

ADULT COMPETITIONS – HAMPSHIRE DOMESTIC LEAGUES

NOTE: Hampshire Premiership and Hampshire Leagues 1 are subject to RFU regulations and directives.

1. The Leagues under the control of Hampshire Rugby Union shall be named in descending order Hampshire Two, Three and Four.

2. The aims of these Competitions are :

- (a) To produce winners of the Leagues Two, Three and Four.
- (b) To provide a stable platform for the movement of teams from the Domestic Leagues into the Hampshire County Leagues within the National RFU League framework .

3. Competition Regulations

- (a) All matches shall be played under the laws of Rugby Football and comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Rugby Football Union, where appropriate but subject also to amendments approved by the Competitions Committee as set out below in Paragraphs 4(c), 4(d), 4(e) and 8.
- (b) The Regulations detailed below shall apply for season 2019-20 and will be further revised by the Competitions Committee for the following seasons.

4. Organising Committee

- (a) Adult Competitions comprising the Hampshire Domestic Leagues shall be organised by the Competitions Committee, which may issue administrative instructions in amplification of this Regulation.
- (b) All communications from Clubs relating to Competitions are to be addressed to the appropriate League Secretary whose details shall be promulgated in the Hampshire Rugby Union Handbook.
- (c) Each Club must nominate a Club Official for each Competition who shall be responsible for communication with the appropriate League Secretary. The name and contact details of this official must be sent to the League Secretary before the beginning of September each year.

Communications to Clubs will normally be made only to the Clubs' nominated Official.

It is the responsibility of Clubs to ensure these communications are properly actioned.

- (d) Except where otherwise stated, the decision of the Competitions Committee shall be binding and final on any matter not provided for in and on the interpretation of this Regulation.
- (e) Questions from Clubs on any matters not obviously covered in these Regulations shall initially be considered by the Competitions Committee and, if necessary, then referred to the Game Development Committee for a final decision.

5. Eligibility of Clubs and Seeding

- (a) A Club may enter in a Domestic League any of their male adult XV's not participating in the RFU Leagues.
- (b) There will be automatic promotion and relegation .but initially Clubs will be allocated by the Committee into the most appropriate league to provide as even a competition as possible within reasonable travelling requirements.
- (c) Not more than one XV of a Club shall be placed in any one Domestic League.
- (d) New Entrants

Applications from paid-up Associate Clubs from neighboring counties to join the Domestic Leagues will be considered by the Competitions Committee providing this is of benefit to Hampshire's Clubs.

6. Eligibility of Players

- (a) A Club may not be represented in a match by a player who has not reached the minimum age set by the RFU for registration for the English Club Championship.
- (b) A Club may not be represented in the front row of the scrum, by a player who has not reached the age of 18.
- (c) To meet the aim of retention of players, all Clubs must endeavor to get games played for the benefit of all the players concerned. To achieve this, it is permissible for spare players to be loaned to the opposing Club if it has less than a full XV on the day of a Domestic League match i.e Hampshire Leagues 2, 3 and 4 (see Regulation 6.f below).
- (d) If a match is played with such players **then the Team Managers must agree beforehand** whether the result will count for the Domestic League. **In the event of the offer of spare players being declined para. 6(h) below will apply.**
- (e) **In the spirit of these competitions if more "senior" teams in a Club are not playing then a Domestic League team should be selected only after a "notional selection" of the senior team(s) has taken place.** The Team Manager/Captain of such a team must advise the opposition Team Manager/Captain before the match if his Club has used players from a more "senior" team and must confirm with his opposite number whether or not he has any objection to the match being classified as "played" for the purposes of the competition. **If there is an objection the result of the match shall be declared void and the League Secretary shall decide whether competition points are to be awarded to the "non-offending" team.**
- (f) Hampshire 3&4 differ in that games in these Leagues only(NOT Hampshire 2) may start with a minimum of ten a side in an attempt to maximize the number of players taking part and to minimize the number of cancellations due to lack of players. Clubs are required to assist each other to maximize the number of players per side and the referee should be informed before kick-off of the number of participating players when less than fifteen.
- (g) In Hampshire 3&4 ONLY a game may be played throughout with uncontested scrums if there are no suitable front row players available. If a game is played at any point however, with uncontested scrums the result shall stand. It is hoped, however, that wherever possible a match will be played with contested scrums so that all the players may gain satisfaction from the game.

- (h) In the event of a match being played in Hampshire League 3 and 4 between uneven numbers of players no team shall have more than one extra player than their opponents, at any stage of the game other than during yellow or red card suspensions.

7. Domestic Leagues – Match Programmes and Points

- (a) Matches will be played as follows

Hampshire League Two – 14 teams will play a total of 19 matches split into two conferences of 7 teams; In each conference, teams will play each other twice (12 games home and away) and the opposite conference 7 teams once (7 games home OR away). League results will appear in a single table format.

Hampshire 2 will have promotion play offs at the end of the season on the RFU matrix specified playoff dates. Playoff positions will be: #1 vs. #4 and #2 vs. #3. The winners of these 2 playoff matches will be promoted to Hampshire 1. These playoffs will be played under full RFU regulations including registered players and match cards.

Hampshire League Three - the 19 teams will play just once home or away.

Hampshire League Four - the 10 teams will play each other twice home and away.

- (b) Competition points will be awarded as follows: For a win: five points; For a draw: three points; others i.e. match abandoned = two points. For a loss: one point; For losing by less than 15 points; one point.

In Hampshire 2 ONLY: four try bonus; one point.

- (c) Failure to participate in a League fixture without a sufficiently acceptable reason, as determined by the Domestic League Secretary, shall result in a penalty of 5 points being deducted from the offending team. The non-offending Club shall be awarded 5 points.
- (d) The position of a Club in a Domestic League will be decided on the competition points for the matches played or awarded.
- (e) If one or more Domestic League Clubs have the same total of match points then the difference between points for and against will be used. If this fails to identify the higher placed Club then the results of the games between the Clubs concerned shall decide; then it will be the Club scoring most match points in those games.

8. Domestic Leagues – Match Dates

- (a) A Club wishing to initiate a change of match date must firstly obtain approval from the League Secretary. Once approved the date may then be changed subject to the agreement of the opposition. The initiating Club must then inform the League Secretary, the Referees Society Week-End Re-Appointer, and the Webmaster of the new date.
- (b) Domestic League matches shall normally be played on the same day as a First XV league fixture or, in the case of a Third XV match, on the same day as a Second XV Competition match.

When possible Domestic League fixtures shall mirror Hampshire or London League fixtures, especially for clubs visiting the Isle of Wight and providing always that sufficient pitches are available at the home club.

Clubs may not cancel matches for reasons other than bad weather and ground conditions and, on the same day, field a team at lower level without first seeking the agreement of the League Secretary.

- (c) In the event that a lower team is fielded in the Domestic Leagues and wins its match when a higher XV of that Club does not have a fixture, or that fixture does not take place, then there may be grounds for appeal to the League Secretary to review the result if it is suspected that a significant number of players from a higher level team have been fielded.
- (d) If a team defaults in a league match and the Club has a lower team in a league that plays and wins on that same day then the lower team **may** be deemed by the League Secretary to have played and lost, with a Nil – Nil score possibly recorded. The circumstances of each such decision may be reviewed by the Competitions Committee.
- (e) **Failure to comply with this requirement will mean that any league points gained by the team at lower level shall be disallowed and 5 points will be deducted from the offending team.**
- (f) If a Club wishes to change the League match date from a Saturday to a Friday or a Sunday, or vice versa then it must discuss this with its opponents and the League Secretary, who shall discuss the request with the Hampshire Rugby Referees (HRR) Appointments Secretary.

This is particularly important and any procedural errors could be very costly, either in League points or financially, when a Channel Island / IOW club is involved.

The lack of availability of an appropriately qualified referee may cause the League Secretary to refuse such a change.

- (g) If the agreement of all parties is obtained the home Club must inform the Hampshire Rugby Referees (HRR) Secretary and the Webmaster as soon as the change of date is agreed and not later than five days before the original or revised date whichever is the earlier.

Without agreement being reached the match shall take place on the day nominated.

9. Colours

- (a) In the event of a clash of colours the home team shall change subject to the satisfaction of the referee.
- (b) The jerseys of teams should be numbered to ensure correct identification of players and replacements during a match; however no team shall be penalized for not wearing numbered shirts.

10. Replacements/Substitutes

In Hampshire 2; up to 20 players may be included in a matchday squad utilising rolling subs, you may not have more than this number available at the start of the match or during.

Sanction for non-compliance- 4 point deduction from the offending team.

In Hampshire 3&4: up to 22 players may be included in a matchday squad utilising rolling subs, you may not have more than this number available at the start of the match or during without prior agreement with the opposition Captain.

Sanction for non-compliance- 4 point deduction from the offending team.

11. Kick-off Time

- (a) The Kick-off Time shall be the "Recommended Kick-off Time" as printed on the

Page iv of the Handbook. In the event of either side seeking an adjustment of kick off time through travel or other issues there must be an agreement between the two teams and the referee or the original kick off time shall stand. The Kick-off Time of any match involving a Channel Islands Club must be adjusted if necessary to accommodate travel arrangements.

- (b) **Any change to the Kick-off time must be notified by the home Club to the League Secretary and to the match referee or the Referee Appointments Secretary as soon as the change is agreed by both Clubs, and not later than five days before the match date.**

12 Venues and Grounds

- (a) The cost of travel to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Wight is recognised as being far in excess of what equivalent Clubs and their age grade teams might expect to meet in any other County. It is intended therefore that, until such time that regular Rugby Football Union funding is forthcoming, the following restrictions are applied.
- (b) In competitions involving mainland Clubs if the first-named Club in a scheduled Domestic League fixture plays its home fixtures on the Channel Islands, the match shall nevertheless be played on the mainland of Hampshire or the Isle of Wight either on the ground of the second-named Club or if the Channel Island Club shall so wish, on the ground of any other Club on the mainland of Hampshire (but not the Isle of Wight). In the latter event all arrangements which are to be agreed with the host Club shall be made by the Channel Island Club which shall be responsible for any ground expenses incurred and shall be at no cost to the host Club involved. The Channel Island Club shall be responsible for all its own travel costs.
- (c) However if the second-named Club agrees then the Channel Island Club may play at home in which case it shall offer to refund the cost of travel to the Island for the mainland Club. Such costs are to be met for a party not exceeding twenty-two players plus three other Club officials. Costs to and from the point of embarkation or dis-embarkation are to be met by the mainland Club.
- (d) Clubs may agree to change the match venue.
- (e) Any change of venue must be notified **by the original home Club** to the League Secretary, the Hampshire Rugby Referees Secretary, the match Referee and the PRO as soon as the change is agreed by both Clubs, and not later than three days before the date of the match.
- (f) **The Home Club is responsible for correctly and clearly marking its pitch including technical areas and it must make proper provision for safety.** Technical area must be should be no larger than 10 metres and at least 1 metre from the touch line.
- (g) If 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 the pitch is necessary, it shall be made by the captains (Colts = Team Managers) of the teams concerned. If they are unable to agree the appointed referee shall take into consideration the safety of the players before making the decision.
- (h) At all times there should be easy accessible entry for an ambulance to the pitch and ready access to a telephone (ideally a mobile telephone at pitch side). Home Clubs are strongly recommended to ensure that a trained first aider, doctor or other medically qualified person is present throughout the match. Team Managers must be aware of the ground post code to assist the emergency services.

- (i) Home Clubs are to confirm arrangements with the away Club by 2000 on the Wednesday before the fixture.

13. Referees and Assistant Referees (Touch Judges)

- (a) The Competitions Committee shall notify all Domestic League fixtures to the Hampshire Rugby Referees (HRR) Secretary before 30 June.
- (b) The HRR shall endeavor to appoint a referee to all matches.
- (c) The normal charge for referees and appointed touch judges shall be levied on the home Club.
- (d) Having confirmed the match arrangements with the visiting Club, the home Club shall confirm venue, date and kick-off time with the referee appointed by the Society directly by telephone (not by leaving a message on an answer-machine, and not by e-mail as there is no guarantee that the referee will receive either message) by 2100 on the Thursday before the scheduled fixture. The home Club shall also confirm venue, date and kick-off time, when appropriate, with any touch judges appointed by the Society. Clubs are advised that match officials are unlikely to attend if they have not had verbal confirmation.
- (e) If the appointed referee has not arrived by the agreed kick-off time, or if the referee is unable to officiate for the whole of the match, and a replacement referee is available, the Team Managers or Captains of the two teams concerned may agree that a replacement referee may officiate. Such agreement shall be binding on the Clubs and the match result shall stand. In a Domestic League match if the Team Managers/Captains are unable to agree and the match cannot be rescheduled or replayed then the match shall be declared void.

14. Abandoned Matches

Sixty Minute Rule

- (a) If a match is abandoned when sixty or more minutes have been played then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand.
- (b) The referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played at the time of abandonment shall be final.
- (c) If agreement on a date change has not been reached, and if the reason for not playing is outside a Club's control then the League Secretary shall consider what action to take. **It is the responsibility of the relevant Team Manager to inform by telephone the League Secretary, the referee and the opposition if a match is to be cancelled.**
- (d) In the event of the unavoidable cancellation of a match because of weather conditions, or if a match is abandoned because of such conditions or because of any other safety or disciplinary reasons before sixty minutes have been played, and the match cannot be re-scheduled it shall be void and no competition points awarded.
- (e) If any other reason for not playing a match is acceptable to the League Secretary, and the match cannot be rescheduled, the match shall be void and no competition points awarded.

- (f) If the reason for not playing a match is not acceptable to the League Secretary, the non-offending Club will be awarded four points. The match shall be recorded as “not played” against the offending Club and four match points may be deducted. The League Secretary will determine any points deduction. No match points will be calculated. If the final position of another Club could be affected by such an award then the match points of a game which actually took place involving the offending Club and the affected Club may be discounted at the sole discretion of the League Secretary.

15. Late Cancellations

- (a) Regardless of the fact that it may be possible to re-arrange a match, late cancellations cause unnecessary expenses and aggravation not only to the aggrieved Club but also to the Society. If a Club is responsible for a late cancellation, providing this is communicated by telephone directly to the League Secretary, the opposition and the appointed referee **before 2100 on the Thursday evening**, the match shall be void and no competition points awarded.
- (b) A Club withdrawing from a Competition match **after 2100 on a Thursday** shall be responsible for all reasonable and irrecoverable expenses incurred and invoiced by the non-offending Club. Details of timing of cancellation and costs incurred by the non-offending Club are to be passed to the League Secretary for approval and sending to the offending Club. The offending Club is expected to pay the costs within one month of receipt.
- (c) If the reason for any withdrawal is not acceptable to the Committee the Club may be excluded from the relevant Competition in the following season or seasons and may be required to pay a bond before any subsequent entry is accepted.
- (d) A Club which withdraws from a match and subsequently plays its team in another fixture on the scheduled date shall be fined on the first occasion and a double fine on any subsequent occasion.
- (e) These fines and the amount of any bond shall be set annually by the Committee and published in the Handbook.

16. Match Results

(a) In Hampshire 2: The Home Club shall inform the League Secretary by telephone or e-mail of the result and scores of the match or of the fact that the match has not been played as soon as possible and certainly no later than 2000 on the day of the match

In Hampshire 3&4: The Home Club shall inform the League Secretary by telephone or e-mail of the result and scores of the match or of the fact that the match has not been played as soon as possible and certainly no later than 2000 on the Monday following the match

- (b) The League Secretary shall provide the results of matches and the latest tables to the Webmaster for publication on the Hampshire Rugby and the RFU Fixtures and Results web site

17. Other Matters that may arise :

Questions from Clubs on any matters not obviously covered in the Regulations above shall initially be considered by the Competitions Committee and, if necessary, then referred to the Game Development Committee for a final decision.

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REGISTERED UNDER THE CO-OPERATIVE AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETIES ACT 2014
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