



**England
Rugby**

County Championships

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITIONS REGULATIONS 2018-19

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(A) Name and Organisation

1. The Competitions shall be called the Bill Beaumont Senior Men's County Championships and shall consist of three tiers as follows: Tier 1: 'Bill Beaumont Division 1' ('Division 1'), Tier 2: 'Bill Beaumont Division 2' ('Division 2') and Tier 3: 'Bill Beaumont Division 3' ('Division 3') or such other name or names incorporating the name of a sponsor as the RFU shall determine.
2. The Competition will be organised by the RFU Rugby Growth Department in partnership with the County Championship Committee. The RFU Rugby Growth Department shall have the power to delegate any or all of its powers, duties or obligations under these Regulations to such person or persons as it may decide.

(B) Definitions

1. In these County Championship Competitions Regulations:
2. "**Residence**" for a full-time bona fide student whilst attending a recognised educational establishment shall mean either his permanent home address or his (for the time being) student accommodation address;
3. In addition, except where the context otherwise requires or permits, the words and expressions listed in the Definitions set out in RFU Regulation 1 shall bear the meanings given to them therein.

(C) Format of County Championship Competitions

1. Bill Beaumont Division 1 shall be contested between the 12 participating counties. The 12 counties will be split into 2 pools of 6 (North and South). Each pool will be divided into two groups of three teams as determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.
 - (i) Each team will play the teams in the other group in its pool once only either at home or away.
 - (ii) The winners of each pool in Division 1 will contest the final of Division 1.
2. Bill Beaumont Division 2 shall be contested between the 8 participating counties and will be divided into two pools of four teams as determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.
 - (i) Each team will play the other teams in its pool once only, either at home or away.
 - (ii) The winners from each pool will contest the final of Division 2.
3. Bill Beaumont Division 3 shall be contested between the 8 participating counties and will be divided into two pools of four teams as determined by the RFU Rugby Growth Department.
 - (iii) Each team will play the other teams in its pool once only, either at home or away
 - (iv) The winners from each pool will contest the final of Division 3
4. In all divisions, promotion and relegation will take place every two seasons to allow counties to find their appropriate level, with each season counting towards promotion and relegation by points for each season rolling into the following season. There will be no promotion or relegation following the 2018-19 season.
5. The position of a County in each Division shall be established by awarding four competition points for a win and two competition points for a draw. In addition, one bonus competition point will be awarded to a team:
 - i) On each occasion it scores four or more tries in a match
 - ii) On each occasion it loses a match by seven points or less.

6. 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 Division 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 pool 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. All matches shall be played in accordance with World Rugby Laws and Regulations (including any such Law trials or variations to which the RFU may agree) and RFU Rules and Regulations insofar as they are applicable save where such RFU Regulations are in conflict with these County Championship Competitions Regulations in which event these County Championship Competitions Regulations will prevail.
8. The RFU Rugby Growth Department will determine the composition or changes to the composition of all the pools, the fixture schedule, the draws and venue for all the finals as it sees fit.
9. In the event of a draw in the finals, 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

(D) Eligibility of Players & Teams

1. All players must be a minimum of 18 years of age unless otherwise permitted to play adult rugby in accordance with RFU Regulation 15.
2. A player who is Effectively Registered (as defined in RFU Regulation 14) for a Club playing at Level 3 or below as at the date of the 2018-19 Transfer Deadline (22 February 2019) or registered to play rugby union at an educational establishment or at a Services club, is eligible to play in any tier of the Competition. The following players are not eligible to play in the Competition:
 - (i) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been an England Academy Player (as defined in RFU Regulation 1).
 - (ii) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season has played in or been selected as a replacement in the Premiership Rugby Shield (formerly A-League) competition on 3 or more occasions.
 - (iii) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been Effectively Registered for a Club at Level 1 or Level 2.
 - (iv) Any player who during the 2018-19 Season is or has been selected for: (a) 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 (b) for such other comparable squad or group for another Tier 1 or Tier 2 Union.
3. Subject to this Regulation D and in accordance with RFU Regulation 15, a player may only play in the County Championship Competitions for a County in which:
 - (i) he was born; or
 - (ii) he has completed not less than 6 months Residence within the County concerned in the preceding 12 months; or

- (iii) has played for a County in a previous County Competition or National Under 20 Championship and who was qualified to play for that County under the Regulations then in effect. Any such player shall remain eligible to play for that County until such time as he qualifies for and plays for another County in any of the Competitions or the National Under 20 Championship; or
 - (iv) he is an Effectively Registered Player of a Club allocated to the County on the date of the match.
4. If a player is eligible for more than one County in a season, the player may select which County to represent but once opted for a County for a particular season and selected in a match day squad in the competition for that County, the player cannot change to play for another County in the same season.
 5. No County shall pay and no player shall receive, in each case whether directly or indirectly, any monetary benefit for participating in the Competition.
 6. No player or named replacement attending on the day of a match may represent more than one County in a Season.
 7. A County shall not play or select as a replacement or substitute more than three non-EQPs in any Competition match.
 8. ***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.***

(E) Replacements, Substitutions and Front Row requirements

1. The number of replacements and substitutes shall not be more than seven, with five players in the match squad being able to play 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.
2. Rolling substitutions are permitted in the Competition and the specific regulations relating to replacements and substitutions in relation to Cup competitions are set out in Appendix 2 of RFU Regulation 13, including the relevant provisions around rolling substitutions, uncontested scrums and front row.

(F) Grounds

1. Except in the Finals, the home County is responsible for correctly and clearly marking its pitch, and must make proper provision to ensure that (with the exception of the touch judges, the fourth official, the medical staff and water carriers who shall be limited to two in addition to the medical staff) all spectators, replacements coaching staff and officials are kept behind a permanent or semi-permanent pitch perimeter barrier at a reasonable distance from the field of play and make provision for two areas one for each team) each not exceeding 10 square metres (each of which when occupied will not in any way impede a touch judge undertaking his responsibilities) to be clearly designated between the touchline and any perimeter or pitch side fencing or other barrier as being that to which medical staff and water carriers when not attending to their duties as permitted by the referee are to be restricted during the match.
2. Participating Counties in a match must ensure that team replacements and coaches are behind any perimeter or pitch side fencing or other barriers during all periods of playing the match.
3. A decision as to the fitness of the ground for playing a match must be made as early as realistically possible having regard to the travel and other commitments of the visiting County. If a County wishes to cancel a match because of ground conditions on the day before the match is scheduled to be played the Referees Department at Twickenham should be contacted to arrange a pitch inspection. When a late decision (i.e. a decision made or to be made within three hours of the scheduled kick-off time) as to the fitness of a ground for the playing of a match is necessary, it shall be made by the respective captains of the Counties involved, but if the captains are not able to agree, the decision as to the fitness of the ground shall be made by the appointed Referee.

Note: The referee is only required to give an opinion as to whether or not a ground is fit to be played upon. If the referee has given his decision and a team declines to play on a ground the referee has declared fit that shall be the decision of the team concerned and not that of the referee.

(G) Un-played/Abandoned Matches

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

(H) Kits

1. 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.

(I) Notification of Match Results

1. 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 County shall telephone the result to whomsoever the RFU specifies as soon as reasonably practical after the whistle.

(J) Finance

1. The RFU Rugby Growth Department shall notify the relevant Counties of its decision regarding funding and distribute monies in its absolute discretion as it considers appropriate for the benefit of the Counties.
2. 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.
3. In all matches other than the Final, Gross Gate Receipts (which shall be the total of all monies received from admissions, car parking and programme sales) to a ceiling of £5,000.00 shall be shared, to help offset the cost of the away team, 70% for the home County and 30% for the away County. Any Gross Gate Receipts in excess shall belong to the home County.

(K) Ticket Allocation

1. The ticket allocation shall be as follows:
 - (i) One third of each ticket category provided the away County advises if its requirements the home County at least six days prior to the match and
 - (ii) Complimentary tickets shall be limited to 25 for each County for its players and replacements and 30 for each County for its Committee Members and its official guests.

(L) Jurisdiction and Breaches of Regulations

1. These Regulations are 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 (to the extent that they affect the Clubs) are deemed varied by these Regulations.
2. In respect of any 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 off the complaint/breach in full.
3. Subject to a right of appeal in accordance with Regulation L(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.
4. Should that party wish to appeal a decision of the Organising Committee, that party shall have a right to appeal in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

(M) Discipline

1. When a player is sent off or cited in any match in this competition, the disciplinary regulations and procedures set out in RFU Regulation 19 will apply.

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.

