

# **The Rugby Football League Gambling Code of Conduct for Sport Sponsorship**

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The RFL (Governing Body) Ltd (the RFL) is the National Governing Body for Rugby League in the UK. It is responsible for the regulatory framework for all rugby league activity in the UK from professional to community game and in all formats of the sport including social, inclusive, full, limited and no contact playing offers for men, women and disabled participants.

This Code of Conduct ("the Code") will form part of the Operational Rules in all tiers of the sport and will bind those Subject to the Operational Rules which will include itself and its subsidiaries and group companies, member Clubs, community Clubs, RL Commercial Ltd (RLC) and Super League (Europe) Ltd (SLE) (and their successors in title).

In summary, Rugby League clubs, competitions and entities entering Sponsorship arrangements with gambling companies commit to ensuring that the income raised is reinvested into improving professional and grassroots sporting infrastructure and will do so by reference to this Code.

It also includes activity that helps protect children and young people, underpins the integrity of sport and delivers services and educational resources that highlight the importance of responsible and safe gambling.

After the first year of operation the RFL will undertake an operational review of the Code which will allow an opportunity to address any issues learned from the implementation process.

**July 2024**

## The Rugby Football League Gambling Code of Conduct for Sport Sponsorship

This Code recognises that the relationship between gambling and Rugby League needs to be conducted responsibly to protect the wider sporting community, including its participants and supporters, from any possible gambling related harm.

We commit to the following general principles when entering Sponsorship arrangements:

- **Sporting Reinvestment** – the commercial income raised from sports gambling partnerships is reinvested back into sporting infrastructure and programmes that serves fans and communities. This includes investment in staging strong sporting competitions, improving sporting infrastructure such as stadium and training facilities, and providing community and grassroots participation opportunities for local communities.
- **Maintaining sporting integrity** – ensuring that Sponsorship agreements do not compromise the integrity of sporting competitions nor harm the welfare of those participants who take part in them
- **Protecting children and other vulnerable people** – Sponsorship arrangements should be specifically designed to limit their reach and promotion to those under the age of 18 and those at risk of gambling related harm
- **Ensuring the promotion of gambling is undertaken in a socially responsible way** – all Sponsorship agreements must be promoted and delivered in a socially responsible way. This includes ensuring that education and awareness messages are provided as part of all marketing activities

### Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, the following definitions apply:

Gambling Company – all services provided by companies whose products are subject to regulatory control by the UK's Gambling Commission.

Sponsorship: The terms of any commercial agreement or part of an agreement by which a sponsor, for the mutual benefit of the sponsor and the sponsored party (Rights Holder), contractually provides financing or other support in order to establish an association between the sponsor's image, brands or products and a Sponsorship Property, in return for rights to promote this association and/or for the granting of certain agreed direct or indirect benefits.

Rights Holder: Any individual or legal entity owning the relevant rights in the Sponsorship Property and receiving direct or indirect support from a sponsor in relation to the Sponsorship Property.

Sponsorship Property: Can include, but is not limited to, for example, a team, individual, group, awards ceremony, event activity, organisation or venue, in return for which the Rights Holder agrees to be associated with or promote the sponsor's brand(s).

Child: Anyone under the age of 18, which is the minimum legal age for gambling in the UK.

**Sporting Reinvestment** – for the purposes of this code money invested in improving the sport's competition base including paid as salaries or prize money to clubs or individuals is included in the definition of reinvestment.

### **Individuals, teams, tournaments and events**

When concluding a Sponsorship agreement, sponsors should be made aware of the following rules they will be expected to abide by:

- Betting and gaming companies must not directly sponsor individuals who are under the age of 18.
- Betting and gaming companies are able to sponsor teams or competitions which may include individuals under 18 years of age, provided those teams or competitions have predominantly adult participation. Any under-18 participants should not be used individually in any promotional material or activity.

### **Monitoring and Compliance**

People Subject to the Operational Rules and the RFL/RLC commit to the following actions:

The RFL will publish the main code, rules and guidance notes on our website. This webpage will include the following information:

- Main code and principles (signed up to by the RFL (Governing Body) Ltd).
- Our Code and regulations that are contained in the Operational Rules.
- List of all of those within Rugby League with a gambling Sponsorship and their signatures denoting their agreement to follow the Code.
- Information on how to make representations on the Code's implementation.
- Details of how to complain which will include the complaints email address link and a portal to send direct complaints from the website and the final appeal process to the Independent Non-Executive Director responsible for compliance with the Code.
- Annual compliance statement including providing real time examples of Sporting Reinvestment and responsible gambling messages being applied.

### **General Rules**

Any Person Subject to the Operational Rules and, where applicable, the RFL/RLC agree to the following:

1. In respect of Sponsorship arrangements that provide consumers in the UK with facilities for gambling, sporting organisations must only enter into Sponsorship arrangements with companies that are licensed under arrangements set by the Gambling Commission permitting them to offer marketing and Sponsorship services.
2. The four main principles.
  - Sporting Reinvestment into Rugby League.
  - Maintaining sporting integrity.
  - Protecting children and other vulnerable people.
  - Ensuring the promotion of gambling is undertaken in a socially responsible way.
3. The RFL Board's Non-Executive Director with responsibility for welfare and safety will be the person responsible for handling any complaints in relation to this Policy. Should any

person wish to lodge a complaint about compliance they should email the RFL on [compliance@rfl.co.uk](mailto:compliance@rfl.co.uk)

## **Specific Rules**

Where a Person Subject to the Operational Rules and/or the RFL/RLC enter an arrangement with a Gambling Company the RFL and RLC will be responsible for working with them to ensure compliance.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of this Policy, where a contract is entered into with a gambling company then the Club will notify the RFL in writing within 72 hours of the agreement being reached.

This will include providing centralised support and advice on best practice on complying with the code, such as on responsible gambling messages and educational resources.

## **Sporting Reinvestment**

Any agreement must ensure that the money is used to further develop Rugby League in the community by:

- Investing in staging strong sporting competitions which includes athlete retention and remuneration.
- Improving sporting infrastructure such as stadium and training facilities.
- Providing community and grassroots services for local communities.
- Providing welfare and educational services for its participants.

## **Maintaining sporting integrity**

Any contract will include specific provisions that the Gambling Company will comply with all aspects of the British Gambling Commission's LCCP, which will include:

- Obligations relating to the sharing of information that the company know or suspect may relate to a breach of the RFL's betting rules as set out in the RFL Operational Rules.
- Making sure the Gambling Company takes all reasonable steps to familiarise themselves with the rules applied by that sport on betting; and
- Placing an obligation on the Gambling Company that ensures it is a condition of their accepting bets that for a bet to be valid, customers placing such bets must not be in breach of any RFL Operational Rules and /or UK laws on betting or misuse of inside information.

The RFL will additionally require any gambling partner involved in the sport, subject to and in accordance with its obligations under data protection law and the Gambling Commission's LCCP (particularly in relation to Schedule 6 of the Gambling Act 2005), to comply with all reasonable requests for relevant information that relates to a breach of the sport's rules.

The RFL will ensure that every year Participants in the Professional Game are provided with education and training specific to their betting rules for those individuals that are captured by those rules. In the Community Game, the RFL will provide annual advice in the form of a fact sheet on the relevant betting rules for competitions in its jurisdiction.

### Protecting children and other vulnerable people

The RFL and its members agree to undertake a responsible approach to sports Sponsorship with a commitment not to directly target under-18s and to actively consider the potential impact on other vulnerable people when undertaking Sponsorship activities. This includes adopting the following rules:

- Sponsorship of individuals, activities, teams or events, should be specifically designed to limit their reach and promotion to those under the age of 18, and those at risk of gambling related harm.
- No logos or promotional material on a Child's replica kit and sportswear.
- Adult replica kit to be available without the front of shirt gambling logo.
- No logos or promotional material on merchandise and products aimed at a Child.
- No promotion of logos on family/junior sections of relevant websites.
- Family enclosures within sports stadia to be free of gambling branding and no specific promotional activity to be specifically targeted at their area.
- No Sponsorship of family days.

### Ensuring the promotion of gambling is undertaken in a socially responsible way

The RFL will ensure all participants and staff are signposted to educational materials that explain the risks associated with gambling and how to find support if needed.

Awareness of support services for gambling addiction will be signposted to professional sportspeople (participants) where necessary through RL Cares.

Any gambling Sponsorship will have to ensure that 20% of the central gambling inventory will be dedicated to safer gambling messaging. This will be of total inventory and include social media posts, website advertising, pitch side hoardings and programme advertising.

The RFL agrees to participate in industry wide national safer gambling campaigns, such as those promoted by the Betting and Gaming Council, Gamble Aware and others, including Safer Gambling Week.