RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

1. Appendix 3 Girls Rugby

For the purposes of these Regulations, the definitions set out below refer to both schools and clubs.

Variations for Womens age grade rugby are detailed below. The variations are specifically for young women, and should be read in conjunction with the guidelines from the RFU regarding youth rugby and 'The Laws of the Game of Rugby Union' written by the IRB, in particular, IRB variations for all who play and all who manage players aged under 19 at midnight on the 31st August.

1.1. Please note the following:

- It is strongly recommended to wear a pre-formed gum shield for all players aged U18 at midnight on the 31st August.
- Mismatches can be avoided by talking to the Coach in charge of the opposition before the game.
- No player should be asked to play outside her age group.

- Clubs must exercise great care and close supervision over the playing of those who, although 18 are eligible to play in adult teams and ensure adequate preparation and training. They should ensure their duty of care by supervising a sensible competition programme for those players taking care that they are not overplayed. Liaison with the coach of the adult team to manage the player's competition programme would be advised.

1.2. U7 to U12 Age Grade Rugby

Playing regulations for these age grades are detailed in the RFU Age Grade Rugby which can be found on the RFU's web site in the Community Rugby/ Refereeing Section. Boys and Girls can play mixed rugby within the Age Grade Regulations

1.3. Girls Rugby

i) The U13 girls' age band is permitted to include U11s, U12s and U13s girls. For the 2012-13 season any female players aged U13 and registered as an U12 player on Rugby First in 2011-12 Season can apply for dispensation to play within the U15 age band by contacting the Competitions Executive responsible for Women's Rugby.

ii) The U15 girls' age band is permitted to include U14s and U15s.

iii) The U18 girls' age band is permitted to include U16s, U17s and U18s.

iv) Players who are aged 17 may play adult rugby and train with other adults as part of the RFU's Women's Elite Rugby programme where the RFU Head of Performance (Women) has given specific consent. Such consent may be

given for playing or training.

1.4 Girls U13s Rugby

This age band takes into account girls who are aged U11, U12 and U13 at midnight on the 31st August 2012

Players and match officials must endeavour to ensure the IRB Law of the Game, modified by the following playing rules, are observed when playing rugby at U13 Girls:

1.4.1 Object of the game:

i) The object of the game is to score a try (5 points) by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line. A penalty try will be awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for foul play by the defending team.

ii) When a try is scored, the game is restarted by a free pass from the centre of the pitch by the non-scoring team.

1.4.2 Teams:

Under 13 Girls Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, containing no more than seven and no less than six players. Each side can have an agreed number of substitutes. Substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is "dead" or at half time and always with the referee's knowledge.

1.4.3 Pitch size:

The maximum pitch size is

i) 60 metres by 35 metres, plus 5 metres for each ingoal area.

ii) Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable provided this is agreed between the referee and coaches, and if the smaller pitches do not materially increase the risk of injury to players.

iii) Adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 metres

1.4.4 Duration of matches:

i) Fixtures which have 2 Clubs present : 20 minutes each way, 1 game = 40 minutes

ii) Fixture which have 3 Clubs present: 15 minutes each way, 2 games = 60 minutes

iii) Festivals: 7 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 70 minutes (total playing time)

iv) No extra time is permitted in any match except that added for injury time.

v) If the try difference rises to more than six coaches should be encouraged to find solutions to challenge the players (eg the winning team may have a “tackle

number restriction" – 4 tackles lose possession etc). Where this is not possible/ is agreed the game must not continue.

1.4.5 **Passing:**

The ball can only be passed sideways or backwards through the air or passed to another player who is front of the ball carrier. If the ball is handed to another player in front of the ball player or passed or knocked forwards (towards the opponents' goal-line) then a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever possible.

1.4.6 **Free Passes:**

A free pass is used:

i) To start the match at the beginning of each half from the centre of the pitch

ii) When there has been foul play

iii) Where the ball has been ripped by an opponent

iv) Where more than one person from each side joins the contact

v) At a free pass, the opposition must be 7 metres back from the mark. They cannot start moving forward until the ball leaves the hands of the passer. At a free pass, the player must start with the ball in both hands and, when instructed by the referee who will call "PLAY", pass the ball backwards through the air to a member of their team. For safety reasons, no player may run until the pass is made. The player taking the free pass must pass the ball when the referee calls "PLAY".

1.4.7 **The Tackle:**

i) Only the ball carrier can be tackled. The ball carrier can run and dodge potential opponents but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off) or the ball. The ball cannot be pulled out of the ball carrier's hands at any time.

ii) A "TACKLE" is deemed to be:

Any contact below the shoulders of the ball carrier which results in a grip, by the opponent of the ball carrier. Where the ball carrier remains on their feet the referee must call "TACKLE" (allow approx 2 secs to establish whether ball carrier held). Where ball carrier is taken to ground, the referee must also call "TACKLE"

iii) ACTIONS BY THE BALL CARRIER in the tackle:

The ball carrier if on their feet, and on hearing the word “tackle” from the referee can pass the ball to a supporting player from their own team, continue to drive or make the ball available to a team mate.

The ball carrier if taken to ground and on hearing the word “tackle” from the referee, can pass the ball to a supporting player from their own team, roll or place the ball towards their own team.

Once forward momentum has been stopped the ball must be played immediately and away from the contact area. (Free pass to opposition)
If the ball carrier drives over their opponents try line and touches the ball down over the try-line, a try should be awarded

iv) ACTIONS BY THE TACKLER:

The tackler must grasp the ball carrier below the shoulders, on the shirt, shorts or around the legs and should hold onto the player through the tackle, until the referee calls tackle

If the ball carrier is brought to ground, the tackler should get to their feet as soon as possible, and can contest the ball and must endeavour to get in an on-side position (between their own try line and the tackled player)

v) ACTIONS BY THE ATTACKING TEAM:

When the tackle is made the ball carriers team should support from behind the tackle player.

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on their feet ONE supporting player, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line) may assist the ball carrier by ripping the ball or driving forward.

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, ONE supporting player may join from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line)

a) Drive over the ball, taking their immediate opponent away from the ball

b) Pick up the ball and pass away from the contact area

A teammate may rip the ball from the ball carrier but must then pass the ball immediately to a team mate.

Support players must not deliberately stand either side of and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.

vi) ACTIONS BY THE DEFENDING TEAM:

When the tackle is made and the ball carrier remains on their feet, ONE additional defender, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line), can join the tackle
When the tackle is made and the ball carrier goes to ground, ONE additional defender, joining from their own side (ie from the direction of their own try line) can contest the ball.

The tackled player represents the off side line and defenders must endeavor to retreat to stay between their own try line and the tackled player until the pass is made, players who fail to do so are offside.

When an infringement occurs, a free pass will be awarded. The referee will make a mark for a free pass. The opposition will retire quickly to 7 metres from the mark. If the pass is taken so quickly that opponents have no opportunity to retire, they will not be penalised for this. However, they must continue to retire without interfering with the game until they are either 7 metres from the mark or a team mate who was standing 7 metres from the mark has run in front of them. The opposing team must not do anything to delay the free pass or obstruct the passer or receiver. Any infringement by the opposing team results in a second free pass 7 metres in front of the mark for the first free pass. On the second occasion the free pass will not be taken until all opponents have retired 7 metres. No free pass can be taken within 5 metres of the goal line.

1.4.8 **Offside:**

Occurs at the time of the Tackle where the offside line is the hindmost part of the tackled player. When a Tackle is made, all the other players from the tackler's team must attempt to retire towards their own goal-line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player. If a player, in an offside position, intercepts, prevents or slows down a pass from the tackled player to a team mate, a free pass will be awarded to the non-offending side. A player can, however, run from an onside position to intercept a floated pass before it reaches the intended receiver.

1.4.9 **Obstruction:**

i) The ball carrier can run and evade potential tacklers but cannot fend them off using their hands (hand off).

ii) The tackler can only make contact with the ball carrier below the shoulders.

iii) If such contact is made the game must be stopped, the offender spoken to, reminded of the contact rules and a free pass awarded to the non-offending side.

iv) If the ball is pulled from the ball carrier's grasp by an opponent, a free pass is awarded to the ball carrier's side.

1.4.10 **Ball on the Ground**:

i) Players play Rugby on their feet, with the ball in hand. If the ball goes to ground, players should be encouraged to pick it up. If they dive to recover the ball they must either get up or play the ball (pass) immediately & be allowed to do so by their opponents.

ii) Penalty: free pass to non-offending side and the following rules will apply:

(a) If the ball was lost forward, a free pass is awarded to the non-offending side unless advantage occurs to the non-offending side.

(b) If the ball is passed other than forward and goes to ground play will continue and either side may pick up the ball. If the passed ball rolls into touch a scrum will commence from the touchline to the non-passing side.

1.4.11 **Scrums:**

i) The scrum will be made up of one row of three players from each team, ie a prop on either side of the hooker. They will be the nearest 3 players from either side, with the 4th nearest acting as scrum half.

ii) At Under 13 girls, the scrum is uncontested by both sides: the team awarded the scrum will throw the ball into the scrum and must be allowed to win it without contest. Opponents cannot push or strike for the ball. If they do, a free pass restart is awarded to the team throwing the ball into the scrum.

iii) The players from each team will bind together approximately half a metre apart. Each prop will touch the upper arm of his opponent and then pause before the engagement. The referee will talk the players through the engagement procedure in the sequence “Crouch, Touch, Pause, Engage”. On the grounds of safety, it is important that the referee manages the engagement of every scrum in this way.

iv) Front rows must not be allowed to charge at each other. If they start to engage too close together and with their necks and backs bent, they must be stopped and the scrum reformed. Props' body positions must be parallel to the touchline (not boring in). There must be no downward pressure exerted by hands or arms. Shoulders must always be above the level of the hips.

v) If the scrum collapses, the whistle must immediately be blown and the appropriate penalty awarded or the scrum reset. If a player is persistently involved in collapsing or illegal binding they must be replaced. If a player's lack of technique or strength is a danger then they must be replaced. All players, including replacements, should be suitably trained and experienced.

vi) Any player at any stage in a scrum who has or causes an opponent to have her shoulders lower than her hip joint must immediately be penalised by awarding a free pass. The object of this rule is to prevent the collapse of a scrum. It is to help the coach to teach good technique and the referee to penalise bad technique. Any player who has her shoulders lower than her hip joint can only move downwards unless she has very great strength. The force through the shoulders should be directed forwards and upwards; all players should remain on their feet, thus preventing a pile up and possible injury.

vii) The back line of both teams must remain 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the opposing scrum half places his hand on it. Until this happens, their scrum half must remain directly behind his scrum, in the pocket edged by the two props.

viii) If a scrum is awarded within 5 metres of the goal line, the scrum is to be taken at a mark such that the middle line of the scrum is 5 metres from the goal line. In this case the defending backs must stay on or behind the goal line.

ix) **Referees** should pay particular attention to ensure that the scrum half putting the ball into the scrum is not "feeding" her own players: the scrum half must hold the ball with both hands, with its major axis parallel to the ground/the touchline, midway between her knees and ankles. The scrum half must release the ball from outside the tunnel so that it lands midway between the two front rows and beyond the width of the nearer prop's shoulders.

1.4.12 **Prohibited Play:**

i) The tackle game places the emphasis for the attack; on running with the ball, evasion, running in support of the ball carrier and passing; and for the defence: on running to tackle the ball carrier, prevent them going forward, and to get back into the game. In Girls U13 Rugby :

a) no contact above the shoulder
b) no line-out;
c) no kicking
d) no hand off/fend off (a hand off being the placing of an open palmed hand by the ball carrier against an opponent's face or body while a fend off is an outstretched arm by the ball carrier towards an opponent to discourage that person making a tackle);
e) no more than the tackler, tackled player plus one other from each team in contact

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1.5. Girls Rugby U15 – U18 Age Groups

All matches should be played to the IRB's U19 variations with the additional Womens variations below:

Under 15 and U18 inclusive
Squeeze ball – law 14 and 15

No player involved in a match at any age level from under 18 downwards shall use in training or in a match the technique known or referred to as Squeeze ball.

NB: "Squeeze Ball" is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents, usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and when on ground, pushes the ball back between the legs.

Penalty: Penalty Kick

Rolling Substitutions – Law 3

A player who has been substituted may replace any player, whether or not that player has been injured.

Players may be exchanges at any time during the match, when the ball is dead, and with knowledge of the referee.

Temporary Suspension Sin Bin Protocol – Law 10

As per the adult game the player will remain in the sin bin for ten minutes actual playing time. The player will stand out of the field of play, in the vicinity of the half way line, at a place readily identifiable to the referee. Then player must be under the control of the teachers and coaches. The player should not be isolated and should be given warm clothing to wear whilst serving the temporary suspension.

1.5.1. Girls (U15 Rugby)

This age band takes into account female players aged U14 and U15 at midnight on the 31st August 2012.

13 aside – 6 in scrum & 7 backs

The game is played between teams having a maximum of thirteen players, six of whom will be forwards and form the scrum, with the remaining players forming the back line. Each side can have a number of substitutes agreed by mutual consent. Substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions may only take place when the ball is 'dead' or at half time and always with the referees knowledge.

The scrum will be made of six players from each team – the front row (a row of three players, i.e. a prop on either side of the hooker, two locks forming the second row and a back-row player who shall bind between the two locks 3-2-1 formation). The locks must bind to each other using the inside arm, with the outside arm around the hips (not between the legs) of the front row (props). The back row player must have their head between the hips of the second row bound with the arms around the hips (not between the legs) of the second row (locks). No player may unbind to pick up the ball at the rear of the scrum but must remain bound into the scrum until the ball is carried or passed out by the scrum half.

Safety Note: Coaches must ensure that only players trained in the front row participate in contested scrums.

RFU U14 variations

Time – Law 5
Playing time not to exceed 25 minutes each way with a size 4 ball. After 50 minutes of playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match on any occasion.
15-a-side Festivals should follow the following pattern:
Not exceeding 4 matches of 10 minutes each way = 80 minutes

Line-out - Law 19
Lifting/supporting is prohibited in these age groups, i.e. a player may not bind to a jumper until that player has returned to the ground.
Penalty: Penalty Kick.

Scrum - Law 20
The scrum-half not throwing the ball into the scrum must not move beyond the middle line of the scrum until the ball has emerged from the scrum or an opponent has placed his hands on the ball. In the event of a strike against the head, the scrum-half who has thrown the ball into the scrum is similarly restricted in not following the ball.

1.5.3 **Girls Rugby (U18)**

This age band takes into account players aged U16, U17 or U18 at midnight on the 31st August 2012. The RFUW's U18 matches should be played to the IRB U19 variations.

There is no Dispensation within this age band.

18 year old players
From their 18th birthday players may elect to register as a senior player and may participate in senior training sessions and matches as well as U18 sessions and matches. It is recommended that players do not play more than one match a week to

avoid injury and player burnout. It is expected that coaches involved should pro-actively communicate on the development of an appropriate competition plan for 18 year old players to ensure their duty of care responsibilities are fulfilled. **At all times welfare and needs of the player should be at the centre of any selection decision.**

A player may attend trials for senior and junior CB and Divisional but cannot play for more than one age group (U18's or seniors) in either competition.

If a player after their 18th Birthday plays senior rugby and plays a Senior Cup competition they are not permitted to then play in the U18 Cup competition and vice versa.

1.5.4 **General – U19 Law Variations**

LAW 3: NUMBER OF PLAYERS – THE TEAM

3.5 (c) 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 the loose head prop, hooker and tight head prop.
If a team nominates more than 22 players it **must** have at least six players who can play in the front row in order that there is replacement cover for the loose head prop, hooker and tight head prop. There must also be three players who can play in lock position.

3.12 A player who has been substituted may replace an injured player.

LAW 5: TIME

5.1 Each half of an Under 19 match lasts 35 minutes playing time. Play in a match lasts no longer than 70 minutes. After a total of 70 minutes playing time, the referee must not allow extra time to be played in the case of a drawn match in a knock-out competition.

LAW 20: SCRUM

20.1 (f)In an 8 person scrum the formation must be 3-4-1, with the single player (normally the Number 8) shoving on the 2 locks. The locks must pack with their heads on either side of the hooker.

Exception: A team must have fewer than eight players in its scrum when **either** the team cannot field a complete team, or a player is sent off for Foul Play, **or** a player leaves the field because of injury.

Even allowing for this exception, each team must always have at least five players in a scrum.

If a team is incomplete, the scrum formation must be as follows:

If a team is without one player, then both teams must use a 3-4 formation (i.e. no No.8).
If a team is without two players, then both teams must use a 3-2-1 formation (i.e. no flankers).
If a team is without three players, then both teams must use a 3-2 formation (i.e. only front rows and locks).

When a normal scrum takes place, the players in the three front row positions and the two lock positions must have been suitably trained for these positions.

If a team cannot field such suitably trained players because:
either they are not available, **or** a player in one of those five positions is injured **or** has been sent off for Foul Play and no suitably trained replacement is available, then the referee must order uncontested scrums.

In an uncontested scrum, the teams do not compete for the ball. The team putting in the ball must win it. Neither team is allowed to push the other team away from the mark.

20.9 (j) **Maximum 1.5 metres push.** A team in a scrum must not push the scrum more than 1.5 metres towards their opponents' goal line.
Penalty: Free Kick

20.9 (k) **Ball must be released from scrum.** A player must not intentionally keep the ball in the scrum once the player's team has heeled the ball and controls it at the base of the scrum.
Penalty: Free Kick

20.11 (a**) No wheeling.** A team must not intentionally wheel a scrum.
Penalty: Penalty Kick

If a wheel reaches 45 degrees, the referee must stop play. If the wheel is unintentional, the referee orders another scrum at the place where the scrum is stopped.

1.6 Junior Match Day Forms

Match day forms must be completed by both Managers (or their delegate) after every match a Junior side plays. Pease ensure that both team names and the scores are entered in the appropriate boxes at the top of the sheet.

The Home team is responsible to ensure the match day form and red and yellow card form are completed and returned to the RFU Competition Executive within 5 days of the match being played. If a team is uncooperative, the form must be completed as far as possible. The uncooperative team may be penalised.

If a player is sent off, this information must be written on the red card form, and where possible, the referee repost attached. Likewise if a player is yellow carded the form must be filled in.

Any club who fails to send in a Red or Yellow card form will find themselves liable to a mandatory RFU fine and repeat offending can lead to a deduction in league points or removal from the cup competitions.

Forms are readily available from the Competitions Executive, the website and the Competitions department at Twickenham. Not having a form is not an acceptable excuse for non-completion. In emergency an A4 sheet of paper detailing the requirements is acceptable.

1.7 **School's Rugby**

For further information please see Womens U13 Girls Tag Rugby and U13 Girls rugby