



## Ulster Women's Competitions Regulations 2017-18

### **1. GENERAL**

- (a) These regulations govern all Ulster Women's Rugby Competitions.
- (b) All Clubs competing in competitions shall be deemed to have accepted and to be bound by these regulations.

### **2. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S RUGBY COMPETITIONS**

- (a) The Ulster Branch Competitions Management Committee (CMC) will nominate up to three Representatives to the Ulster Women's Competitions Sub-Committee, hereafter referred to as the UWCC,
- (b) The UWCC shall administer and manage Ulster Women's Rugby competitions.
- (c) The UWCC shall decide:-
  - (i) the dates on which matches, including replays, shall be played
  - (ii) the venues of matches
  - (iii) whether or not extra time if necessary shall be played
- (d) The UWCC may at any time scrutinise team lists, reinstatements, referees' reports or other relevant material and apply competition regulations as appropriate.
- (e) The UWCC may refer matters of conduct and responsibility, or of discipline, to the Honorary Secretary of the Ulster Branch.

### **3. PROTESTS OR APPEALS AND DECISIONS OF THE UWCC**

- (a) A Club wishing to make an official protest or appeal to the CMC in relation to a fixture must do so in writing on Club note paper signed by the Honorary Secretary or President of the club to reach the Branch Office within 96 hours after the end of the match to which it relates.
- (b) A Club may appeal any decision of the UWCC. Any such appeal must be lodged in writing by the Honorary Secretary or President of the Club within 96 hours of the club receiving official notification of the UWCC decision and addressed to the Honorary Competitions Secretary of the Branch. The appeal must be accompanied by a sum of £250 which may, at the discretion of the CMC, be refunded in whole or in part. The appeal will be heard by the CMC excluding those members also belonging to the UWCC.

### **4. DURATION OF GAME**

- (a) Save as provided in (b) below:-
  - (i) The duration of a match shall normally be 80 minutes subject to the Laws of the Game.
  - (ii) In the knock-out stages of all Cup Competitions extra time of 10 minutes each way will be played in the case of a draw at full time. Extra time will also be played in all play-off matches for promotion or relegation.
  - (iii) In the finals of Cup Competitions where, after extra time, the match still ends in a draw the Cup will be shared.

### **5. REFEREES**

- (a) The Ulster Society of Rugby Football Referees shall (whenever possible) appoint Referees for all League and Cup matches.
- (b) In relation to Law 6 (Laws of the Game) if a referee, having been duly appointed for a Cup or League game, is not in attendance, or if such appointment was not made, or if a referee who was

appointed for a Cup or League game is unable to officiate for the whole period of a match, the game as scheduled may be postponed or in the latter case may be abandoned and reported to the UWCC.

- (c) If either Club offers an alternative person to referee (including a referee spectating at the ground) in circumstances covered by (b) to enable the match to be played or concluded, agreement to the arrangements should be confirmed by both Captains signing the team lists submitted to the Referee before the game or before the game is concluded.
- (d) Save as provided in (c) above, changes of a referee's appointment after arrival at a ground can only take place with the approval of a Referee's Selector.
- (e) Referees may refuse to permit players to take part in a game if not wearing the registered Club jersey. If the registered colours of teams in a match are of such similarity as would present playing or refereeing difficulties, it is the responsibility of the home team to make the necessary change and to notify the Branch and opponents of such change.

## **6. COMPETITIONS PROVISIONS**

- (a) The team winning a league match shall be awarded four points. In the case of a drawn league game, each team shall receive two points. One bonus point will be awarded to a team scoring four or more tries in a league match, and one bonus point will be awarded to a team losing by seven points or less. Any team failing to fulfil a league fixture shall have five points deducted from its league points scored, and their opponents shall receive five points. In the case of two or more teams having an equal number of points, a deciding match or matches may be arranged as the CMC may determine.
- (b) Where a team is unable to field either sufficient numbers to play a competitive league fixture, or a suitably trained and experienced front row, but chooses to fulfil the fixture, the following provisions will apply :-
  - (i) such team will forfeit the fixture and the opposition will be awarded 5 points ; and
  - (ii) if the fixture is played in modified format, and is not in violation of the provisions of Regulation 17 (a), the team forfeiting shall not be subject to a deduction of 5 points under the provisions of Regulation 6(a), but shall be subject to a deduction of 1 point.
- (c) Should teams finish equal on total league points the position in the division will be decided according to the result of the fixtures between them. If this does not produce a winner then the ranking will be decided as follows: the total average difference between points scored and points conceded in the games played in their entire division; if this fails to produce a result then the team scoring the greatest number of points per game actually played in their entire division.

## **7. TEAMSHEETS AND NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

- (a) The full names of the players of each team, and the number of their playing position, must be given to the referee before the start of each match and he shall retain same and forward them to the Branch if requested.
- (b) The referee shall submit the result and number of tries scored by each team by text to the Branch immediately following the end of the game.
- (c) In the event of any matter of importance affecting a match, including red and yellow cards or serious injury the referee shall submit a report about the incident on-line to the Branch within 24 hours of the end of the game.
- (d) No later than 96 hours from the end of a game, each club shall submit to the Branch an electronic teamsheet setting out the names and registration numbers of the players who played or were named as substitutes.

## **8. REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS, AND PAYMENTS TO PLAYERS**

8.1 All players must be registered on the IRFU Registration system prior to their inclusion in a Championship fixture.

8.2 Clubs with more than one team will comply with the reinstatement provisions for the movement of players between each team (see section 9 below).

8.3 All Clubs are subject to the provisions of Regulation 6 of the Regulations of the Irish Rugby Football Union ("the IRFU Regulations").

(a) In addition the following provisions shall apply:-

(i) A player shall not be eligible to play for a club unless she is registered with that club in accordance with the IRFU Regulations, and in the case of knock-out Cup Competitions she shall be ineligible to take part in any such Competition unless she shall have been so registered before the commencement of the particular Competition.

(ii) A player may not transfer as a playing member from one Club to another unless she is free from any financial obligation with the Club he is leaving.

(iii) A player whose transfer has not been completed in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6.4.4 of the IRFU Regulations by the 31 January in any year will not be eligible to play for her new Club in Branch League or Cup Competitions.

8.4 The term "dual status" refers to a player who although a bona fide registered playing member of a League or non League Club in Ireland may play for a Club in the Championship provided the following regulations are observed. A League Club shall be limited to selecting or playing not more than three such players in one season. Selection shall include players who are selected as replacements/substitutes for Championship matches.

8.5 Players shall not represent other clubs playing in the same League. Players can only play up the divisions. Players from higher division clubs shall not play for lower division clubs.

8.6 A Championship Club wishing to use the dual status principle shall follow the procedures set out below. A request shall be made to the Secretary of the player's Club. When permission is obtained, an application shall be made in writing to the UWCC at least forty eight hours prior to each match in which they intend to play, enclosing the written permission of the non-Championship Club.

8.7 The name/s of dual status player/s shall be indicated on the Championship team sheet (D/S). Dual status players shall satisfy regulation 8 relating to player eligibility. A player shall only be a dual status member of one Championship Club in any one season.

8.8 Youths who have not reached their 18th birthday are ineligible to participate in any form of Adult contact (XV's or 7s) rugby.

## **9. REINSTATEMENTS**

(a) The UWCC shall have the power to reinstate:-

(i) players who have become disqualified from league competitions, and

(ii) players (other than players selected by a Club in breach of Regulation 13 below, who have become disqualified from cup competition, provided that application is made on the electronic teamsheet submitted to the Branch under the provisions of Regulation 7 above and provided that such application is received by the Branch by 10am 3 working days before the match in which the player seeks to play.

(b) A player becomes disqualified if, during the current season, she has played, in aggregate, three or more cup and league matches for a team in her Club playing in a higher grade.

- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, the power of the UWCC to reinstate a player under the provision of (a) above shall only arise after that player has become disqualified in accordance with the provisions of (b) above.
- (d) A Club applying to reinstate a player shall:-
- (i) provide the reason for such reinstatement;
  - (ii) state the league sections from, and to, which the player is to be reinstated;
  - (ii) provide the full playing record of the player for that season; and
  - (iv) include details of any previous reinstatements in respect of the player during that season.
- (e) A player may be reinstated a maximum of once in a season, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the UWCC.
- (f) A club applying to reinstate a player in exceptional circumstances, as provided in (e), above, shall provide full and detailed reasons in writing in support of its application.
- (g) A player cannot be reinstated on the grounds that she is returning from injury unless she has been unable, by virtue of that injury, to play for a least the previous two weeks.
- (h) A club may not apply, in any one week, to reinstate more than 3 players.
- (i) For the purposes of this regulation the grades of League shall be: (i) AIL (ii) Ulster Women's Championship league Division One and (iii) Ulster Women's Championship league Division Two.

#### **10. UNQUALIFIED PLAYERS**

If any Club includes in its team, any player who is not duly qualified to represent it, the team shall be deemed to have lost the match, and in the case of a league match will have two points deducted from its league total to date.

#### **11. FALSIFYING TEAMSHEETS**

If any Club includes in its team any player who is not duly qualified to represent it, and includes that player in the electronic teamsheet under a name or registration number other than her own, the team shall, in addition to any sanctions which may be applied under the provisions of Regulation 10 above:

- (i) in the case of a league match, have sixteen points deducted from its league total to date;
- (ii) in the case of a match in a cup competition, may be debarred from entering that competition in the following season, and the Club may be subject to further sanction by the Disciplinary Committee of the Branch if its conduct is held to be detrimental to the best interests of the Game.

#### **12. THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND THE REPLACEMENT AND SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS**

- (a) Teams participating in the women's rugby competitions must comply with Law 3 of the Game in respect of the nomination and replacement/substitution of players.
- (b) The following provisions will apply in respect of the number of players:
- (i) Clubs will field 15-a-side teams with a maximum of 22 players. Clubs must play with the maximum number of players available to them (up to 15).
  - (ii) Substitutes can only be used if the club start with 15 players. In all competitions in which substitutions are permitted such substitutions shall be rolling.
  - (iii) When a club cannot field 15 players they must field what is available to a minimum of 14 players (in the Ulster Women's Championship league Division One) and a minimum of 13 players (in the Ulster Women's Championship Division Two) for the fixture to be valid.
  - (iv) Both teams must start with the same number of players (in the Ulster Women's Championship league Division One) and a minimum of 13 players (in the Ulster Women's Championship Division Two).

- (v) Where a club is aware that they have fewer than 15 available players they must inform their opposition by at least 6pm the day prior to the match of their starting numbers.
  - (vi) Any team in the Women's Championship league Division One, regardless of numbers, should begin the game with suitably trained front row players, in order for the game to stand as a valid fixture.
- (e) All games played in the Ulster Women's Championship Division One will be played under U19 scrummaging rules. Games played in the Ulster Women's Championship Division Two will be played under either U19 scrummaging rules or uncontested scrums – both teams to agree which option will be used and inform the referee before the commencement of the game.
- (d) If on any occasion where, after the match has commenced, uncontested scrums are ordered by the Referee as a result of there being no suitably trained and experienced front row replacement for any reason (which includes injury, temporary blood injury, temporary exclusion (i.e. following a yellow card) or permanent exclusion (i.e. following a sending off), **the team concerned shall not be entitled to replace the player whose departure caused the uncontested scrums**. On return to the field of play of the front row player who has been temporarily excluded or injured, the match shall continue with contested scrums.

### **13. CUP TIED PLAYERS**

A Club may not select a player from a higher team to play in the semi-final or final of any cup unless the player has played in a previous round of the competition or in exceptional circumstances permission is granted by the UWCC. For the purposes of this provision a player from a higher team shall be deemed to be a player who, during the current season, has played three or more matches in aggregate for a higher team or teams in cup and league competitions.

### **14. STARTING TIMES OF MATCHES**

Matches shall kick off at 1pm on the Sunday. However, if for any reason two Clubs mutually agree to an alternative date or kick off time, both Clubs shall apply in writing to the UWCC on the Wednesday prior to the date of the match in question and obtain consent in writing from the UWCC prior to the match. All match changes are subject to the availability of a referee.

### **15. CHANGE OF DATES**

When the date and time of any match has been approved by the UWCC the same shall not be changed without the prior permission of the UWCC, other than under the provisions of Regulation 19, and any Club or Clubs contravening this regulation shall be deemed to have lost the match unless the UWCC rules otherwise. Any postponed league game must be re-arranged, and notification sent to the Branch by the Home club, within 14 days of the original date, in default of which the game will be re-arranged by the UWCC.

### **16. REFUSAL TO PLAY**

(a) League and Cup matches must be completed by the date specified by the UWCC

(b) In the event of a Club failing to play a match or replay on the stipulated date or refusing to play extra time if ordered to do so by the UWCC having control of the competition, it shall be adjudged to have lost the match unless the UWCC consider there was a reasonable and proper cause for the refusal and, if the match is a Cup match, may be liable to a fine as provided in Regulation 17.

### **17. POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF MATCHES**

(a) Clubs must cancel league and cup matches from the lowest team upwards.

(b) Any Club postponing a match (with the permission of the CMC in accordance with Regulation 16 above), or cancelling a match, for any reason, must immediately notify:-

- (i) The Honorary Secretary or an authorised official of the opposing Club
- (ii) The Branch in writing or e-mail (Branch will notify Referee if cancellation is more than 24 hours before kick-off)
- (iii) The Referee, if postponement or cancellation is within 24 hours of kick off.

- (b) Any Club failing to comply with (b) above may be liable to a fine of £100 in respect of the expenses of a referee who travels, and may, at the discretion of the CMC, be held liable to pay the travelling expenses of the visiting Club.

### **18. PROTESTS OR APPEALS**

A Club wishing to make an official protest or appeal to the UWCC in relation to a fixture must do so in writing on Club note paper signed by the Honorary Secretary or President of the club to reach the Branch Office within 96 hours after the end of the match to which it relates.

### **19. FITNESS OF GROUND**

Prior to kick-off the Home Club shall be the sole judge of the fitness of the ground for the playing of a League or Cup match. In the case of a public ground the decision shall lie with the groundsman in charge. Once a match starts the referee is the sole judge of the fitness of the ground

### **20. CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

- (a) Clubs participating in the women's league and cup competitions are responsible and accountable for the conduct of their players, officials, members and supporters in attendance at matches.
- (b) For the purposes of the women's league and cup competitions misconduct shall mean conduct, behaviour or practices on or off the playing enclosure, which may bring the game of rugby or the Union into disrepute or may be detrimental to the best interests of the Union or of the game in accordance with the Union/Province Disciplinary Regulations.
- (c) Breaches of this regulation shall be dealt with under the Union/Province Disciplinary Regulations.
- (d) Each participating Club will be represented by registered members of the Club who are eligible pursuant to these regulations. Each Club shall play at full available strength in all matches unless some satisfactory reason is given.
- (e) No player may participate in the women's league and cup competitions while serving a disciplinary sanction imposed by the Union, by a Branch of the Union or by her Club.