



**England
Rugby**

County Championships

**NATIONAL U20s COMPETITION REGULATIONS
2018-19**

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1. COMPETITION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The overall objective of the Competition is to provide a meaningful Competition as part of the development of those players Under 20 years of age. In particular its aims are to:
- (a) establish a competition, which will encourage each County to work closely together with all its member Clubs to develop young players and their coaches and thus enable the performance of this partnership to be measured by success in the competition;
 - (b) support both County and Club youth development programmes and, in particular, to focus on the further development of young Club players as well as their coaches emerging from the dual Schools/Youth U18 development programme;
 - (c) provide the opportunity for young players to test and measure their skills at a representative level above normal Club rugby.

2. COMPETITION ORGANISATION

- 2.1 The Competition will be organised by the RFU Rugby Growth Department in partnership with the County Championship Committee.
- 2.2 In the discharge of its responsibilities the RFU Rugby Growth Department may further delegate some or all of the powers contained within the relevant Regulations to any individual(s) or staff member(s) of RFU Rugby Growth Department.
- 2.3 Each season an Organising Committee will be established to deal with any breaches of these competition Regulations or to review any matters referred to it under Regulation 12 of the Competition.
- 2.4 The Organising Committee shall have discretion to decide on matters (including those not provided for in these Regulations) relating to the Competition. Any person affected by the decision of the Organising Committee on matters not provided for in the Regulations shall have a right of appeal against such decision in accordance with Regulation 12 below.
- 2.5 If any interested party requires clarification of any of these Regulations, such queries must be submitted to the RFU Rugby Growth Department.
- 2.6 The Competition will be played in accordance with these Regulations, RFU Rules and Regulations, World Rugby Laws of the Game (including any variations and trials that may be adopted by the RFU) and World Rugby Rules and Regulations. These Regulations are therefore supplemental to the RFU Regulations which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall have full force and effect save that in the event of conflict between these Regulations and the RFU Regulations, the RFU Regulations are deemed varied by these Regulations.
- 2.7 Any terms not defined in these Regulations shall have the meanings set out in RFU Regulation 1.

3. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The RFU Rugby Growth Department will determine the precise structure of the Competition. The Competition will be split into two parts – Jason Leonard Division 1 ('Division 1') and Jason Leonard Division 2 ('Division 2'). Matches will be scheduled for weeks which shall be determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department. This will ensure Counties have the opportunity to enter a level of competition commensurate with their annual current talent pool; the essence is to provide meaningful competition and safeguard player welfare (E.g. those players in Counties with a high proportion of NCA clubs should play fewer games at County level due to the high number of high intensity games their players will be involved in at club level).
- 3.2 The RFU Rugby Growth Department will determine whether a County is permitted to participate in the Competition and if so, in which tier of the Competition each County will play, whether Division 1 or Division 2.

3.3 At the end of each season:

- (a) the winner of each divisional pool in Division 2 will be automatically promoted into the respective divisional pool in Division 1 for the subsequent season; and
- (b) the bottom team in each divisional pool in Division 1 will be automatically relegated into the respective divisional pool in Division 2 for the subsequent season.

3.4 The RFU Rugby Growth Department may, in its absolute discretion, alter the pools and/or the tier in which a County plays if the RFU Rugby Growth Department believes it to be in the interests of the Competition to do so.

4. DIVISION 1 TEAMS

4.1 In respect of the 2018-19 Competition, the Counties who will participate in Division 1 will be:

Cheshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, East Midlands, North Midlands, NLD, Eastern Counties, Hertfordshire, Kent, Sussex, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Hampshire.

5. DIVISION 2 TEAMS

5.1 In respect of the 2018-19 Competition, the Counties who will participate in Division 2 will be:

Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Staffordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Essex, Middlesex, Surrey, Berkshire, Dorset & Wilts, Somerset.

6. FORMAT OF COMPETITION

6.1. Division 1 and Division 2 will each be played in two stages: the Pool Stage and the Knockout Stage. The precise format and structure of the competition, which will conform to the agreed objectives of the competition, will be determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department and communicated to participating teams and other stakeholders as soon as practicable.

Pool Stage

6.2. For the Pool Stage in respect of each of Division 1 and Division 2, the Counties will be divided into such pools as determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department in their absolute discretion. Each County will play each other County in their pool once.

6.3. Matches shall only be played on Sundays, where the RFU Rugby Growth Department agrees, on any Saturday or on a weekday provided the match is played prior to the weekend of the next scheduled pool match. If no agreement is reached, the match shall be played on the Sunday of the allocated weekend which are as follows:

	Division 1	Division 2
Pool Match 1	3 February 2019	3 February 2019
Pool Match 2	24 February 2019	24 February 2019
Pool Match 3	17 March 2019	17 March 2019

6.4. If any of the above dates and matches are affected by adverse weather conditions, delay or postponement, the host County must notify the RFU Rugby Growth Department who may decide that the match be played on such other date as the RFU Rugby Growth Department may determine.

Knockout Stage

6.5. The Knockout Stage in respect of Division 1 and Division 2 shall each comprise of four quarter-final matches, two semi-final matches and a final match. Matches shall only be played on Sundays, or where the RFU Rugby Growth Department agrees, on any Saturday or on a weekday provided the match is played prior to the weekend of the next scheduled pool match. If no agreement is reached, the match shall be played on the Sunday of the allocated weekend

- 6.6. The quarter-final matches for Division 1 and Division 2 will be played on Sunday 31 March 2019 unless determined otherwise in accordance with Regulation 6.5 above, and will consist of the following matches:
- Winner Pool 1 v Runner Up Pool 2
 - Winner Pool 2 v Runner Up Pool 1
 - Winner Pool 3 v Runner Up Pool 4
 - Winner Pool 4 v Runner Up Pool 3
- 6.7. The semi-final matches for Division 1 and Division 2 will be an open draw and will be played on Sunday 14 April 2019 unless determined otherwise in accordance with Regulation 6.5 above.
- 6.8. The winners of Division 1 semi-final matches will play each other and the winner of Division 2 semi-final matches will play each other on the date determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department and communicated to the participating teams as soon as practicable.

7. SCORING SYSTEM

- 7.1. In respect of the Pool Stage the scoring system for all matches will be four competition points for a win, and two for a draw. In addition, one bonus competition point will be awarded:
- (a) on each occasion a County scores four or more tries in a match
 - (b) on each occasion a County loses a match by seven points or less
- 7.2. The winner of the pool will be the County with the most competition points after all matches in the pool have been played. In the case of equality of competition points, positions in the pool shall be determined firstly by the number of wins and draws achieved in the Competition and then on the basis of match points differential in the Competition. A County with a larger number of wins shall be placed higher than a County with the same number of competition points but fewer wins. A County with a larger number of draws shall be placed ahead of a County with a fewer number of draws. If Counties have equal competition points and equal number of wins and draws then a County with a larger difference between match points “for” and match points “against” shall be placed higher in the pool than a County with a smaller difference between match points “for” and match points “against”. Should two Counties have the same number of competition points, the same wins and draws, and the same match points difference, the County having scored more match points “for” shall be placed higher in the Division than the County having the lesser number of match points “for”. If this still does not establish the positions then the positions of the Counties involved shall be determined by a toss of a coin.
- 7.3. In the event of a draw in a match in the Pool Stage, there will be no extra time and the result will stand.
- 7.4. In the event of a draw in a match in the Knockout Stage, there will be no extra time and the winner will be decided based on the team scoring the most tries, or if that fails to produce a winner, the team scoring the most goals from tries. If this fails to produce a winner then the winner of the match will be determined by a Place Kicking Competition, the procedure and conduct of which is set out in Appendix 1.

8. SUBSTITUTIONS, REPLACEMENTS AND FRONT ROW REQUIREMENTS

- 8.1 County teams must not consist of a squad of more than 22 players and the number of replacements and substitutes shall not be more than 7, with five players in the 22 man match squad being able to play in the front row to ensure that:
- on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums; and
 - on the first occasion that a replacement prop is required the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.
- 8.2 Rolling substitutions are permitted in the Competition and the specific regulations relating to replacements and substitutions are set out in Appendix 2 of RFU Regulation 13, including the relevant provisions around rolling substitutions, uncontested scrums and front row.

9. VENUES

- 9.1 In respect of Pool Stage matches and the Knockout Stages (other than the finals), the County having home advantage shall decide upon the venue where the match shall be played.
- 9.2 In respect of the final of Division 1 and Division 2, the venues shall be as determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.

10. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

10.1 RFU Regulation 13.4 shall not apply.

10.2 Subject to Regulations 10.3 to 10.4 below, in order to be eligible to represent a County in the Competition, a player:

- (a) must be under 20 years of age at midnight on 31st August 2018 and at least 17 years of age or over on the date of the match. *Note: In accordance with RFU Regulation 15 Counties may select a player who is aged 17 on the date of the match provided he is suitably skilled, judged capable of playing to this level, they have written permission from his parents/guardians and have fully completed the Playing Adult Rugby Form. Players who are aged 17 are still not permitted to play in the front-row of the scrum;*

and

- (b) must qualify to play for a County by:
- (i) birth (i.e. have been born within the boundaries of the County); or
 - (ii) residence (i.e. actually be residing within the County concerned when he first plays for that County, provided that he has resided therein continuously for a period of three calendar months immediately preceding the date of playing - he shall be held to be actually residing in a County only if his own home or ordinary place of residence, which comprises premises which he ordinarily and regularly uses as his home and in which he ordinarily and regularly uses as a sleeping apartment, be within the boundaries of the County concerned, or having no other home or ordinary place of residence of his own, his parents' or guardians' ordinary place of residence is situated within the boundaries of the County concerned, or being a member of the Services he is stationed in the County, his station counts as residence) or;
 - (iii) being a registered member of a Club at Level 3 or below allocated to the County; or
 - (iv) attending full time a School or a Further or Higher education establishment within the boundaries of the County (i.e. actually be attending full time at the start of the Competition a School or a Further or Higher education establishment situated within the boundaries of the County). This does not preclude players if an educational vacation coincides with the dates of the Competition; or
 - (v) having played for that County in the Under 18 or U19 Championships in previous seasons and who so qualified to play for that County under any earlier regulations (as to eligibility) relating to those competitions, in which case a player shall continue to be eligible for that County until he qualifies and plays for another County under the eligibility provisions set out in these Regulations;

10.3 The following players are not eligible to play in the Competition:

- (a) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been an England Academy Player (as defined in RFU Regulation 1).
- (b) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season has been selected in a Match Day Squad on 3 or more occasions in the Premiership Rugby Shield (formerly A-League) competition.
- (c) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been Effectively Registered for a Club at Level 1 or Level 2.

- (d) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been selected for:
- (i) an England national representative squad (including England Senior XV, England Saxons, England Sevens, England U20 XV, England U18 XV, England U17 XV or such other England national representative squad) with the exception of England Students, England Colleges XV, England Counties U20 and England Counties XV (Senior); or
 - (ii) for such other comparable squad or group for another Tier 1 or Tier 2 Union.

10.4 Counties may not select as a member of their match day squads any player who has been selected as a member of the match day squad of another County during the same season. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes substitutes who may not even be called upon to play.

10.5 Counties participating in Division 1 or Division 2 of the Competition are entitled to select registered players from Levels 3 and below in their match day 22 man squad. There is no cap on the number of Level 3 and 4 players permitted in the match day squad.

10.6 *Sanction: If a player is ruled ineligible after he has been selected in a Pool Stage match day squad, the County will be deducted 2 competition points in addition to any other competition points earned during the match. In other matches the Organising Committee will determine what sanction will apply.*

11. MATCH MANAGEMENT

11.1 Managers will be required to sign the Match Result Sheet to declare that all their players are eligible and that they understand that if an ineligible player is part of a given squad, even if the player is on the bench and does not play, the County in question will face a potential monetary fine and/or other sanction as the Organising Committee may in its absolute discretion impose.

11.2 In all matches both teams shall complete and sign the Match Result Sheet provided by the RFU. The home team shall send the completed form to the RFU (or as it directs) within 90 minutes of the final whistle. Additionally, (if so directed by the RFU) the home shall telephone the result to whomsoever the RFU specifies as soon as reasonably practical after the whistle.

11.3 In the event of Counties having clashing or similar colours; the away team shall be responsible for changing its colours subject to the satisfaction of the appointed Referee or his nominee.

12 UN-PLAYED/ABANDONED MATCHES

12.1 RFU Regulations 13.6.6 and 13.6.7 shall not apply to County Championship Competitions.

12.2 If conditions prevent any match (except any of the Finals) being played or a match is abandoned because of such conditions before full time, the Referee shall indicate on the Match Result Sheet the score at the time and reason for abandonment and the number of minutes played. The Organising Committee shall determine whether the match is to be played or replayed or whether any score shall decide the result and its decision shall be final and binding. Each County must submit in writing to the RFU Competitions Manager (Development), within 48 hours of the end of the match, any representations they wish the Organising Committee to consider in making its decision.

12.3 If conditions prevent the Finals of the Competitions being played the RFU Rugby Growth Department shall determine whether or not the same shall be played and if so upon what date and at which venue and such decision shall be final and binding.

12.4 The referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played at the moment of abandonment shall be final.

13. DISPUTES AND BREACHES OF REGULATIONS

- 13.1 Any County, whether before a match or within 48 hours of the end of the match was played, which receives an official complaint (whether verbal or otherwise) regarding the qualification of one or more of its players, must report the facts to the Organising Committee within a further 48 hours by email to the RFU Rugby Growth Department. The complaining County must also within a further 48 hours of making the complaint report the details on which it bases it to the Organising Committee by writing to the RFU Rugby Growth Department and to the County against which it is making the complaint. If the Organising Committee upholds the complaint regarding the qualification of a player where the complaint is made before the match is played and the player plays, the County concerned shall lose the match in which the unqualified player has participated by a score of 20 points to nil being four unconverted tries (unless such County was actually defeated by a greater points difference in which case the result of the match will stand.) and suffer such further sanction as the Organising Committee may in its absolute discretion impose. In any other case where a complaint is upheld the Organising Committee shall impose such sanction (or sanctions) as it may in its absolute discretion see fit. In making any complaint time is of the essence. The Organising Committee shall not be entitled to consider any complaint received unless the time limits imposed by and the procedures set out in this Regulation have been adhered to by the complaining County.
- 13.2 In respect of any other matters alleged to be in breach of these Regulations and/or RFU Regulations, such matters shall be referred immediately to the Organising Committee c/o the RFU Rugby Growth Department in writing or by telephone if necessary, within 24 hours following the conclusion of a match. In any event written confirmation must be sent to the RFU Rugby Growth Department within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match setting out the grounds of the complaint/breach in full.
- 13.3 Subject to a right of appeal in accordance with Regulation 12.4 below, the Organising Committee shall have the power to discipline and sanction in its absolute discretion any party for breach of any of these Regulations and/or any RFU Regulations, which may include imposing a financial sanction of £1,500 for any failure to play a match. Ignorance of these Regulations will not be deemed an excuse in the event of breach.
- 13.4 Should any party wish to appeal a decision of the Organising Committee, that party shall have a right to appeal in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

14. DISCIPLINE

- 14.1 When any player is sent off or cited in any match in any of the Competitions, the disciplinary regulations and procedures set out in RFU Regulation 19 shall apply.

15. FINANCE

- 15.1 Payments to Counties will be made before the competition begins. The amounts and process for making the payments will be communicated to Counties by the Rugby Growth Department as soon as practicable.

APPENDIX 1

Place Kicking Competition

- 1 All players and match officials will remain on the playing area. The Referee will call the captains of the two teams to the centre circle and will conduct two coin tosses. The first toss of the coin will decide which team selects the end at which all place-kicks must be taken; the second toss of the coin will decide which team selects whether it wishes to kick first or second. For the avoidance of doubt, it may be that the same team wins both tosses in which case it may select the end at which all place kicks must be taken and whether it wishes to kick first or second in sequence.
- 2 Each team must nominate three players to take part in the competition. Only players on the playing area at the final whistle may be nominated. No substituted players or players who have been shown a red card may take part at any time. For clarification purposes, any player who has received a yellow card and who remains in the sin bin at the time of the final whistle may not take part in the place kick competition. The order in which the nominated players will kick does not have to be predetermined.
- 3 The match officials and the six nominated players (three from each team) will assemble on the halfway line. Team management and players not nominated must remain behind the halfway line in the side of the playing area not used. No one other than the match officials and the participating players is allowed in the part of the playing area being used for the competition (including around the playing area, behind the posts, etc).
- 4 The Referee starts the competition by calling the first player selected from the team kicking first to the first kicking point. Once the player has taken the kick, the Referee calls a player from the opposing team to kick from exactly the same spot.
- 5 Each kicker will take 2 kicks in the following order:-
 - Kicker 1 from team A and Kicker 1 from team B will each take a kick from position 1.
 - Kicker 2 from team A and Kicker 2 from team B will each take a kick from position 2.
 - Kicker 3 from team A and Kicker 3 from team B will each take a kick from position 3.
 - Kicker 1 from team A and Kicker 1 from team B will each take a kick from position 4.
 - Kicker 2 from team A and Kicker 2 from team B will each take a kick from position 5.
 - Kicker 3 from team A and Kicker 3 from team B will each take a kick from position 6.
6. If the teams are level at the end of the 6 kick competition there will be a 'sudden death competition'. All kicks will take place from position 4 and kicks will be taken in the following order:-
 - First to kick will be Kicker 1 from each team
 - Second to kick will be Kicker 2 from each team
 - Third to kick will be Kicker 3 from each team
 - Kicks will continue in this order until a point is reached where each team has taken the same number of sudden death kicks but one team has scored one more than the other team. When this point is reached the team that has scored more successful kicks will be declared the winner.
7. For the avoidance of doubt the Referee is the sole judge of whether a kick has been successful. In reaching this decision the Referee may rely on assistance from his Assistant Referees. The Referee's decision shall be final and binding.
8. Throughout the place kick competition:
 - (a) Once a player has positioned the ball on the kicking tee, he must take the kick within one minute. Should he take longer, the Referee shall declare the kick void.
 - (b) After each kick, the referee records the number of the player and whether or not the attempt was successful.

