

GIRL'S RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2024

The ethos of the League is to create fun and welcoming environments, where girls can play rugby league in a friendly setting, whilst also providing appropriate development and competition needs for all players.

APPLICABLE OPERATIONAL RULES

1.1 The “**Girls’ Rugby League**” (**GRL**) sits within tier five of the RFL competition structure. All teams participating in the (GRL) are bound by the RFL Operational Rules for Tiers Four, Five and Six (Operational Rules).

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Membership of the GRL is open to all clubs playing Rugby League who are capable of meeting any Annual Entry Criteria as specified by the RFL. This can be found on the RFL website. Membership to the GRL can be reviewed at any time, if clubs have a poor disciplinary record or they fall below any of the Annual Entry Criteria.

2.2.1 Applications from clubs must be submitted in writing to the Competition Officer by the middle of January each year (precise date will be set each year). Membership shall be granted to a club for one season only and all clubs must reapply for membership each year.

2.2.2 New clubs may be admitted to the League at a later date; however, they would join the development league and play friendlies.

2.3 The annual affiliation for membership of the league shall be £30 per team. This should be paid by 30th April.

2.4 Each Club will be required to ensure that the Volunteers listed below are qualified, as specified by the RFL, and registered on GameDay:

- Coaches (Level 2 licenced coach)
- Club Welfare Officer
- First Aiders
- Game Day Manager
- Club Secretary
- Club Chair

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 March and 31st October in any year.

3.2 All U14 and U16 Premier Division League fixtures need to be played before the 25th September, all U14 and U16 Regional League fixtures need to be played before 9th October. All U13 and U15 league games need completing by 4th September.

3.3 Any outstanding games at this time will be awarded by the management 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 to 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. During this process a Player must become an Our League Active member.
- 4.1.1 A maximum of 25 players can register per team in the GRL, however 15 is the minimum number per team to enter any of the formal competitions and scheduled fixtures may be refused until there are 15 players registered. However, clubs with less than 15 players registered can still participate in the development league.
- 4.1.2 Where clubs run 2 teams at one age group, clubs must have a minimum of 30 players and can register a maximum of 50. These teams have the ability to move up to 5 players between the two teams during the season subject to the discretion of the management.
- 4.1.3 Players will be able to play for any team they are eligible for by date of birth. This is in line with the age range policy, contained within the operational rules, where players are able to play for their true age and the age above. However, they cannot play for two teams in one day. Clubs are advised to consider their duty of care to their players and manage player workload accordingly.
- 4.1.4 Merged teams will not be permitted into the structured divisions. Any teams who have to merge with a local club can play games in the development leagues until such time they can play games as a standalone team.
- 4.1.5 The RFL may introduce, from time to time, new registration processes.

4.2 Transfers

- 4.2.1 Teams may register, by transfer, three Players only per Season from different Clubs. The RFL may relax this rule, at their discretion, as deemed appropriate to meet the needs of the Competition.
- 4.2.2 It is the responsibility of the Club the player is moving to, to initiate the transfer. The parent/guardian has final sign off of the transfer. The process must be completed in full, including parent/guardian sign off, before a player plays. The Competition Officer will communicate further details on the process.
- 4.2.3 Clubs must wait for transfers to be approved before permitting players to attend training sessions with them. Prior to transfer approval, players are not insured to be training with a new club.
- 4.2.4 The deadline for transferring of players shall be the **31st of August**.

5. STRUCTURE OF COMPETITION

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

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- 5.2 The League will run the following age groups in 2024: Under-11, Under-12, Under-13, Under-14, Under-15, Under-16, Under-18.
- 5.3 The Competition Officer will, following consultation with the Girls Management Group, allocate teams to a playing division.
- 5.4 Teams not having the designated 15 players registered when divisions are allocated, will be offered alternative fixtures via the development divisions.
- 5.5 The League will operate to a top four play-off format for the Under-14, and Under-16 age groups in the Premier Divisions only, where this is deemed, by the Management Committee, to be appropriate.
- 5.6 Only players who have played 2 or more League fixtures, for their respective team are eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the Competition.
- 5.7 Teams who 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.
- 5.8 **League Tables**
- 5.8.1 The League competition tables shall be compiled by the RFL. There will be no league table displayed for the Under-11's age group.
- 5.8.2 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.
- 5.8.3 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.
- 5.8.4 Where Clubs have an equal number of points, their 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 fixtures will decide the team on top. 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.
- 5.8.5 The notional score in forfeited games shall be 24-0 and a points' deduction of 1 point. 24 - 0 forfeited games should only be used as a last resort, every effort should be made to get games played. The Girls League's primary aim is to give as many girls as possible the chance to play and develop. Awarding 24 – 0's does not do this.
- 5.8.6 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.
- 5.8.7 If a club is expelled or suspended, its record will be expunged, irrespective of how many games that club has played.
- 5.8.8 Any club found guilty of match official abuse will face sanctions including the possibility of a points deduction.

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6. FIXTURES

- 6.1 The RFL Competition Officer will notify teams of their fixtures.
- 6.2 All games shall, unless there is mutual agreement between competing clubs to the contrary, be organised and staged on Saturday morning with a kick off time scheduled for 11.00 a.m.
- 6.3 Any club wishing to rearrange a fixture must consult their opponents, agree a new date and complete a fixture amendment form. The completed fixture amendment form must be forwarded to the Competition Officer for their approval. If clubs cannot agree a new date within 14 days of the original fixture, then the Competition Officer will issue a new date for the fixture. If the fixture is not played as instructed by the Competition Officer, the points will be awarded to the non-offending club.
- 6.4 24 – 0 will be awarded as a last resort at the end of the season, every effort should be made to re arrange games, either on back log weeks or mid-week evenings.
- 6.5 Where programmed into the fixture programme, backlog dates should not be considered as a free weekend. Teams should be prepared to be allocated fixtures on these days.
- 6.6 Any club desiring to arrange a friendly must seek permission from the Competition Officer before a fixture is agreed. No friendly fixtures shall be arranged on a League fixture date without prior approval of the Competition Officer. Failure to notify the Competition Officer will result in the fixture not being sanctioned.
- 6.7 Clubs must accept fixtures given at seven days' notice by the Competition Officer.
- 6.8 Any club failing to play a fixture on a scheduled date will be made to play the reverse fixture, if it has not already been played or forfeited, on their opponents' ground. Clubs failing to fulfil fixtures will be fined £30 and deducted competition points.
- 6.9 Any Club failing to fulfil a fixture must pay reasonable expenses to the non-offending Club, as determined by the GRL Management Group. This may include the referee's full fee and expenses, including contribution towards any coach cost involved. For the avoidance of doubt, if a game is called off within 48 hours of the scheduled fixture, then this rule will come into force.
- 6.10 Any Club which fails to notify their opponents of its inability to raise a team 60 minutes before the scheduled kick-off, shall also be liable to pay any expenses, up to a maximum of £40, which their opponents may incur, including kit washing, or medical costs such as strapping.
- 6.11 In the case of a home club failing to fulfil a fixture, a visiting club that has travelled, may claim up to 50% of transport costs.
- 6.12 Any club with more than one team at home, in any competition, must provide an alternative pitch in case of a clash of fixtures.

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6.13 Postponements due to weather

6.13.1 In the event of the home Club suspecting that its ground will not be fit for play owing to adverse weather conditions or other cause, the home Club must immediately call a Match Official on the approved list recognised by the RFL to carry out a ground inspection. If the Match Official states the ground is not fit for play, and in their opinion, there is no chance of it being so before the scheduled kick off, then that decision must be communicated immediately to the visiting Club, appointed Match Official and the Competition Officer. Any Club failing to fulfil this instruction may be guilty of Misconduct and in addition to any sanction will be responsible for the reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses incurred by any Match Official or Club not so notified.

6.13.2 All postponements must be notified to the Competition Officer within 1 hour of the decision being made competitions@rfl.co.uk

6.13.3 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.

6.14 Cup Rules

6.14.1 Normal competition rules apply.

6.14.2 Cup entry is optional clubs must apply via the Competition Officer, once applications are open.

6.14.3 In accordance with Operational Rule B3:2:2 Cup Ties will take precedence over League Matches.

6.14.4 A player can only play for one team in the cup competition.

6.14.5 If a knock out game finishes level then golden point extra time should be played (in 10 minute periods until the first score).

6.14.6 Where the cup is played in a group format, then any games that finish level after normal time will be declared a draw and each team shall receive one point on the league table.

6.14.7 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.

6.14.8 Where the cup is run on a group basis then forfeited games will be given as 48– 0 and the team forfeiting the game will be fined £50.

6.14.9 Home advantage for semi-finals is given to the first team drawn. That club must provide a full-size pitch, physical barrier and are responsible for organising the match officials. Should the club be unable to meet this criteria, then the Management Committee will locate a suitable venue.

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6.14.10 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.

6.14.11 The League Management shall appoint the referees and confirm kick off times for finals.

6.14.12 The League will provide trophies or medals for league winners and cup finalists.

6.14.13 All Cups must be returned to the RFL one month before the finals the 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 any costs where this is not the case.

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 Competition Officer shall determine the day and kick off time.

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

7.3 Contacting Opponents and Kit Obligations

7.3.1 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.

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

7.4 Team Sizes

7.4.1 Teams at Under-14 and above should play 13 a side. If a team cannot raise 13 players, both sides should reduce numbers accordingly to a minimum of 9 a side. The pitch size should also be reduced to reflect this.

7.4.2 Teams can play everybody in their squad on a match day, however it is up to the coaches to manage this. Coaches should try and ensure everybody gets at least half a game.

7.5 Match Length and ball size

Under-11s – 20 minutes e/w size 4 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 4 ball
Under-15s – 30 minutes e/w size 4 ball
Under-16s – 30 minutes e/w size 4 ball
Under-18s - 35 minutes e/w size 4 ball

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7.6 Technical Areas

7.6.1 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.

7.6.2 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

7.7 Medical Requirements

7.7.1 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.

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

7.7.3 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.

7.8 Reporting Injuries and Concussion

7.8.1 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.

7.9 Post Match Arrangements

7.9.1 The home club shall be responsible for supplying all the competing players, club officials and appointed Match Officials with a suitable post-match meal. The visiting club is obligated to accept such hospitality.

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7.10 Team Sheets and Reporting Results

7.10.1 Official team sheets must be completed correctly before the commencement of matches and shall be signed by a recognised official from each club and the Match Official.

7.10.2 Completed team sheets should include the full forename and surname (no initials), of all participants and must be sent by the home club official to the Competition Officer at competitions@rfl.co.uk. Details of the player of the match from both the participating clubs must also be included. The failure of a club to complete and return team sheets correctly will incur a £20 administration fine.

7.10.3 It is the responsibility of both clubs to ensure that the team sheet information, including point scorers and result information, is entered on the GameDay system, within 48 hours following the completion of the game. Failure to do so will result in a £20 administration fine. For the avoidance of doubt prior to inserting the result, both Clubs must agree with the Match Official the final result.

7.10.4 For all U11's games the score must be entered as 0 – 0.

7.11 Abandonment of Games

7.11.1 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 League Management), at its sole discretion, may order the game to be re-played.

7.12 Communications with the RFL

7.12.1 Clubs should not use social media (WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) to contact the RFL Competition Manager and Competition Officer to expect a decision/answer to a question. Throughout the week they can be contacted on their RFL email addresses and on a Saturday morning the RFL Competitions email address may respond.

7.13 If a game does not have an appointed Match Official

7.13.1 If a game does not have an appointed Match Official, then the game can still go ahead should both teams agree. The game should then be officiated by a coach. The away coach should be offered this in the first instance. Clubs may decide to split a half each.

7.13.2 However, should the game feature any discipline issues then these must still be reported to the RFL, so these cases can be looked at if necessary.

7.14 Playing Rules

7.14.1 The playing rules for each age group each season will be confirmed by the RFL W&G Player Development Group made up of player development professionals. This group will ensure the rules are progressive and age appropriate.

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8 DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSIONS AND FINES

- 8.1 A GRL discipline panel is in place to deal with all discipline matters in accordance with section D of the Operational Rules. The disciplinary panel shall have the full power to expel, suspend and/or fine any club, player, official or other person, subject to the Operational Rules, found guilty of misconduct and/or breach of these rules and/or breach of the Operational Rules and to order them to meet any costs incurred.
- 8.2 A written report by a Match Official on the misconduct of any club, player or official must be sent via email to the Competition Officer with a copy to the offending club for receipt inside 48 hours from the conclusion of the game.
- 8.3 Reports of brawling – defined as three or more players involved – should, via email, be sent by the Match Official, within 48 hours of a game's conclusion, to the Competition Officer. Separate copies of the report must be lodged by the Match Official with the clubs concerned.
- 8.4 Any club which does not receive from the Match Official within 48 hours a report outlining a dismissal or brawl having occurred should contact the Competition Officer immediately. The failure of a club to receive a written report will not prevent action being dealt by the relevant discipline committee.
- 8.5 A reported club, player, official or any other person may, to defend an allegation of misconduct, send a letter for receipt by the Competition Officer within seven days of the date of the match. The club or such persons may in their own defence request a personal appearance and/or bring witnesses and/or submit written mitigation, to the hearing, if they notify the Competition Officer within seven days of the alleged offence and send a deposit of £20.00 which must be paid to the RFL by bank transfer. The deposit shall be refunded after the hearing, provided that the appellant or their designated representative attends in person and they are found not guilty.
- 8.6 Unedited DVD evidence shall be an accepted method through which to defend or confirm the alleged actions that have been reported to the committee by a Match Official.
- 8.7 Should a case of alleged assault by a player, club official or spectator be lodged it will be reported to the Competition Officer by a Match Official. The Match Official will then be instructed to make himself available to the disciplinary committee, for the purposes of interview, due notice of which shall be given in writing. A Match Official shall in such circumstances be entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses.
- 8.8 The Competition Officer will notify relevant Club of any sanctions imposed by a Discipline panel. It is the responsibility of the Club to check junk/spam inboxes for the sanctions and to chase up with the Competition Officer if they have not heard the findings of the panel within 48 hours of the hearing
- 8.9 A player's suspension will start on the Saturday after the hearing took place unless the Competition Officer notifies the player or club otherwise with the exception of any suspension of six matches or more which shall take immediate effect. In the event a player with a suspension of 6 or more games wishes to appeal, they will not be permitted to resume playing until the appeal is heard.

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- 8.10 A suspended player is not permitted to play in any other game of Rugby League, until any fines are paid and her suspension is served, and the completed Notification of Games Served Form has been completed, received and approved by the Competition Officer. Any player or club violating this rule will be fined not less than £100. The offending player may also incur an additional suspension and will not be able to play until such time as the fine is paid. In the event of a game having been won by a club fielding a player under suspension then the competition points gained shall be forfeited automatically. The Management Group reserves the right to apply other sanctions which may include a club's suspension or expulsion from the competition.
- 8.11 All fines, payable to the RFL must be settled within 28 days and must be forwarded to the Competition Officer. Failure to meet this obligation shall result in the fine being doubled automatically. If a further seven day elapse without receipt of payment, then the club's fixtures will be suspended.
- 8.12 All organised competition games, (including SRL fixtures, and RFL representative games) provided that they were arranged prior to the player's offence, may be counted towards the list of suspended games. It will be down to the RFL's discretion on how many friendlies during the pre-season are included in the total of suspended games.

9 APPEALS

- 9.1 All appeals against disciplinary sanctions imposed by the GRL are to be dealt with by an independent RFL appointed panel.
- 9.2 Clubs who have the right to appeal may do so within 7 days of a decision made only if they have attended the disciplinary panel meeting or submitted a written defence. A £40.00 fee, payable to the "RFL", should be submitted together with an accompanying letter outlining the reason why the appeal is sought. This must be forwarded to the Competition Officer.
- 9.3 An appeal by a club may only be based on the following grounds: a) the finding of guilt or b) the severity of sentence imposed.
- 9.4 No member of the Disciplinary Panel actively involved in a decision taken at the initial hearing, other than the Competition Officer who has no voting rights, shall be permitted to adjudicate on matters which will be the subject of appeal.
- 9.5 Adjudication by the Appeals' Panel precludes the right of individual players or their clubs towards seeking a further representation. The decision of the Appeals panel is final.
- 9.6 It is the responsibility of the club to check junk/spam inboxes for the sanctions and to chase up with the Competition administrator if they have not heard the findings of the panel within 48 hours of the hearing.