

NATIONAL U17 COMPETITION REGULATIONS 2011/12

Competition Format

1.1 The Competition will be divided into a) Cup b) Plate c) Bowl and d) Shield. There will be two stages to the competition a) Divisional and b) National

A. Divisional Stage

1.2 The Divisional Organiser will receive U17 CB/League nominations on a date determined by the Divisional Organiser. Nominations will identify 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Cup Knockout Competition, 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Plate KO Competition, 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Bowl KO Competition and 8 teams to participate in the Divisional Shield KO Competition (32 teams in total per Division, 128 teams nationwide)

1.3 Upon nomination to the Divisional KO Stages of the Competition each Club must submit to the Divisional Organiser evidence of all eligible players' registrations taken from the computerised record of a Club or players' registration details held by the RFU on the RugbyFirst database.

1.4 Playing dates for the Divisional KO rounds of the RFU National U17 Cup, Plate, Bowl, and Shield will be as follows:

Divisional Quarter Finals	Sunday March 4 th 2012
Divisional Semi Finals	Sunday March 18 th 2012
Divisional Finals	Sunday April 1 st 2012

1.5 All matches are to be played on the due date unless otherwise agreed by the Divisional Organiser. All matches must be played by the due date of the next round of the competition.

1.6 The Divisional Organiser will have full responsibility for the Divisional KO Stage, and will notify all Clubs participating in the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield of the draws for each round of the competition. This information will include date of fixture, venue and recommended kick off time.

1.7 The Home team at each Divisional KO stage will contact the visiting team prior to the match to confirm arrangements and kick off times. Such contact must be at least 96 hours prior to the kick off of the match. The home team will request their referees' society provides a fully qualified referee.

1.8 Where the Divisional Organiser arranges a neutral venue for a Divisional KO match the Divisional Organiser will arrange a suitable venue and ensure the relevant referees society provides a fully qualified referee. The competing teams must contact the neutral venue to arrange a kick off time and arrange post match catering requirements.

1.9 Teams in a Divisional KO match of the Cup, Plate Bowl and Shield must complete a Match Result Card, listing the first names, surnames and the RFU registration numbers of the team and all replacements in block letters. The card must be presented to the referee for checking before the game. The card must be

signed by the Match Referee and officials from both Clubs at the end of the match and the final score including number of tries, conversions, penalties and drop goals. The match card must be faxed or emailed to the relevant Divisional Organiser **and** the Rugby Football Union by the winning team no later than 24 hours after the conclusion of a match.

- 1.10 The Divisional Organiser will forward the draw for the following round of the competition to Tournaments & Competitions Department no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of a match.

B. National Stage

- 1.11 The winners of each Divisional KO stage will progress to the next round of the competition; the winners of the Divisional Final (the venue of which will be determined by the Divisional Organiser) at Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield will progress to the National U17 Semi Finals. Winners from the London & South East will play the winners from the South West; the Midlands winners will play the winners from the North. National Semi Finals and Finals will be played at neutral venues to be decided by the RFU. The dates of the National Semi Finals and Final are specified below:

National Semi Finals Sunday April 22nd 2012
National Finals Sunday May 6th 2012

- 1.10 Teams in a National KO match of the Cup, Plate Bowl and Shield must complete a Match Card, listing the first names, surnames and the RFU registration numbers of the team and all replacements in block letters. The card must be presented to the referee for checking before the game. The card must be signed by the Match Referee and officials from both Clubs at the end of the match and the final score including - number of tries, conversions, penalties and drop goals added. The match card must be faxed to the Rugby Football Union by the winning team no later than 24 hours after the conclusion of a match.

C. All Stages

- 1.11 Each game will be 15 a-side and be 70 minutes playing time in length (35 minutes each way). Half time will be 10 minutes
- 1.12 A squad of up to 22 players (15 starting players and 7 substitutes) can be registered for each match.
- 1.13 All matches must be played on the dates shown. There will be no variance on playing dates unless agreed by the Divisional Organiser in case of the Divisional Stages of the Competition.
- 1.14 All matches in the National Stage of the Competition must be played on the specified date unless agreed by the Tournaments & Competitions Department.

Competition Organisation

- 2.1 The Competitions will be organised by the Tournaments & Competitions Department of the Rugby Football Union.
- 2.2 The management of the Divisional KO stages for the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield competitions is delegated to the Divisional Organisers. Any playing disputes or transgressions (including breach of these regulations) during the Divisional KO Stages of the competition will be dealt with by the relevant Divisional Organiser in the first instance. If the dispute cannot be resolved at divisional level the dispute will be forwarded to the Tournaments & Competitions Department of the RFU.

Eligibility of Clubs

- 3.1 The competition is open to all Clubs nominated by their respective Constituent Body who are in full membership of the Rugby Football Union or RFU Constituent Body, and shall be played under the Rules & Regulations of the Rugby Football Union and the IRB laws of the game: Under 19 Variations.
- 3.2 If a Club nominated by a Constituent Body plays its home fixtures in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands (an “Island Club”), their matches shall be played on the mainland of England (including for the purposes of this Regulation the Isle of Wight) either on the ground of the opposing Club or, if the Island Club desires, at the ground of any other Club on the mainland of England within its CB. In this event, all arrangements which are to be agreed with the host Club shall be made by the Island Club, which shall be responsible for any ground expenses incurred and at no cost to the host Club involved.
- 3.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the Island Club will be responsible for all travel and accommodation costs where two participating Clubs agree to play any Divisional KO match on the Island concerned.

4. Eligibility of Players

- 4.1 All players must be 15 years of age or over and under 17 years of age at midnight of the 31st August at the start of the season in which the competition is to take place, and be a genuine player of their Club. To be eligible a player must:
 - 4.1.1 have been Effectively Registered with the Club he is representing on the Rugby Football Union RugbyFirst database on or before 31st December of the current season.
 - 4.1.2 be a bona fide member of the Club.
- 4.2 Every participating player must be Effectively Registered with the Rugby Football Union on the RugbyFirst Database for the Club they are representing and hold a Personal Youth Registration ID number. Players/Team Managers must hold valid RFU registration cards (with photographs) or an alternative form of photographic identification (passport/provisional driving licence) for each player in a match day squad and have them available for inspection at every match
- 4.3 No player may play for more than one team in the competition during any one

season.

- 4.4 A player who is a nominated RFU England Academy Scholar (as stipulated by the RFU Elite Rugby Department) or a player who has been selected for any England Age Grade representative match squad (or comparable team from another IRB Tier One Nation) during the current season will not be eligible.

5. Postponed & Abandoned Matches

- 5.1 If ground or weather conditions prevent a match being played at the ground of the Club designated as the “home” side, every effort must be made to play the match either a) at the grounds of the designated “away” side, should that Club have a suitable pitch available or b) at a neutral venue (in which case the first named team will be deemed the “home side”.)
- 5.2 If ground or weather conditions prevent a match being played at the grounds of either Club, (or neutral venue) it may be re-scheduled by agreement between the two Clubs and the Divisional Organiser or RFU Tournaments & Competitions Department, dependent on the stage of the competition. In the event of the Clubs being unable to agree to a revised date, the Divisional Organiser or RFU Tournaments & Competitions Department may specify the date on which the match is to be played or award the match to one side or the other, dependant on the circumstances of the postponement. A rescheduled match must be played before the due date of the next round of the competition.
- 5.3 If a match is abandoned because of weather conditions (including bad light) when fifty or more minutes have been played, then 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.
- 5.4 Teams will concede the match if they are unable to field a full side on the stipulated date of play.

6. Drawn Matches

- 6.1 In the event that the scores are level at the end of a Divisional KO 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 goals from tries will proceed to the next round. If this still does not produce a winner the visiting team shall proceed to the next round. Where under regulation 5.1 a match has been played at the designated “away side” and tries and goals from tries are equal the winning team will be decided by a place kicking competition (see paragraph 6.3) For Divisional KO matches played at neutral venues, if the score tries and goals from tries are equal the winner will be decided by a Place Kicking Competition (see paragraph 6.3 below)
- 6.2 The winner of each Divisional Final (Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield) will progress to the National Semi Final. In the National Semi Finals and National Finals if scores are level at the end of the match, the winner will be the team that has scored the

most tries. If this does not produce a result, the team that has scored the most goals from tries will be the winner. If this does not produce a result, the winner of the match will be determined by Place Kicking Competition as set out below.

6.3.Place Kicking Competition

- 6.3.1 Each team shall nominate one player from its number on the field of play at the final whistle to participate on its behalf in a place kicking competition.
- 6.3.2 Each kicker in turn shall attempt a place kick from pre-determined positions until such time as, after equal attempts; one kicker has kicked more goals than the other.
- 6.3.3 The first kick shall be taken by the team that kicked-off at the commencement of the match. The attempts will be taken from the following positions in turn, repeating the sequence until a decision is reached: -
- (a) the intersection of the 22-metre line and the centre of the 22-metre line
 - (b) the intersection of 22-metre and 15-metre lines to left of posts facing
 - (c) the intersection of 22-metre and 5-metre lines to left of posts facing
 - (d) the intersection of 22-metre and 15-metre lines to right of posts facing
 - (e) the intersection of 22-metre and 5-metre lines to right of posts facing

7. Referees & Touch Judges

- 7.1 The home team will provide a Society appointed Referee (and a team of three where possible) for the Divisional KO stages for the Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield Competitions.
- 7.2 Where a Referee Society cannot provide a team of three, competent touch judges, who shall not be substitutes or team officials, will be provided by the participating teams. Further, it is the home Club's responsibility to liaise with the appointed official(s) directly to ensure that such official(s) is aware of the arrangements e.g. kick off time, regulations and has the appropriate directions to the venue for the match (or any change of venue).
- 7.3 For the National Semi Finals and Final, (Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield) Referees and Touch Judges will be provided by the RFU Referee Appointments Secretary.

8. Replacements

- 8.1 Replacements will be allowed under the relevant IRB law. A player who has been replaced must not resume playing during the match (unless permitted under the IRB Laws of the Game U19 Variations).
- 8.2 In the interests of safety a team fielding a squad of fewer than 22 players in a Competition match must ensure that they have a suitable number of Front Row replacements in accordance with IRB Law 3 (suitably trained and experienced players in the front row). For the avoidance of doubt if a team nominates 22 players, it must have at least six players who can play in the Front Row in order that there is replacement cover for loose head prop, hooker and tight head prop.

8.3 If in any match including a Final a team cannot comply with the requirements of iRB Law 3 such that when a front row player requires to be replaced, his team cannot provide a suitably trained and experienced replacement player to enable the team to continue to safely play with contested scrums the referee having made enquiry and confirmed this fact with the captain of the team and the manager or adult official from the Club responsible for the team the match will continue with uncontested scrums, and (subject to the provisions of Regulation 8.6) the final result of the match will stand.

8.4 Where during a match,

- (i) a player is temporarily suspended from the field of play (which includes a blood injury) and that suspension results in a replacement on any occasion, and his team cannot provide a replacement or suitably trained and experienced player to enable the match to safely continue with contested scrums; and
- (ii) the Referee has made enquiry of and confirmed this fact with the Manager of the team or such other person nominated by the Club as the manager or other person responsible for the team); then the match shall continue with uncontested scrums only for the duration of the temporary suspension. The match result will be unaffected.

8.5 The Divisional Organiser/RFU will review the circumstances in every case where a match in the Competition is completed with uncontested scrums. The Divisional Organiser/RFU will be entitled to take any such action as it deems appropriate.

Such action may include:

- (a) reversal of the match result
- (b) a fine and/or payment of compensation, and/or
- (c) disqualification from the Competition in the Season; and/or the following Season and the reinstatement of the non offending team into the next round of the Competition; and/or requiring that the match be replayed

8.6 Where the Divisional Organiser/RFU Tournaments & Competitions Department finds that there has been a breach of any Regulation governing the Competition or that a Club in a match in the Competition acting other than in good faith has taken advantage of the provisions of this Regulation. They may take action against that Club as described above, in 8.5.

9. Clash of Colours/Identification of Players

9.1 In the event of Clubs having similar or clashing colours, the home team shall be responsible for changing its colours subject to the satisfaction of the appointed referee. If a match is being played at a neutral venue or the competition has reached the National Stage the home team will be decided by the toss of a coin at least two days before the match concerned.

9.2 All teams in the National U17 Competition must wear numbered shirts in accordance with IRB requirements to ensure the correct identification of all players and replacements during a match.

10. Finance

10.1 The RFU will provide financial assistance to each Divisional Organiser as set out in the agreed 2011/12 National U17's Competitions budget.

10.2 A financial contribution (up to 60% of total travel costs (not including flights, accommodation or meal/drinks) will be made available to Clubs playing away from home, where travel exceeds 200 miles (round trip).

10.3 To receive a financial contribution for travel the Club concerned must submit an invoice to the Rugby Football Union by **1st June 2012**. All invoices must be made out for the attention of the Tournaments & Competitions Department, Rugby Football Union, Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, Twickenham, TW2 7BA.

10.4 Home teams will retain any revenue generated from hosting a National/Divisional U17 fixture.

10.5 Consideration will be given to any potential sponsor, who may find the finals day an attractive marketing opportunity

11. Protests, Disputes and Transgressions

11.1 Any matters in dispute or any transgressions of these Regulations shall be referred immediately to the Divisional Organiser by telephone if necessary within 24 hours following the conclusion of the match, providing written confirmation follows within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match, setting out the grounds of the complaint in full. Any dispute or transgression during the Divisional KO Stages of the competition will be dealt with by the relevant Divisional Organiser in the first instance. If the dispute cannot be resolved at divisional level the dispute will be forwarded to The National Schools and Youth Disciplinary Secretary at the RFU, who will establish an Appeals Panel consisting of three of the four Divisional Organisers. A Divisional Organiser from the division where the appeal originated would not be a member of the panel. Any dispute will be resolved not less than 5 days prior to the next round of the competition.

11.2 From the National Semi Final Stage onwards disputes or any transgressions must be referred immediately to the Competition Manager at the RFU (Tournaments & Competitions Department) by telephone if necessary but no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the match, providing written confirmation follows within 48 hours setting out the grounds of the complaint in full.

11.3 The RFU shall have absolute discretion to resolve any such protests or disputes as it shall think fit and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing may decline to act upon a protest validly made if it considers doing so to be in the

interests of the Competition generally.

11.4 The RFU shall have power to amend alter or vary these Regulations as it deems necessary (but not with retrospective effect), to deal with any matter not dealt with by these Regulations, to resolve any ambiguity herein or if it considers it to be in the interests of the Competition.

12. Right of Appeal

12.1 Any interested party aggrieved at the decision of the RFU under Regulation 11.2 above may, within 48 hours from the receipt of the letter informing it of the RFU's decision, lodge an appeal in writing or request a further review of the decision in writing to The National Schools and Youth Disciplinary Secretary, c/o Tournaments & Competitions Department, Rugby Football Union, Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, Twickenham TW2 7BA, stating the grounds on which the appeal or complaint is made. Any such appeal must be accompanied by a payment of £100 payable to the RFU; this fee is refundable in the event the appeal is upheld unless the Appeals Panel decides otherwise.

12.2 The NSYDS will establish an Appeals Panel whose three members will exclude The Age Grade Competitions Manager and the four Divisional Organisers. The NSYDS will establish what the issues are and canvass to see whether, if parties agree, an Appeal can be heard by way of a written submissions rather than oral evidence/submissions. If a "live" hearing is necessary he will oversee and determine the timing and venue of the Hearing ensuring minimal delay

12.3 Any individual with a connection to any party involved in such a dispute, breach hearing or with a clear interest in the outcome will not adjudicate on that case.

12.4 The Appeal Chairman will determine the conduct of proceedings and their scope. The Panel will provide written reasons for their decision. The Appeals Panel can vary or impose sanctions as is appropriate. For the sake of the competition schedule adjournments will be for exceptional circumstances only.

12.5 In any appeal the Appeal Panel shall have discretion, only in exceptional circumstances, to act in any manner it sees fit provided that it is of the opinion that the application of these National Under 17 Cup Regulations has resulted or would result in a perverse and/or unfair outcome. In all cases where the Appeal Panel exercises that discretion, or where it fails to follow its own procedures, any party to the proceedings may, within 72 hours of the publication of the Appeal Panel's decision, refer the matter to the RFU Disciplinary Officer for review. The Disciplinary Officer will then review the decision and may affirm it or substitute an alternative finding and his decision shall be final and binding.

13. Terms & Conditions of Participation

13.1 Each Club by agreeing to enter the competition and/or by commencing its first match in the Competition agrees that it will:

13.1.1 fulfil its fixtures in the Competition and comply in every particular with these Regulations and all other RFU Regulations.

13.1.2 will play in each game in the Competition for which it qualifies.

13.1.3 permit access to its premises during before or after a match to any person authorised by the Divisional Organiser or RFU (with or without notice) to check compliance with all and/or any of these Regulations and to provide to any such person such documentation and information as might be reasonably required to identify any player in any match in the Competition and produce evidence of such players Effective Registration with the Club.

13.2 Each Club by commencing its first match in the competition agrees it has entered into a legally binding obligation with the RFU and as a separate covenant with each other Club in the Competition, Referee, Touch Judge or Match Official involved in any match in the competition or cancellation or abandonment thereof that it will not hold liable or make any claim against such official, the Divisional Organiser or the Rugby Football Union:

(a) for any loss cost charge compensation or expense arising out of or in connection with any kind of injury or illness suffered by any player, spectator or other person. (insofar as is permitted by law)

(b) for any damage to property of any kind.

(c) for any other loss cost charge expenses or damages be it for loss of profit expense incurred or otherwise and whether directly or consequential or in relation to the result of any match.

(d) arising out of or due to any decision or action that such official may take under the Laws of the Game these regulations or any other rules or regulations published in the Handbook or which have been properly introduced by the RFU or in respect of the normal procedures to hold play control, cancel or abandon a match.

13.3 Each Club undertakes that it will take reasonable steps to control the conduct of its players and its supporters at all matches.

14 Disciplinary and Citing

14.1 Notwithstanding the provisions of RFU Regulation 19, all red cards must be notified to the RFU Disciplinary Manager (at brucereece-russel@rfu.com) within 72 hours of the end the match in which the red card was given.

- 14.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of RFU Regulation 19, all citations must be referred to the RFU Disciplinary Manager (at brucereece-russel@rfu.com) within 72 hours of the end of the relevant match.
- 14.3 The RFU Disciplinary Manager will refer such red cards and citations to the relevant CB Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary for action.
- 14.4 A sent off or cited player may be banned from further participation in some or all of the subsequent matches in the tournament.
- 14.5 Appeals against such action shall be undertaken in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.