress in the competition(s). This power will only apply to situations where there is no other opportunity to play/replay a match and the successful delivery of the competition(s) is at risk.</p> <p>8. The Competition Organiser will determine the date, kick off time and venue of the finals of the Competition.</p>
E. Entrant Eligibility	<p>1. No more than one team from a Club may enter.</p> <p>1. By 17th September 2023, in both the U18 and U16 Competitions, any team entered must have a minimum of 18 active players registered on GMS.</p> <p>2. To enter the Competition, the Club must complete and submit the entry by the due date stipulated by the Competition Organiser.</p> <p>3. A Competition Panel will oversee and advise on all entrants to ensure suitability for the competition.</p>
F. Player Eligibility	<p>1. Players must be aged 14 or 15 at midnight on 31st August of the effective season to be eligible for the u16 Competition. Players must be 16 or 17 at midnight on the 31st August of the effective season to be eligible for the U18 Competition, save in respect of players playing down in accordance RFU Regulation 15.4.1.</p> <p>2. All Clubs and players must comply with RFU Regulation 15 and the additional Age Grade variations in RFU Regulation 22. <i>U15s are able to play in the U16 competition. U17 players are able to play in the U18 competitions.</i></p> <p>3. All players must be registered for that Club on the RFU GMS database. The borrowing of players from other clubs is not allowed in either the U16 or U18 competition.</p> <p>4. No Player may play for more than one Club in the Competition during any one season.</p>
G. Match Management	Squad

1. A squad of up to 22 players (15 starting players and 7 substitutes/replacements) can be named for each match. In a squad of 22 each team must have nominated in advance at least five suitably trained and experienced front row Players in their nominated match squad, to ensure that: (a) on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums; and (b) on the first occasion that a replacement prop is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. Should a team name a squad with less than 22 players, then the number of suitably trained and experienced front row players will be determined in accordance with World Rugby Law 3.

2. Teams should play 15-a-side, but can start a match with a minimum of 12-a-side in the Pool Stages and Regional Knockouts. 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.

In National Knockouts, teams must play 15-a-side.

Match

3. U16 matches will be 35 minutes each way. Half-time will be 5 minutes, with both teams staying on the Field of Play.

4. U18 matches will be 35 minutes each way. Half-time will be 5 minutes, with both teams staying on the Field of Play.

5. Should a fifty-point differential occur at any time during a match, the Referee may end the match and the result at that time will stand, unless both teams agree to continue.

6. For matches other than the final, the tiebreakers in the instance of a draw will be: number of tries, number of conversions, first try scored and then first points scored. If the match finishes 0-0 then a coin toss will take place to determine who progresses to the next round.

Match Officials

7. The home team will provide a Society appointed Referee.

8. The home team must advise the Referee that the appointment is to a Competition fixture and advise them of the Competition Regulations and appropriate Law Variations.

9. For the National Semi-Finals and Finals, Match Officials will be appointed by the Competition

	Organiser, unless otherwise delegated to a participating Entrant.
H. Electronic Match Cards	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Each entrant in every match of the Competition must complete and enter their starting players and replacements onto the Electronic Match Card prior to the match.2. The home team must submit the results into the Electronic Match Card within 24 hours of the end of the match.



PART B: COMPETITION REGULATIONS
(APPLICABLE TO NATIONAL AGE GRADE COMPETITIONS, NATIONAL COMMUNITY MEN AND WOMEN COMPETITIONS AND COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITIONS)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. These Competition Regulations, together with the above Schedule and any attached Annexes (together the “Competition Regulations”), set out in full the regulations that shall apply to this Competition.
- 1.2. These Regulations apply to the Competition in the 2023-24 season and are effective from 1st August 2023.
- 1.3. All matches must be played in accordance with these Regulations, World Rugby Laws and Regulations (including any variations, trials and other formats that may be adopted by the RFU) and RFU Rules and Regulations. In the event of any conflict between a provision of these Regulations and the RFU or World Rugby Rules and Regulations, these Regulations will prevail in respect of that provision.
- 1.4. Unless otherwise specifically defined in these Regulations, any definitions will have the meanings set out in the RFU Regulation 1 (Definitions) which is available on the RFU website.

Covid-19 Variations and Standards

- 1.5 In order to cater for the ongoing impact of the global Covid-19 crisis on rugby union in England (and such other infectious disease and/or public health emergency), Covid-19 regulatory variations have been agreed and put in place to ensure that, as far as possible, the regulations are flexible enough to deal with and adapt to the ever-changing Covid-19 (or other, as applicable) landscape. This flexibility needs to be balanced against the overriding objective of the RFU to deliver meaningful and authentic competition and maintain the integrity of the competition and to ensure the player welfare is at the forefront.
- 1.6 These Variations are set out in RFU Regulation 22. In the event of any conflict between Regulation 22 and these Regulations, RFU Regulation 22 will prevail.

2. Competition Organisation

- 2.1. The Competition will be administered by the Competition Organiser who shall manage the delivery of the Competition.
- 2.2. The Competition Organiser shall have discretion to decide on matters not provided for in, as well as on the interpretation of, these Regulations in the context of the Competition. 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.
- 2.3. Any interested party may seek clarification of any of these Regulations by submitting a question to the Competition Organiser in writing.
- 2.4. Any party affected by a decision of the Competition Organiser on matters not provided for in the Competition Regulations shall have a right of appeal against such decision in accordance with Regulation 11 below.
- 2.5. In the discharge of its responsibilities, the Competition Organiser may further delegate some or all of the powers contained within these Regulations to any individual member(s) or staff member(s) of the Competition Organiser.

3. Match Management

Squad Lists

- 3.1. If required by the RFU, before the first match of the season each Entrant will submit a squad list of players that may be considered for selection during the Competition in such form and containing such information as may be required by the RFU and the term “**Squad List**” shall be construed accordingly.

Match Cards

- 3.2. If required by the RFU, each Entrant must complete and submit a match card and/or a team sheet in such form and containing such information as required by the RFU and the terms “Match Card” and “Team Sheet” shall be construed accordingly.
- 3.3. Each Team Manager must sign the Match Card (where indicated) confirming the accuracy of the details being submitted to the Competition Organiser.
- 3.4. Each entrant must ensure that information provided to the RFU (which may include a Match Card and/or Team Sheet) is accurate and legible. Failure to submit, or late submission of the foregoing, will render an entrant liable to sanction. The provision of false or misleading information on players or replacements is a serious breach of these Regulations and may give rise to a severe penalty.

Half Game Rule

- 3.5. In respect of Age Grade Competitions, the Half Game Rule will apply to all matches in accordance with RFU Regulation 15.12. Suspected breaches of this regulation will be referred to the Disputes Committee in accordance with the process outlined in Regulation 9.2.

Matches

- 3.6. The home team is responsible for arranging the match at a suitable venue (defined as the usual home pitch, or alternative school/club/artificial pitch) for all matches with the exception of those listed in the Regulations Schedule.
- 3.7. Matches must be played by the end of the week in which a match is scheduled, as detailed by the Competition Organiser. Should this not be possible, the home team must contact the Competition Organiser to apply for dispensation to play on an alternative date.
- 3.8. The Competition Organiser retains the right to specify the date and kick-off time for any match in the Competition.
- 3.9. In all matches in the Competition, Entrants must select their strongest squad of eligible players.

Kit

- 3.10. Each team must ensure that there is no clash of colours and that all its kit complies with World Rugby Regulations.
- 3.11. The home team must change shirts in the event of a clash of colour.

4. Replacements

- 4.1. Rolling Substitutions are permitted in all matches. A player who has been substituted may later replace any player, whether or not that player has been injured (subject to Regulation 4.2).
- 4.2. Subject to 4.4 below, if on any occasion a front-row player requires to be replaced and their team cannot (for any reason, including injury, temporary blood injury, temporary exclusion following a yellow card, or permanent exclusion following a red card) provide a replacement, or another suitably trained and experienced player from the nominated squad, to enable the match to continue safely with contested scrums, the Referee, having made enquiry of and having

confirmed this fact with the manager of the team (or such other person nominated by the Entrant as the person responsible for the team), the match will continue with uncontested scrums. The team concerned shall not be entitled to replace the player whose departure caused the uncontested scrums and (subject to Regulation 4.4 below) the final result will stand. On return to the field of play of the front-row player who had been temporarily excluded or injured, the Match shall continue with contested scrums.

- 4.3. In the event that a Referee decides to continue the match with uncontested scrums on the grounds of safety, because the Referee cannot safely manage the scrums otherwise, the final result will stand, subject to Regulation 4.4.
- 4.4. The Competition Organiser may review the circumstances where a match is completed with or contains uncontested scrums and in its sole discretion may impose penalties in accordance with Regulation 10, subject to the right of appeal set out in Regulation 11.

5. Drawn Matches

5.1. Matches in a League Format (if applicable)

In the event that the scores are level at the end of the match, the match will be considered a draw. There will be no extra time.

5.2. Matches in a Knock-Out Format (other than the final)

Unless otherwise specified in Part A of these Regulations, in the event that the scores are level at the end of a 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 conversions from tries will. If this still does not produce a winner or the score is 0-0, the away team shall proceed to the next round.

5.3. Final

Unless otherwise specified in Part A of these Regulations, if scores are level at the end of the match, the following order of events shall be applied in order to determine the winner of a drawn match: number of tries, number of conversions from tries, first try, first points. If this does not produce a winner or the score is 0-0, the title will be shared.

6. Non-fulfilled, Postponed or Abandoned Matches

6.1. Weather Conditions (including bad light)

6.1.1. Postponed Match

If weather conditions (including bad light) prevent a match being played, despite the teams having followed any Postponed Match Notification Procedure as may be notified to the participating Entrant by the Competition Organiser, the match will be played at a later date unless the Competition Organiser exceptionally, and in its absolute discretion, agrees/specifies otherwise.

6.1.2. Abandoned with Fewer than 50 minutes played

If the match is abandoned solely because of the weather conditions (including bad light) or serious injury to a player when fewer than 50 minutes have been played, the match will be replayed unless the Competition Organiser exceptionally, and in its absolute discretion, agrees/specifies otherwise.

6.1.3. Abandoned with 50 or more minutes played

If a match is abandoned solely because of weather conditions (including bad light) or serious injury to a player when 50 or more minutes have been played, 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.

6.2. Other Reasons

If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon a match for any reason other than weather conditions (including bad light) or serious injury to a player, irrespective of the number of minutes played,

the result of that match shall be reviewed by the Competition Organiser. The Competition Organiser may order the match to be replayed and/or impose such other sanction as it deems appropriate. The Referee's report must be submitted on why play was curtailed.

6.3. Re-scheduling or re-arranging Matches

A Match shall be played/replayed on a date specified by the RFU

6.4. Failure to Fulfil Obligations

All Entrants must fulfil their Matches in compliance with these Regulations. If the Disputes Committee considers that an Entrant has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its obligations, it shall have regard to Appendix 3 of RFU Regulation 6 and the Entrant may be liable to have Competition points deducted and/or ordered to have the match replayed or such other sanctions imposed as deemed appropriate by the Disputes Committee.

7. Match Officials

- 7.1. The responsibility for providing Match Officials for each match will be in accordance with the Competition Regulations Schedule.

8. On-field Disciplinary Process

- 8.1. The RFU has the power to investigate all allegations of foul play or misconduct on or off the field of play, and all such matters shall be dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulation 19. Non-compliance with any such investigation may result in an Entrant or person's exclusion from the Competition.
- 8.2. When any player is sent off or cited in any match in the Competition, the Disciplinary Regulations as set out in RFU Regulation 19 will apply.
- 8.3. In respect of Age Grade Competitions, the discipline process as set out in Appendix 6 of RFU Regulation 19 will apply.
- 8.4. Any rugby disciplinary incident that arises in a School, College or Age Grade Club match must be reported to the CBAGDS within 48 hours by the school, college, club disciplinary officer or person(s) with delegated authority. Failure to do so could result in the removal of an Entrant from the Competition.
- 8.5. Each Entrant is responsible for ensuring that its players, spectators and coaches are fully aware of the RFU Core Values. Any proven incidents of Match Official abuse or unauthorised entry into the field of play by any individual associated to that Entrant, could result in the removal of the Entrant from the Competition.

9. Disputes and Breaches of Regulations

- 9.1. Subject to the right of appeal in accordance with RFU Regulation 19, the Disputes Committee (as defined in Regulation 1) shall have the power to discipline any Entrant or person for breach of any of these Regulations and/or any RFU Regulations. Ignorance of any such regulations cannot be deemed an excuse in the event of breach.
- 9.2. Subject to 9.3, any matters alleged to be in breach of these Regulations and/or RFU Regulations shall be referred immediately to the Disputes Committee; c/o the Competition Organiser within 24 hours following the conclusion of a match. Written confirmation must be sent to the Competition Organiser within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match setting out the grounds of the complaint/breach in full.
- 9.3. The RFU Head of Discipline shall have the ability to refer any alleged breach of these Regulations and/or RFU Regulations to the Disputes Committee; c/o the Competition Organiser at any time after the conclusion of a match.

- 9.4. The Disputes Committee shall have jurisdiction to impose such penalty as it thinks fit including, but not limited to, financial sanctions, disqualification and suspension. For the avoidance of doubt, this power shall include a power to impose any sanction for breaching these or any other RFU Regulation, in line with tariffs and guidelines where these exist.

10. Sanctions

- 10.1. If the Disputes Committee finds a breach of a Regulation has occurred, it may impose such sanction as it considers appropriate.
- 10.2. Sanctions open to the Disputes Committee in respect of any breach of these Regulations and/or RFU Regulations will include but are not limited to the following:
- Reprimand an individual or Entrant
 - A deduction of points
 - A fine up to £100 and/or an award or reasonable costs as scheduled by either the Disputes Committee and/or a complainant
 - Order a replay
 - Order that the result is that an Entrant has lost the match
 - Exclusion/disqualification of an Entrant from the Competition, for a specific period of time as the Disputes Committee may decide.
- 10.3. Any fines collected will be put towards the costs of this Competition. Failure by an Entrant to pay a fine or costs will be considered a further breach of these Regulations and may result in the removal of the Entrant from future competitions.

11. Right of Appeal

- 11.1. Should an Entrant or affected party wish to appeal a decision of the Disputes Committee, that party shall have a right to appeal in accordance with this Regulation 11.
- 11.2. Such party may, within 72 hours from the receipt of the letter or notice informing it of the Disputes Committee's decision, lodge an appeal in writing to the Competition Organiser, who shall then notify the RFU Head of Discipline. Without prejudice to the party's appeal rights, the RFU Head of Discipline has the power to refer the matter back to the Disputes Committee for further consideration. If the matter cannot be resolved by the Disputes Committee, the appeal shall be referred to an Appeal Panel for determination.
- 11.3. Any appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the appeal provisions of RFU Regulation 19 and the decision of the appeal panel is final.

12. Broadcasting, Media and Image Rights

- 12.1. All broadcasting, media and image rights relating to the Competitions belong solely and exclusively to the RFU, and all participating entrants agree not, by any act or omission, to do anything to prejudice, or that is in conflict with, these rights.
- 12.2. In all Competition matches participating teams may record matches for the purpose of analysis and non-commercial purposes only unless a reasonable objection is received from a participating team.
- 12.3. Anyone wishing to broadcast any match by means of radio, television or any other audio-visual or electronic media shall be permitted to do so solely on a not-for-profit basis unless a reasonable objection is received from a participating team or unless directed otherwise by the RFU and/or the Competition Organiser. The ability for anyone to broadcast any match by any means shall at all times remain subject to the sole discretion of the RFU.
- 12.4. No team shall take any part (either as organiser or participant or in any other way) in any match that is in whole or in part broadcast by means of radio, television or any other audio-visual or electronic media, where doing so shall be a breach of any broadcasting, or other, contract entered

into by the RFU or any other person acting for or on behalf of itself or any group or association of Clubs, Schools, Constituent Bodies or Unions.

13. Obligations

13.1. Each Entrant entering its team in this competition agrees:

- a) that, by commencing its programme of matches in the Competition, it has entered into a legally binding obligation with the RFU, and, as a separate covenant, with every other team in the Competition and with any sponsor and/or commercial partner as may be associated with the competition in which the team plays;
- b) to comply in every particular with these Regulations, the RFU Rules and Regulations, and the World Rugby Rules/Regulations;
- c) to permit access to its premises during a match to any person authorised by the RFU, or Competition Organiser (with or without notice) to check compliance with all or any of the above Regulations.