

CUMBRIA YOUTH AND JUNIOR LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2026

1. APPLICABLE OPERATIONAL RULES

- 1.1 The Cumbria Youth and Junior League (CYJL) is part of the RFL Tier 4 Competition Structure within the National Community Rugby League (NCRL). Governance of this competition sits with the RFL under its Operational Rules for Tiers Three and Four, while day-to-day management is delegated to the CYJL Management Group.
- 1.2 These rules apply to all teams competing in the Cumbria Youth & Junior League (U12–U18). Primary Rugby League (U6–U11) is governed by its own dedicated Primary Rugby League Rules, which cover all playing, coaching, festival, and matchday requirements for those age groups. However, Club membership requirements, volunteer qualifications, safeguarding standards, and the registration of primary-aged players remain subject to the relevant sections of this document.
- 1.3 All teams must also comply with the RFL Operational Rules applicable to Tiers Three and Four.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Eligibility

Membership is open to all Rugby League Clubs in Cumbria that meet the Annual Entry Criteria set by the Management Group. Membership may be reviewed if a Club has a poor disciplinary record or falls below the criteria.

2.2 Application Process

Clubs must submit their membership application using the official process issued by the League, no later than 6th January 2026. Membership is granted for one season only, and all Clubs are required to reapply each year.

2.3 Fees

The annual subscription for membership in the League shall be as follows:

- Primary teams (6s–11s): £20 per team
- Youth teams (12s–18s): £80 per team, which includes entry into the relevant Cup competitions

All fees must be paid by 28th February 2026. Payment instructions will be issued by the RFL. In future seasons, the deadline for payment will be 31st January.

Teams will not be cleared for fixtures or transfers until all fees are paid.

2.4 Club Roles and Qualifications

2.4.1 Mandatory Club Roles

Each Club must have the following roles in place for membership to be approved:

- Club Chair
- Club Secretary
- Club Treasurer
- Club Welfare Officer (RFL-registered)

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- Registered Game Day Managers
- Qualified First Aiders
- Coaches for each team

These roles must be held by separate individuals unless otherwise permitted by the RFL.

2.4.2 Coaching Qualifications Coaches must hold the following minimum qualifications:

- Primary age groups (U6–U11): Level 1 Coaching Licence
- Youth age groups (U12+): Level 2 Coaching Licence

All coaches must be registered on GameDay with up-to-date qualification and licence expiry dates.

2.4.3 These roles, along with key Club details, must be submitted via the Club Registration Form (CRF1) by the published deadline. The CRF1 must include:

- Club Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson (3 separate individuals)
- Optional Nominated Club Person
- List of teams for the season
- Coaches with qualifications and expiry dates. Coaches who remain in 'pending' status for more than 12 months will not be accepted as qualified coaches.
- Two separate contacts with email addresses
- Registered Game Day Managers (mandatory)
- Accreditation status
- Welfare Officer (RFL registered)
- Qualified First Aiders (mandatory)

The Club Secretary or Nominated Club Person is responsible for ensuring CRF1 accuracy and must have full GameDay access. Changes to volunteers must be notified in writing within 14 days.

2.5 Club Meetings Attendance

All member Clubs are required to attend designated Club Meetings, including the Annual Clubs Meeting. Failure to attend without prior approval from the League Secretary may result in a fine of up to £50, or other sanctions as determined by the CYJL Management Group.

3. START AND END DATE OF THE COMPETITION

- 3.1 The RFL shall determine the commencement date of its competition and the date upon which it shall cease. These dates will fit between the 1st of March and the 31st of October in any year, unless otherwise approved by the RFL, including the possibility of play-offs extending into November.
- 3.2 Any outstanding games at this time will be awarded by the Management Group once they have considered all facts around the original and any subsequent postponements in accordance with the rules in section 6.

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4. PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

4.1 All players should annually register with the Club using the RFL GameDay system. The League will circulate a link to the registration portal to the Clubs to commence the registration process.

4.2 Each team shall be permitted to register players up to the following maximum limits:

- U12–U15: Maximum of 25 registered players

The Management Group may grant exceptions to allow for additional registrations beyond these limits.

4.3 The minimum number of players that must be registered for a team to be involved in formal competitions is as follows:

- U12–U15: Minimum of 15 registered players

The Management Group may grant exceptions to allow additional recruitment beyond these limits.

4.4 Scheduled fixtures may be refused if a team has fewer than 15 players registered.

4.5 **Age Group Eligibility**

Players are eligible to play in their true age group or one age group above, in line with RFL Operational Rules. Players may only register for one team per season.

4.6 **Registration Updates**

The RFL may introduce, from time to time, new registration processes

4.7 **Player Dispensation (Youth & Junior)**

4.7.1 Player dispensations are governed by the [Player Dispensation Policy 2026.pdf](#). The League does not administer or approve dispensations; all Clubs must follow the RFL policy and associated procedures in full.

4.7.2 Dispensation requests may be considered where a player's welfare, safety, or access to the game would otherwise be compromised. Dispensations are only granted in defined circumstances, including (but not limited to) disability, significant physical development delay, chronic health conditions, cognitive or educational delay, access or pathway restrictions, exceptional individual needs, or the requirement to use medical devices or personal protective equipment.

4.7.3 All applications must be submitted in accordance with the [RFL Dispensation Policy](#), using the official RFL process and supported by appropriate evidence. Applications must be submitted through the Club Welfare Officer.

4.7.4 Dispensations will not be granted where they pose a safeguarding risk, create a competitive imbalance, or compromise the integrity of the competition.

4.7.5 Clubs are responsible for ensuring that any player granted dispensation complies with the terms, conditions, and limitations set out in the RFL approval. The League will

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recognise only those dispensations formally approved under the RFL Dispensation Policy.

4.8 Transfers

4.8.1 Transfer Limits

Teams may apply to transfer up to three players per season.

Where a Club submits two transfer requests from the same team, the Management Group may restrict any further transfers from that team for the remainder of the season, in order to protect competition integrity and ensure teams remain viable.

The decision of the Management Group is final, and there is no appeals process.

4.8.2 Discretionary Transfers

Where a player seeks to transfer and is seeking discretion of the Management Group, the Management Group will make a decision based on whether to approve such a transfer, based on all the factual circumstances and evidence placed before it. The onus is on the Club to provide all evidence required, and there shall be no right of appeal.

Factors that the panel may take into consideration in choosing to apply discretion or not include: -

- Has the Player transferred previously in that Season?
- How many Players has the new Team registered?
- What effect does allowing the transfer have on the team the player is leaving?
- If a team has five or more scholarship or academy players, they cannot transfer any more scholarship or academy players into that team.
- How many transfers has the team had in that season? And how many from the team the player is transferring from?
- Any other individual factors that make the transfer necessary or not.

4.8.3 Any player who signed a Professional contract for the following Season must finish their current season with their existing Team and may not transfer to a new Team

4.8.4 It is the responsibility of the new Club to initiate the transfer. The parent/guardian has final sign-off on the transfer. The process must be completed in full, including parent/guardian sign-off, before a player plays. The Registration Coordinator will communicate further details on the process.

4.8.5 Players may attend up to two training sessions prior to transfer approval, provided the receiving Club notifies the League in advance.

4.8.6 Clubs must declare if a player owes money or property. The maximum recoverable amount is £30, excluding kit/trophies. The £30 cap applies to monetary debts only. Kit and property must still be returned.

4.8.7 If a transfer is submitted evidencing that there are genuine safeguarding issues pursuant to the RFL's Safeguarding Policy, then this will be dealt with by the League's Welfare Officer, who will seek guidance from the RFL Safeguarding Team. The transfer

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will be held in abeyance until all investigations have been concluded. Any malicious or false allegation of a breach of the Safeguarding Policy shall be considered Misconduct.

4.8.8 A Club forming a new team at U12 and above must register a minimum of ten new players who were not previously associated with that Club before any transfer requests into that team will be considered. The Management Group may exercise discretion to relax this requirement in exceptional circumstances.

4.8.9 Scholarship players may transfer, subject to review. Transfers to Clubs with significant scholarship numbers per team may be refused

4.8.10 The deadline for transferring players shall be the **31st of August**. Only players from disbanded teams will be able to move after this date.

4.9 Clubs Running Two Teams in the Same Age Group

4.9.1 Where Clubs run 2 teams at one age group in a structured League, Clubs must have a minimum of 30 players and can register a maximum of 50. These teams can move up to 5 players temporarily between the two teams during the season, subject to the discretion of the management.

4.9.2 If a player plays for more than 5 consecutive weeks, they will be subject to an in-house transfer.

4.10 **Free Agents and Disbanded Teams**

4.10.1 Players from a disbanded team at Youth and Junior age groups will be deemed to be free agents, subject to the remaining provisions of this clause.

4.10.2 No Club or Club Official shall incite or encourage a team to disband. Where the Management Group reasonably believes that a team has been incited or encouraged to disband, it may impose such restrictions on the transfer of those players to the Club, or to the Club or Club Official responsible, as it sees fit. This is in addition to any Misconduct action that may be taken.

4.10.3 A free agent is defined as a player who has not been registered for a full playing season. Free agents may register with a new Club provided they do not owe monies or property to a previous Club. A transfer will be required to move the playing record to the new Club; this movement will not count towards the Club's transfer quota.

4.10.4 Where the Club a player is leaving fails to engage with the transfer process, does not respond within a reasonable timeframe, or does not provide the required information, the Management Group reserves the right to approve the transfer in order to protect the player's welfare and ensure fair access to the game.

5. **STRUCTURE OF COMPETITION**

5.1 The RFL, in conjunction with the Management Group, will determine the structure of the League, including its format and size, and any play-off structure.

5.2 The League will operate the following age groups in 2026:

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Under-12 – Home & Away League fixtures, plus Cup

Under-14 – Play teams once in a grading phase before split. After the split, teams will play their opponents at the opposite venue to the previous fixture once more

The Under-14 will then move to Under-15 in 2027 and Under-16 in 2028.

5.3 The League Secretary will, following consultation with the Management Group, allocate teams to a playing division.

5.4 The League will operate League divisions determined by the number of applications.

5.5 Only players who have played 2 or more League or cup fixtures for their respective team are eligible to participate in any cup semi-final, a cup final and any divisional play-off. The exception is if a player has been registered within that team at the start of the season and has been unavailable to play, the Management Group can give dispensation.

5.6 Teams that have forfeited two or more games over the course of the season shall not be eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the competition. In this event, the next qualifying team will be entered into the play-off stages.

5.7 **League Tables**

5.7.1 The League competition tables shall be compiled by the Management Group. The positions shall be determined by the number of completed matches, with points being awarded as follows: two points for each Match won; and one point for each Match drawn.

5.7.2 The Club with the highest number of points shall be at the top of the League table and the Club with the lowest shall be at the bottom.

5.7.3 The League placings will be determined and calculated as follows:

- The Club with the highest number of points shall be at the top of the League table and the Club with the lowest shall be at the bottom.
- Where Clubs have an equal number of points then relative positions shall be determined by the head-to-head record in League matches only. Where their head-to-head record is even then the aggregate score of all head-to-head League matches will decide the team on top (head-to-head placings will not be displayed on the League table but will be communicated by the Competition Officer if necessary).
- If positions are still even, the point's difference calculated by the total points scored minus points conceded shall be used, with the greater number giving the higher position.
- If this still leaves a tie, total points scored will decide the team on top and where this also is even, the least points conceded shall be used.
- If the positions are still equal, positions will be determined by the toss of a coin which shall be carried out at such time and place as the RFL shall direct and those Clubs concerned shall be entitled to witness the toss.

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5.7.4 The notional score in forfeited games shall be 24-0 and a points' deduction of 1 point on the second occasion. Please reference section 6. 24-0 forfeited games should only be used as a last resort; every effort should be made to get games played. The primary aim of Cumbria Youth & Junior League is to give as many players as possible the chance to play and develop.

5.7.5 If a Club withdraws from the League having failed to complete 50% of its scheduled games, then the Club's record shall be expunged. If a Club completes 50% or more of its scheduled games, the points will be awarded to the opponents.

5.7.6 If a Club is expelled or suspended to the end of the season, its record will be expunged, irrespective of how many games that Club has played.

5.7.7 Any Club found guilty of match official abuse will face sanctions or fines, including the possibility of a points deduction or games played behind closed doors.

6. FIXTURES - GENERAL

6.1 All League and Cup fixtures shall be arranged and published by the League Secretary.

6.2 Once Leagues have been finalised, all results between teams remaining in the same division will stand as League points. A fixture must be played to receive points unless otherwise decided by the Management Group.

6.3 No fixture shall be arranged without prior approval from the League Secretary . Any member Club participating in an unapproved fixture will be fined (see Appendix 1).

6.4 The top four teams of each division must have played each other home and away, subject to the number of teams in the division.

6.5 If no League fixture is available, a friendly may be played. Teams may not cancel a rearranged League fixture once allocated.

6.6 A team that concedes or otherwise, for whatever reason, does not fulfil a fixture scheduled, shall on the first occasion be notified that the default has been duly recorded, and further instances shall result in a 1 point deduction, and a financial penalty of £30. A score-line of 24-0 shall be applied against the defaulting Club.

6.7 The failure of a team to attend a fixture for whatever reason, without sufficient notice, shall result in the loss of the points. The reverse fixture, if not already played, shall take place at the ground of the opponents. The team shall also be responsible for the referee's fee and the post-match cost of refreshments.

6.8 Postponements due to weather

6.8.1 If the home Club suspects that its ground may be unfit for play due to adverse weather or other causes, it must immediately contact a Match Official from the RFL-approved list to conduct a ground inspection.

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If the Match Official deems the ground unfit for play and determines that it is unlikely to become playable before the scheduled kick-off, this decision must be communicated immediately to:

- The visiting team,
- The appointed Match Official, and
- The relevant Fixture Secretary.

Failure to follow this procedure may result in the home Club being found guilty of Misconduct. In addition to any sanctions, the home Club will be responsible for reimbursing reasonable travel expenses incurred by any Match Official or Club that was not notified in accordance with this rule. Travel reimbursement applies only where the visiting team was not notified before departure.

- 6.8.2 All postponements must be notified to the relevant Fixture Officer within 1 hour of the decision being made.
- 6.8.3 Where a Match does not take place because the away Club fails to turn up on the day, then in addition to such Club being found guilty of misconduct, it shall also be liable to pay £50 compensation towards refreshment costs.

6.9 Postponing Games

- 6.9.1 Teams are expected to play on their originally scheduled date. Postponing a game is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and must not be used for convenience. Any postponed game must be rearranged in line with the procedures in this section.
- 6.9.2 A game may only be postponed where it is necessary to ensure it can be played safely, fairly, and with the intended number of players. Acceptable reasons include unavoidable player or coach commitments, referee or pitch unavailability, weather-related issues, or clashes with cup fixtures.
- 6.9.3 Before submitting a formal postponement request, teams must contact their opposition to attempt to agree a suitable rearranged date.
- 6.9.4 Teams may apply to postpone up to two games per season, providing seven days' notice.
- 6.9.5 Postponement requests must provide a minimum of seven days' notice to both the opposition and the Fixture Coordinator. The reason for the postponement must be clearly stated. Reversing a fixture on the same day is not classed as a postponement but must still be communicated.
- 6.9.6 If permission to postpone is refused, teams have 24 hours to decide whether to play the fixture as scheduled, play a smaller-sided match, or forfeit the game.
- 6.9.7 Postponement requests are not permitted within the final four weeks of the season.
- 6.9.8 Cup games may not be moved from the original date unless agreed by the Fixture Coordinator.

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- 6.9.9 The Fixture Coordinator or League Secretaries will monitor postponements to prevent excessive end-of-season congestion. Where a game cannot be played, the Management Group will determine whether the result should be recorded as 24–0 or 0–0.
- 6.9.10 Postponed fixtures may be played midweek only if they replace the originally scheduled weekend fixture. To protect player welfare, teams may not play more than three times in any eight-day period.
- 6.10 Cup Rules**
- 6.10.1 Normal competition rules apply.
- 6.10.2 Cup entry is optional. Clubs must apply via the League Secretary once applications are open.
- 6.10.3 In accordance with Operational Rule B3:2:2 Cup Ties will take precedence over League Matches.
- 6.10.4 A player can only play for one team in the cup competition, if a player has played for any other team in ANY cup competition, he is cup tied for all cup games.
- 6.10.5 If a knockout game finishes level, then golden point extra time should be played (in 5 minute periods until the first score).
- 6.10.6 The draw for each round of all cup competitions shall be on the basis that the first named Club shall be the home Club, and the second named Club shall be the away Club.
- 6.10.7 Only players who have played 2 or more League or Cup fixtures for their respective team are eligible to participate in a Cup Semi Final or Final of the competition.
- 6.10.8 Home advantage for semi-finals is given to the first team drawn. That Club must provide a full-size pitch, physical barrier.
- 6.10.9 Once dates have been confirmed for cup finals, those dates shall not be changed. Unless there are circumstances outside the control of the League or otherwise decided by the Management Group for the good of the game.
- 6.10.10 The Appointments officer shall appoint the referees and kick off times for finals will be confirmed.
- 6.10.11 The League will provide up to twenty medals for League winners and cup finalists, if more are required the Club must pay the difference.
- 6.10.12 All Cups must be returned to the League one month before the finals of the following season. It is the responsibility of the Clubs to return these in a clean and good condition. The Clubs will be liable for £100 where this is not the case.

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7. MATCH DAY OPERATIONS

7.1 In the event that your Club and age groups are all drawn on the same day and in conflict with the default kick off time, then the highest age group will take priority and Clubs are encouraged to stagger the kick off times accordingly. These kick off times and days may be varied if both Clubs agree. In the event that both Clubs do not agree, then the League Secretary shall determine the day and kick off time.

7.2 To maintain the continuity of the playing programme, the League Secretary shall be empowered, if necessary, to bring forward to an earlier fixture date scheduled for later in the season.

7.3 Home Clubs must confirm the fixture and kick-off time by 9pm on the Thursday preceding the fixture. Failure to do so may result in a fine.

7.4 If a team cancels a fixture after the Thursday deadline:

- The fixture will be awarded 24–0 to the opposition and subject to a fine.
- Visiting teams may also be responsible for food costs (up to £30) and referee fees.
- Teams that postpone late and have not played their reverse fixture will lose their home game advantage.

7.5 Postponed games must be rearranged by League Secretary.

7.6 Match Duration and Ball Size

Under-11s – 20 minutes e/w size 3 ball

Under-12s – 20 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-13s – 25 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-14s – 25 minutes e/w size 5 ball

Under-15s – 30 minutes e/w size 5 ball

Under-16s – 30 minutes e/w size 5 ball

Under-18s - 35 minutes e/w size 5 ball

7.7 Contacting Opponents and Kit Obligations

7.7.1 In accordance with the Operational Rules, it is the responsibility of the home Club, during the week preceding a game, to contact both its opponents and the relevant Match Officials regarding team colours and ground directions.

7.7.2 In the event there is a clash of colours, the away team must wear an alternative strip.

7.8 Team Numbers and Match Format

7.8.1 Teams are expected to work together to ensure that fixtures are played wherever possible.

7.8.2 Standard Format Games are normally played 13 v 13 with substitutes. Semi Finals and Finals must be played 13 v 13.

7.8.3 Teams may select up to 20 players for a match day. Squad rotation is the responsibility of the coaching staff.

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- 7.8.4 Where a team has fewer players, the match should still be played, provided a minimum of 9 v 9 is possible. Teams must match numbers and agree the format together. Teams must travel with a minimum of 11 players in structured Leagues.
- 7.8.5 Any team with fewer than 17 available players must inform the opposition the day before the game to support planning and cooperation.
- 7.8.6 If a team drops below the starting number due to injury, the opposition may continue with the number they started with.
- 7.8.7 Teams may lend or borrow players by mutual agreement to ensure the game can be played.
- 7.8.8 Reduced number games count as League fixtures unless the short numbered team concedes and both Clubs agree to play a friendly. If a team drops to less than 9 players, the game will automatically become a friendly and the non-offending team awarded the points.
- 7.8.9 Failure to follow these requirements will result in the opposition being awarded the fixture 24–0.

7.8.10 Players playing cards must be shown and checked prior to KO. Both teams will be liable to pay a fine if it is found that cards were not checked prior to KO.

7.9 Technical Areas

7.9.1 All non-playing personnel and interchanges must remain in the designated technical area throughout the Match. They are not permitted to station themselves around the field, other than when managing a player who has been removed from play, or when time management principles have been implemented (other than tracking physios) and are subject at all times to the control of the Match Officials.

7.9.2 There should be no more than 5 non-playing members of staff in the technical area; all of these must wear an 'high viz' vest so they can be identifiable.

3 x Coaches
1 x Game Day Manager
1 x First Aider

7.10 Medical Requirements

7.10.1 It is the requirement of each Home Club to ensure that a First Aider is in attendance at each game. The first aider should make themselves known to the Match Official before the start of any Match and shall remain for a minimum of 15 minutes after the end of the Game and shall speak directly with a designated Official from both Clubs, if necessary, to ensure that the correct reporting paperwork is completed. In the event that there is no first aider then the Match Official will not permit a game to take place.

7.10.2 First aiders should be listed on the team sheet and are required to register on the GameDay system as a volunteer.

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7.10.3 In the event a player sustains an injury to the head or displays signs or symptoms of concussion, the Match Official will stop the game and ask for the first aider to attend to them. If the first aider suspects concussion the player **MUST** be removed from the field of play and remain off the field of play. If the player refuses to follow the first aider's advice, then the Match Officials can hold up play until the player follows the instruction of the first aider. Advice for managing concussion can be found [HERE](#). The RFL is supportive of and follows the SRA concussion guidance – please read through the guidance in full [HERE](#) and ensure they are applied to matches and training at all times.

7.11 Reporting Injuries and Concussion

7.11.1 In the event there is a serious injury or concussion at a Match this must be reported using the GameDay system. Reports are added in the post-game section which is the same area as where results are added. It is imperative that any head injuries are reported on the system as this information has to be provided to the insurers.

7.12 Post Match Arrangements

7.12.1 Home teams must provide post-match food. If unable, they must inform the visiting team in advance so alternative arrangements can be made. Failure to do so allows the visiting team to claim up to £30. The relevant Fixture Secretary and General Secretary must be informed; the League will reimburse the claiming Club.

7.12.2 Visiting teams failing to remain for post-match food without giving at least 3 days' notice must cover costs up to £30 to the home team. At least 50% of players must stay. The relevant Fixture Secretary and General Secretary must be informed; the League will reimburse the claiming Club.

7.12.3 Any disagreements regarding post-match food will be referred to the Board of Management, whose decision is final.

7.13 Team Sheets and Reporting Results

7.13.1 Teams will be required to enter their team sheet on Gameday no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled KO time, this should include shirt numbers and positions. Failure to do so will result in an £10 administration fine. Any changes after that point must be reported to the Match Official on the day.

7.13.2 The home Club, in consultation with the Match Official and designated officer from the opposition, must agree the result immediately on completion of the game and enter the result onto GameDay within 60 minutes. Failure to comply will result in a £10 administration fine.

7.13.3 Each Club is responsible for ensuring its points scoring information is updated within the player stats area on the GameDay system within 48 hours following the completion of the game. Failure to do so will result in a £10 administration fine.

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7.14 Abandonment of Games

7.14.1 If a game is abandoned with more than three-quarters of the playing time elapsed, the result shall stand unless otherwise determined by the RFL. If less than three-quarters of the playing time has elapsed, the RFL (via the Management Group), at its sole discretion, may order the game to be re-played.

7.14.2 If a game is abandoned due to misconduct by only one team, that team will forfeit the fixture.

- If the offending team is ahead or drawing, the score is recorded as 24–0 to the non-offending team.
- If the non-offending team is ahead, the score stands.

8 DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSIONS AND FINES

8.1 All disciplinary matters, suspensions, fines and appeals shall be dealt with in accordance with Section D of the RFL Operational Rules and the F9 On-Field Sentencing Guidelines.

9 APPEALS

9.1 Appeals against disciplinary sanctions shall be conducted under Section D of the RFL Operational Rules, with reference to the F9 On-Field Sentencing Guidelines where applicable.