REGULATION 16 – ADULT WOMEN COMPETITIONS 2014-2015

16.1 General

16.1.1 RFU Regulation 16 sets out the Regulations relating to the RFU Women Competitions in England. Regulation 16 is supplemental to other RFU Regulations (including RFU Regulation 13) which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall have full force and effect save that in the event of conflict between Regulation 16 and the other RFU Regulations, the RFU Regulations (to the extent that they affect the teams) are deemed varied by RFU Regulation 16.

16.1.2 RFU Regulation 15 (Age Grade Rugby) sets out the Regulations and Rules of Play for Girls Age Grade Rugby.

16.1.3 All RFU Women Competitions shall be organised by such designated Organising Committee to which powers have been delegated by the Competitions Sub-Committee in accordance with RFU Regulation 13. Should the delegated Organising Committee wish to apply local variations to this Regulation 16, the procedure set out in RFU Regulation 13.1.4 shall apply in the same way that it applies to teams, Clubs, Divisional Organising Committees and Constituent Bodies.

16.1.4 All matches played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and/or in RFU Women Competitions or any other competition or merit table must be played in accordance with the IRB Laws, IRB Regulations, the RFU Rules, the RFU Regulations and any competition specific Regulations applicable to a competition.

16.1.5 The definitions set out in RFU Regulation 1 (RFU Definitions) shall apply to this RFU Regulation 16 unless stated otherwise.

16.1.6 For the purposes of this Regulation 16, 'Premiership', 'Championship', 'Championship 2', 'National Challenge Division 1' and 'National Challenge Division 2' means Level 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively of the RFU Women Competition structure.

16.2 Eligibility of Teams

16.2.1 All clubs participating in the RFU Women Competitions must:

(a) be affiliated to the RFU;

(b) have completed and submitted the league entry form by 31st May of the previous season; and

(c) have received confirmation from the RFU that the team has been accepted into the league for the next Season.

16.2.2 Only one team per Club can participate in each league in the same Season. If the 1st team of a Club is relegated into the same league as the

2nd team of the same Club, the 2nd team shall be relegated and this same principle shall apply in respect of all other lower XV teams.

16.3 Eligibility of Individual Players

16.3.1 All Players participating in the RFU Women Competitions must be registered with the RFU on the RFU's Game Management System.

16.3.2 Student Players can be registered with both a student team and one Club team at any one time.

16.3.4 An application for registration of an Overseas Player wishing to be registered with a Club in England must be accompanied by a Clearance (as defined in IRB Regulation 1) from her Current Union.

16.4 Player Transfers

16.4.1 A Player may only transfer from one Club to another Club on one occasion in any one Season, subject to the remaining provisions of Regulation 16.

16.4.2 In the event of a Player transferring from one Club to another, a Player transfer form must be completed and signed by the captain or secretary of the current Club and the new Club prior to it being submitted to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department.

16.4.3 A captain/secretary of the current Club may refuse to sign the transfer form where:

(a) the Player has a Contract with the current Club;

(b) the Player is being disciplined under RFU Rule 5.12;

(c) the Player owes money to the Club under applicable RFU or IRB Regulations.

Any such objection must be submitted in writing to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department stating all the grounds upon which the objection is made within 7 days of being notified of the proposed transfer.

16.4.4 Once completed, all transfer forms must be submitted to the RFU Competition's Executive who will confirm the date from which the transferred Player will be permitted to play for the new Club. If a Player has played one or more league or cup games for the previous Club in the current Season, there is a 7 day waiting period from the date of receipt by the RFU Competition's Executive of the transfer form during which time the Player will not be permitted to play for the new Club.

16.4.5 Once a Club's league season has finished, a Player is not allowed to transfer to another Club for cup competitions or playoffs.

16.4.6 In relation to any Women's cup competitions, a Club may not be represented in that competition by any Player who has played or been a

replacement (i.e. included in the match squad) for another Club in that cup competition in the current Season or such other higher cup competition.

16.5 Movement of Players between teams inside a Club

16.5.1 A Player who has played in the last 1st team league or cup match for a Club may not play in the 2nd team league or cup fixture unless:

(a) she was only playing for the 1st team to replace an injured regular 1st team Player;

(b) she has been dropped in favour of a better Player in agreement with the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department.

16.5.2 A Player cannot represent the 1st and 2nd team on the same day or the same weekend.

16.6 Borrowing and Loaning Players

Premiership and Championship

16.6.1 No Club playing in the Premiership, Championship or Championship 2 can loan Players down to any other Club.

16.6.2 Premiership and Championship Clubs can borrow Players from Championship 2 or below for a maximum of 6 matches per season provided a loan agreement form is completed and signed by both Clubs, the Player and is submitted to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department for approval.

16.6.3 If a Player from a Premiership/Championship team is returning from long term injury or requires game time, the Player can apply for dispensation from the Organising Committee to be loaned to a team playing below their current league status. The Organising Committee shall decide in its absolute discretion as to whether the Player is permitted to be loaned.

National Challenge 1 and below

16.6.4 At National Challenge 1 level and below, the borrowing and lending of Players is permitted subject to the below conditions:

(a) A maximum of two Players can be borrowed from National Challenge 1 Clubs and below in any one match;

(b) A borrowed Player must be declared to the opposition prior to the start of the fixture;

(c) In no circumstances may Players from Premiership, Championship or Championship 2 Clubs be borrowed; and

(d) A Player can only be borrowed in order to fulfil a fixture to complete a playing squad or to cover a specific position.

16.7 Match Management

Specific procedures for match management will be circulated by the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department before the start of the Season.

Squad Lists

16.7.1 Squad lists (including replacements) for all teams must be submitted in advance of any team fixture to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department by 12 noon on the day before the match is due to be played.

Date of match

16.7.2 All matches must be played on the Sunday unless such other date is specified by the Organising Committee or agreed by the teams and RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department.

Kick Off

16.7.3 All matches shall kick off at the following times:

September, March and April 2.45pm
October and February 2.30pm
November, December and January 2.00pm

16.7.4 Kick-off time may be varied by mutual agreement between two teams. If the away team disagrees, they must contact the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department 3 days in advance of the fixture and the Organising Committee shall determine the time of kick-off.

16.7.5 Any delay to the kick-off of a match may be reported by the non-offending team to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department together with confirmation by the referee of any delay. The Organising Committee will investigate and will then take appropriate action, when all the circumstances have been taken into consideration.

16.7.6 If a delay in kick-off occurs, wherever possible every effort should be made by the two teams concerned to play the match on the day of the fixture.

Score Reporting

16.7.7 The home team is required to telephone their results in immediately after the match has finished, and by no later than 6pm on the day of the match. All results for all leagues (even abandoned matches) must be telephoned to the RFU women's result line on 0845 226 0411 or text 07797 800102.

Match Day Forms

16.7.8 Match day forms must be completed by both captains (or their delegates) and each team shall be responsible: (i) for correctly completing the match day form in accordance with these Regulations and any other relevant instructions; and (ii) passing the completed match day form to the Referee (or such person who is designated by him) no later than 15 minutes before kick-off.

16.7.9 The home team is responsible for ensuring that the completed match day forms, the red card form and yellow card forms are all completed and returned to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department within 5 days of the match day.

16.7.10 Each team must ensure that information provided on a match day form is accurate, true and legible. The provision of false or misleading information on players or replacements shall be a serious breach of this Regulation and may give rise to a severe penalty.

Referee Appointments

16.7.11 The home team is responsible for arranging the appointment of a qualified Referee as follows:

(a) Premiership – Referees will be appointed by the RFU.

(b) Championship and below, every attempt should be made to organise the local Referee Society to appoint a Referee, otherwise a qualified Referee must be used.

16.8 Non-fulfilment of Fixtures

16.8.1 If a team fails to fulfil an away league fixture then the reverse fixture will, where possible, automatically become an away fixture for the defaulting team.

16.8.2 For the Premiership and Championship, teams that fail to fulfil one or more of their fixtures will be automatically relegated at the end of the Season.

16.8.3 For Championship 2 and below, teams that fail to fulfil one of their fixtures will have their league status reviewed at the end of the Season. Teams that do not fulfil two or more of their fixtures will automatically be relegated at the end of the Season.

16.8.4 The above Regulations set out in this Regulation 16.8 are all subject to this Regulation 16.8.4 which permits matches to be cancelled and re-arranged due to pitch or Weather Conditions, subject to the approval of the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department.

16.9 Abandonment

16.9.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to provide a suitable pitch for the match to be played on. If a team's ground is prone to being waterlogged or frozen, every effort must be made to secure another ground within a reasonable distance of the team's ground to try to ensure the fixture takes place on the designated day.

16.9.2 If a match is abandoned because of weather conditions when 60 minutes or more has been played (or 50 minutes or more of the match has been played in accordance with the IRB U19 Law Variations) then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed to be the final score in the match. The Referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played and the time of abandonment shall be final.

16.9.3 If a match is abandoned because of Weather Conditions when less than 60 minutes has been played (or less than 50 minutes if the match has been played in accordance with the IRB U19 Law Variations), the match shall be replayed on a date to be agreed by both teams and the RFU Competitions Executive in accordance with 16.10.

16.9.4 If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon the match for any reason other than weather conditions, then irrespective of the number of minutes played the result of that match may be determined by the RFU Competition Executive or the match be ordered to be replayed.

16.9.5 If the match is abandoned as stated above both teams shall provide a completed match day form signed by the Referee and stating the exact time of the match abandonment, the number of minutes played, the score at the time of abandonment and the reason for abandonment.

16.10 Re-arrangement of Fixtures

16.10.1 A fixture may only be moved in extreme circumstances in the absolute discretion of the Organising Committee. Both teams must be in agreement and must notify the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department for approval at least 5 days prior to the original fixture. If both teams are not in agreement the fixture is played on the set date and if it is not fulfilled, a walkover may be awarded if determined by the Organising Committee.

16.10.2 In the event of a league match not being played the Organising Committee in its absolute discretion may award the competition points to either side, divide the competition points equally between the sides, decide that no competition points shall be awarded or if the Organising Committee is of the view that the team has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its obligations, deduct competition points from the team. In addition, the Organising Committee may order the match to be replayed on a specified date or order a match to be counted as a "double header" whereby the outcome of the match will count against both fixtures, this taking into account the promotion and relegation issue in the league concerned, (including the effect on other teams in the league not involved in the league match) the commitments of the teams concerned and giving priority to arguments of the team that was not at fault in the event of a dispute on any re-arranged match date.

16.11 Promotion and Relegation

The principles of promotion and relegation as are set out below:

Premiership

16.11.1 All teams competing in the Premiership must fulfil the minimum standards criteria for the Premiership. If a team fails to fulfil this criteria, the league position of that team will be reviewed by the Organising Committee and the team may be subject to relegation.

16.11.2 The team finishing bottom of the league will be asked to play in a playoff if the team that wins the Championship Cup meets the criteria to play in the Premiership and wishes to participate in the playoff.

Championship North and South

16.11.3 The winner of Championship North and South league will play each other in the Championship Cup (North v South).

If a 1st XV wins the Championship cup they may be given the opportunity to play off with the bottom placed team in the Premiership if the team meets the criteria to play in this league, provided the 1st XV of the same Clubs is not already in the Premiership.

16.11.4 At the end of the Season there will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated.

Championship 2 – North, Midlands, South East, South West

16.11.5 Two teams across all leagues in Championship 2 will be promoted to the Championship at the end of the 2014-15 Season. The winning teams from the North, Midlands, South East and South West will participate in a play-off for promotion to Championship North and South respectively. The North will play the Midlands for a place in the Championship North and the South East will play the South West for a place in Championship South.

16.11.6 At the end of each Season, the bottom two teams across both leagues in the Championship will be relegated.

National Challenge 1 & below

16.11.7 One team across all leagues at the relevant level will be promoted at the end of the 2014-15 Season.

16.11.8 At the end of the Season, there will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated.

16.12 League Points

Premiership, Championship, Championship 2 and National Challenge 1

16.12.1 In the Premiership, Championship, Championship 2 and National Challenge 1, league points are awarded as follows:

(a) 4 points for a win

(b) 2 points for a draw

(c) 0 points for a loss

16.12.2 A bonus point will be awarded to a team:

(a) on each occasion it scores five or more tries in a league match

(b) on each occasion it loses a league match by 15 points or less

16.12.3 Final league positions will be calculated as follows:

(a) The team scoring the highest number of points (including bonus points) shall be placed first, and the other teams placed in descending order according to the points gained.

(b) If two or more teams have equal points, they will be placed according to the match points difference.

Note: to calculate the match points difference where a defaulted fixture or uncontested scrums are involved, the points scored for and against and any bonus points in any equivalent fixture for the other team(s) will not be used in the final calculations.

(c) If two or more teams have equal match points difference, they shall be placed according to the greatest number of match points scored (incorporating note above as applicable).

(d) If two or more teams have equal match points they shall be placed according to the greatest number of tries scored.

(e) If two or more teams have scored equal number of tries they shall be placed according to the greatest number of drop goals scored.

(f) If two or more teams are still equal they shall be placed according to the greatest number of conversions scored.

(g) If two or more teams are still equal they shall be placed according to the number of penalties scored.

(h) If two or more teams are still equal they will share the league title and the winner of the league will be decided with a play-off game between the two teams.

National Challenge 2 and below

16.12.4 In National Challenge 2 and below, league points are awarded as follows:

(a) 3 points for a win

(b) 2 points for a draw

(c) 1 point for playing

(d) 0 for not playing

16.12.5 A bonus of 1 point will be awarded to a team that plays 15 Players or more, unless a team has borrowed Players to make up 15 Players in which case a bonus point will not be awarded.

16.13 Discipline

16.13.1 All allegations of Foul Play and Misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

16.13.2 Subject to the variations set out below, all allegations of illegal/Foul Play or Misconduct shall be shall dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

16.13.3 Any Player ordered-off the field of play, cited by an opposition team (in accordance with RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 4) or subject to an allegation of Misconduct shall appear before an RFU Disciplinary Panel to answer the charge(s). Any appeal against a decision of an RFU Disciplinary Panel will be to an RFU Appeal Panel.

16.13.4 Any Player ordered-off the field of play will be provisionally suspended until her case has been dealt with by an RFU Disciplinary Panel and, if there is an appeal, until the matter has been determined by an RFU Appeal Panel.

16.13.5 The disciplinary administration fees applicable will be the same as those that apply to Levels 5 & below in RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 3.

16.14 Breaches of Regulations

16.14.1 Any matters alleged to be in breach of these Regulations shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Organising Committee who shall have the power to deal with and discipline any team, Player or such other individuals for such breach including (without limitation) imposing sanctions such as loss of match or competition points, review of the result, altering league position, match replay, monetary fines or compensation award and/or disqualification. The Organising Committee and/or the RFU Head of Discipline shall also have the power to request that any breach of these Regulations is dealt with in accordance with the RFU Disciplinary Procedures as set out in RFU Regulation 19.

16.14.2 Any alleged breach or complaint should be referred, in writing, to the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department within 7 days of the alleged breach.

16.14.3 Any appeal of the Organising Committee's decision may be made by a party to the proceedings to the RFU Head of Discipline in accordance with the appeal disciplinary procedures set out in RFU Regulation 19.

16.15 Fixed Sanction

16.15.1 Without prejudice to any of the above Regulations, where it is determined by the Organising Committee that a team has not complied with the Regulations as set out below, the following fixed sanctions shall apply in respect of that breach and such sanctions will be final and binding with no right of appeal:

Failing to telephone result in by 6pm (Regulation 16.7.6)	£25
Failure to send in match day form within 5 days (Regulation 16.7.7)	£25
Failure to send in squad list (Regulation 16.7.1)	£20
Providing false information and the playing of unregistered Players (Regulation 16.7.8)	£100 per player
Failing to fill in yellow and red card forms (Regulation 16.7.7)	£20

16.16 Laws of the Game (including replacements and substitutes)

16.16.1 All matches played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and/or in RFU Women Competitions or any other competition or merit table must be played in accordance with the IRB Laws (including the IRB Under 19 Law Variations) and any such law variations set out in Appendix 1 (and/or otherwise agreed by the RFU).

16.16.2 The specific Regulations relating to replacements, substitutions and uncontested scrums are set out in Appendix 1.