

# ***MATCH DAY OPERATIONS MANUAL***

***2026***



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Manual has been produced to assist those responsible for Match Day Operations at Super League (Men's and Women's), Challenge Cup, 1895 Cup, Championship, Academy, Reserves, Scholarship and WSL Under 19s Matches and includes the operating standards and protocols which apply on Match days. The Manual should be read in conjunction with the

- Operational Rules;
- Medical Standards;
- Super League Code of Conduct
- Championship Code of Conduct

A breach of the Match Day Operations Manual (unless that section is clearly marked as guidance) shall be considered Misconduct and dealt with under Section D1 of the Operational Rules. In the event of a conflict with the Operational Rules then the Operational Rules take precedence.

### **RFL/RL COMMERCIAL KEY PERSONNEL**

Below is a list of RFL/RL COMMERCIAL key personnel who can be reached out of regular office hours should you require assistance in an emergency.

Gavin Wild (Compliance Manager) 07904 625189

Kelly Barrett (Head of Delivery) 07739 819750

Gerry Kershaw (Match Commissioners' Coordinator) 07775 763109

Hannah Presley (Head of Communications) 07825 194227

## SECTION A – PRE-MATCH PLANNING

The provisions of Section A shall apply to matches played in 2026 as directed by the RFL. The applicable protocols that may be brought into force from time to time, shall take precedence.

### 1. Pitch & Ground Requirements

#### 1.1. Playing Field

The plan and markings thereon and the notes relating thereto are part of the Laws of the Game:

- Minimum distance from goal line to goal line = 88m
- Maximum distance from goal line to goal line = 100m
- Minimum pitch width = 55m
- Maximum pitch width = 68m
- Minimum in-goal area = 6m
- Maximum in-goal area = 11m
- Recommended in-goal area = 8m

Clubs should provide a playing surface as close to the maximum as possible while still maintaining a safe pitch perimeter.

There should be 2 flags on the intersection between the touchline and the goal line (2 flags on each side). No other flags (e.g., flags on the intersection of the dead-ball line and touchline) are necessary.

Y shaped posts are not permitted at any level.

Any amendments to on field structures which may affect performance, player safety and welfare, must comply with the Operational Rules and must be as set out in this section. Where they are different, they must be risk assessed and comply with relevant health and safety legislation and regulations.

Pitch dimensions shall be notified to the RFL by Clubs at least 7 days prior to the start of each Season as per Operational Rule A2:39. The notified dimensions shall not be altered during a Season without the prior written consent of the RFL.

#### 1.2. Pitch Markings

The following must be adhered to in relation to pitch markings:

- The home Club must ensure that pitch markings are visible and correctly laid out.
- Line markings should be no less than 10cm in width and white in colour (except for the 20m and 40m lines which should be red). Failure to apply red lines will result in a fine of £5,000 in line with the various Codes of Conduct.



- Lines shall be unbroken except where a line is broken to show that the distance is less than 10m.
- The following lines are required: 10m, 20m, 30m, 40m, 50m, goal line, dead ball line and touch line.
- Where a pitch is less than 100m from goal line to goal line the 10m, 20m and 30m lines should be measured accurately from the goal line and the 40m line should be measured accurately from the halfway line. The distance between the 30m and 40m lines will therefore not be 10m and this should be highlighted by marking the 30m line in a broken rather than solid line.
- 10m and 20m scrum lines should be marked.
- Pitch markings for other sports must be greened out

- Technical area should be marked out to give at least 3 metres clearance from the touch line, although 2 metres is acceptable, if no items are placed on the floor within 3 metres.

- Clubs should liaise with the RL Commercial team prior to ordering post pads in respect of sizing.

- **Marking broken lines**

The outermost broken lines measure 1m from the inside of the touchlines.

The centre point of the next broken line should be 10m from the inside of the nearest touchline. The marking is extended 1m either side of the centre point to make a 2m line.

The centre point of the next broken line should be 20m from the inside of the nearest touchline. The marking is extended 1m either side of the centre point to make a 2m line.

The centre broken line is marked from the middle of the width of the pitch. The marking should be 1m either side of this point to make a 2m line.

This process is repeated on the opposite side of the pitch, starting 10m from the nearest touchline.

A further 2m hash line should be marked at the mid-point on the pitch between the half way and the centre of the 20m hash line on each side.

- **Marking hash lines**

Hash lines are used by the match officials to position play for 10m tap restarts and 20m scrums.

The hash marks run lengthways down the field from 10m to 10m. The hash mark on either 10m line is marked 1m in length facing the halfway line and forms a T shape on the field.

All other hash marks are marked 2 m either side of the lines running across the field to form a +.

- **Red lines**

There are four red lines on the field on each of the 20m lines and each of the 40 m lines. They are solid red lines which run across the field. They are essential marks for the game and failure to comply with this instruction will result in a fine of £5,000 in line with the various Codes of Conduct.

- **Other lines.**

There is a small hash line at the centre point of each 20m line. This is marked to a length of 30cm each side of each 20m line.

### **1.3. In Goal Areas**

Where possible the in-goal area should be marked to 8m. Player safety takes priority over the Laws of the Game and the in-goal area may be smaller than the 6m minimum required under the Laws of the Game, if necessary, to ensure the 3m margin (measured from the inside of the relevant line) for player safety. If any variation from this is required, dispensation must be sought from the RFL.

### **1.4. Pitch Perimeter**

As a general rule, there can be no solid structures or surfaces, either permanent or temporary, within 3m of the pitch perimeter.

However, when a situation occurs which means a Club cannot achieve the 3m clearance, they must apply for an exemption, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Exemptions will only be granted if the following criteria are met: -

- There are no solid surfaces within 2m of the pitch perimeter, and:
- Only collapsible structures or padded surfaces are permitted within 2m of the pitch perimeter.

Padded TV cameras are allowed within 2-3m without Clubs applying for an exemption.

For the avoidance of doubt, ball bins must be placed outside of 3m of the pitch. Clubs which cannot accommodate this must apply for an exemption which will be considered in line with the above.

Please be aware that this policy also applies to portable items placed within the 3-metre perimeter, for example exercise bikes. The use of such equipment must not contravene the above policy and all personnel should follow the instructions of ground safety staff in regard to this matter.

### **1.5. Pitch & Surrounds**

The Referee or the Match Commissioner (where applicable) at every Match under the control of the RFL, will check that the pitch is fit to play; however, it is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the ground and pitch is fit for play in accordance with these Rules and the Laws of the Game. If a ground and/or pitch is not fit for play, a Referee/Match Commissioner may refuse to allow a Match to be played thereon or he may order the making of such alterations and/or improvements as he thinks fit.

### **1.6. Synthetic Pitches**

Where a Club plays any level of Match on a synthetic pitch, it is required to provide a copy of pitch maintenance logs as set out in the Operational Rules, prior to each home match. The log shall be provided to the Match Commissioner (where appointed to a Match) and to the Referee at all other matches.

### **1.7. Floodlighting**

Floodlights must be compliant with the lux capacities as set out in the Facilities Standards from time to time. For Super League this is a minimum of 1200 lux.

In relation to televised Matches, the home Club is responsible for providing and paying for floodlighting as required by the Broadcast Partner, and such lights must be switched on when reasonably requested by the Broadcast Partner which may be before the programme goes on air and once on must remain on until the programme goes off air, and for allowing the Broadcast Partner to derig safely.

For Matches which are not televised, should the Referee or Match Commissioner deem that the floodlights are required, they must be switched on before the Players go out to warm up and must remain on until the Players have left the pitch. If a team wishes to warm down on the pitch the lights must remain on until they have finished. If the Referee or Match Commissioner determine that floodlights should be switched on during a Match, this should be done so without delay.

### **1.8. Television Facilities & Access**

As per the contract with the contracted broadcaster (including, if applicable, by the RFL on its own platform), each Club where appropriate shall ensure that adequate facilities are provided to achieve television coverage at the time and date specified by the contracted broadcaster.

Failure to host a Match at the time and date specified by the contracted broadcaster is Misconduct. It is essential that this area of operation is maintained to the highest standards. As set out in the Code of Conduct Super League Clubs (and any other Clubs hosting broadcast Matches) must ensure that their facilities comply with the contracted broadcaster's contract in effect from time to time.

### **1.9. Signalling Equipment**

It is the responsibility of the home Club to ensure that the signalling equipment in the ground is clearly audible on the field of play whatever the size of the crowd. This includes (where applicable) any shot clock equipment. The RFL may require Clubs to use a form of signalling equipment as notified from time to time.

### **1.10. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle / Drones – Permissions**

The use of a drone over public events presents a danger to those involved in that they can be affected by sudden changes in conditions which could take them out of the control of the operator. Such loss of control could result in the drone falling to the ground with the potential for injury or damage. The unauthorised use of drones may also affect the integrity of Matches.

If there is permission granted from the Civil Aviation Authority for a professional operator to use a drone in the vicinity of a Stadium during a Match, this information must be made known to all relevant parties before the commencement of the Match.

All members of staff should be alert to the possible unauthorised use of drones over and around the stadium. If it is suspected that a drone is being deployed the following actions must be taken:

- The Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer must be informed immediately with the details of where the drone has been seen and, if known, the location of the drone operator.
- The Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer should utilise all available resources to monitor the drone and locate the operator.
- Under no circumstances should any member of staff attempt to touch the drone until the pilot is located and they are satisfied it is switched off; and
- If the event has a police presence, the Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer should make the relevant senior police officer aware of the presence of a drone. If no police officer is present, then the Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer should consider reporting the incident to the police for deployment of a patrol to investigate the incident.
- The Stadium Safety Officer/Deputy Safety Officer has the authority to suspend the match in line with their safety briefing if the danger to safety appears to be increased.

## **2. Commercial Delivery**

This section should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct applicable to the Competition.

### **2.1. Central Commercial Delivery Requirements**

Each Club should ensure it complies with central sponsorship requirements regarding perimeter advertising, on pitch and off pitch branding (including but not limited to pitch branding, post pads, corner flags and metre markers), Match programme advertising, website links, and ticket and hospitality requirements.

For detailed information regarding central commercial delivery requirements please refer to the Super League/Championship Code of Conduct or contact the RL Commercial team (as applicable).

### **2.2. Ground Advertising Boards**

The home Club is responsible for ensuring that all central partner advertising boards and LED systems, if relevant, are displayed in the correct sites and that the boards are in a good state of repair and clean.

On Match days, the home Club is responsible for ensuring that no flags, banners, persons (e.g. players and support staff, ball crew, photographers, cheerleaders or stewards) or any other items such as TV cameras can obstruct any central contract advertising boards or LED systems if relevant.

Consideration should also be given to the positioning of advertising boards in relation to the sightlines of spectators, particularly disabled spectators.

### **2.3. Perspex Interview Backdrop**

At Super League and Championship TV Matches, there will be a post-Match Perspex backdrop for post-Match interviews with the broadcast partner.

For Super League TV Matches, it is the Club's responsibility to deliver the Perspex board in the desired location, as outlined by the RL Commercial representative at the end of Match.

At Challenge Cup and Championship TV Matches, there will be a post-Match Perspex backdrop for post-Match interviews with the broadcast partner.

For Challenge Cup and Championship TV Matches, it is the Club's responsibility to deliver the Perspex board in the desired location, as outlined by the RFL representative at the end of the Match.

Under no circumstances should the Perspex board be positioned whilst a live interview is taking place. Instead, the board should be placed to the side so that the next interview can take place in front of the Perspex board.

### **2.4. Pitch Branding**

Central partner pitch branding shall be marked out on the pitch as notified by the RL Commercial team from time to time. Permission to brand the pitch must not be unreasonably withheld. It is a requirement of every televised fixture that central pitch branding will occur.

No other sponsor or other central pitch branding may be displayed without written permission from the RL Commercial team.

### **2.5. Post Pads, Corner Flags and Ball Bins**

The title sponsor is responsible for providing post pads and corner post pads. Where branded pads have been provided for certain competitions, the home Club must ensure that these items are clean and in a good state of repair. Under no circumstances should the corner pole be visible beyond the height of the soft branding. Corner flags must not have spikes, which could result in a player sustaining an injury

RL Commercial are responsible for providing ball bins at the start of each Season (as required) for the Super League competition.

For all other competitions where ball bins are required, the RFL, at the start of each Season (as required) are responsible for providing them.

Each Club is responsible for maintaining the condition and appearance of the ball bin and ensuring its correct placement ahead of each Match.

Ball bins will be required behind the posts at both ends of the pitch. These are for match balls and are to be used for dropouts. Where a Club cannot place these bins beyond 3m of the pitch perimeter that is required, an exemption must be applied for, in accordance with 1.4 above.

### **2.6. Individual Player Sponsorship Agreements**

As stated in the Standard Player Contract all individual sponsorships should be approved in writing by the Club the Player is contracted to. Players are expressly forbidden from entering sponsorship or promotional contracts with companies who are direct competitors of existing Club or League sponsors.

Where permission has been sought and granted in relation to any protective equipment or apparel worn on the pitch, then any sponsor branding on such items shall not exceed a single brand name measuring no more than 2 square inches.

### **3. Tickets**

#### **3.1. Super League Complimentary Tickets**

Super League Home Clubs should provide 58 complimentary tickets to the away Club with at least 20 of these tickets in the Directors Box. It is considered usual to provide complimentary refreshments pre-match to visiting Directors in private facilities. The Player complimentary tickets should be made available for collection prior to the match. Ticket allocation should be in a safe environment near the Directors' Box.

#### **3.2. Championship and WSL Complimentary Tickets**

Championship and WSL home Clubs should provide, if requested, a minimum of 30 complimentary tickets to the away Club, at least 12 of which should be in the Directors' Box. It is considered usual to provide complimentary refreshments pre-match to visiting Directors in private facilities. The Player's complimentary tickets should be made available for collection prior to the match. Ticket allocation should be in a safe environment near the Directors' Box. If additional tickets are needed, then this should be agreed between the Clubs involved and there is no obligation to provide further complimentary tickets.

#### **3.3. Challenge Cup / 1895 Cup Complimentary Tickets**

Each Club shall be entitled to 50 complimentary tickets at least 20 of which shall be in the Directors' area. In all Super League ties this will be increased to 58. In addition, complimentary admission tickets shall be allocated to the RFL's sponsors or as part of any RFL Marketing strategy as directed by the RFL.

#### **3.4. Match Review Panel Members Complimentary Tickets**

A member of the Match Review Panel reviews every Super League Match. Members of the Match Review Panel are entitled to two free tickets to a Match they are reviewing. These tickets should be seated in an appropriate position as close to the halfway line as possible. Car parking should be provided if possible.

#### **3.5. Match Officials' Tickets**

Match Officials should be provided with a briefing pack prior to the Match which includes Match tickets. Each official is entitled to two tickets for matches in which they are officiating, for their guests.

### **4. Kit Directives**

Kit directives will be published by the RFL, in most cases for the entire playing season, but at least 4 working days before any First Team Match. Clubs are responsible for ensuring that their kit person is provided with a copy of the kit directive. Kits will be chosen for maximum contrast between the two teams. Clubs wishing to wear a particular kit for a Match should put in a written request at least 28 days prior to the Match in which they wish to wear the kit.

The competing Clubs in each Match must comply with the kit directives issued by the RFL. Any dispute shall be referred to the Professional Game Delivery Team. Where a match is scheduled for broadcast, the competing away team must bring both their principal and alternative kit.

For major Matches the RFL will issue kit directives as they deem appropriate and will confirm which team, if any, has home advantage.

For WSL, Academy, Reserve and Scholarship Matches, the home Team should play in the principal colours of the Club's First Team and the away Team should also play in the principal colours of the Club's First Team. Where there is a clash, the away Team should play in the alternative colours of the Club's First Team. It is the responsibility of the away Team to ensure that there is no clash of kits prior to the Match.

## **5. Squad Declaration**

### **5.1. Naming of Squads**

#### **5.1.1. Team**

The RFL will operate the Squad Declaration System in accordance with the principles set out below:

- There should be transparency and integrity in team selection.
- Teams should play the strongest team available to them.
- Clubs should not suggest to the public that their team is stronger or weaker than it is by publishing misleading information about injuries or the probable team selection.
- There should not be any opportunity for those connected with a Club to profit from inside information.
- The health, safety & welfare of players should be paramount.

Before each First Team Match in all Competitions each Club must declare its squad of 21 players that it will choose from for that Match. For the avoidance of doubt, Clubs do not have to declare a 21-player squad for a Reserve Match.

Clubs cannot declare players who are not correctly registered with the RFL. Loan players must be included in the 21 Player Squad subject to the maximum permitted numbers (i.e., 5 Loan, 6 IF one player is on loan for the entire season).

The Squad Declaration for all Competitions must be made on Gameday by noon on the day 48 hours before the Match. For example, teams playing on a Thursday would need to provide their squads by noon on Tuesday. The RFL will issue guidance for Matches played over Bank Holidays or similar.

The Squad declaration system for Academy and Scholarship U16s is as above save:

- Academy teams name 24 player squads (in the timelines set out above).

- Scholarship U16 teams name 20 player squads by 10am on a Thursday for Matches which are to be played on a Saturday and by 10am on the day 24 hours prior to the Match for Matches played on any other day.

### **5.1.2. Medical Staff**

All Medical Staff working (or volunteering) at Clubs (including those providing cover at short notice) who are, or may be, involved in giving treatment or advice to Players within a professional Club environment) must be registered with the RFL.

Clubs are required to nominate registered medical staff on Gameday at the same time as the squad declaration for players is made, and for the avoidance of doubt, this applies to all levels.

Declaration should be made using the drop-down boxes on the Pre-Game area on Gameday. If a member of staff does not appear in a Club's drop down of registered staff, a Club needs to ensure that the individual registers onto Gameday so they can select using the drop-down boxes on the Pre-Game area. For the avoidance of doubt, Clubs must still carry out all checks on the individuals it uses in a Match to ensure they hold the relevant qualifications. Nomination of an individual, whether registered or otherwise, does not constitute authority from the RFL for that person to carry out the role for the Club – this is done so entirely at the Club's risk.

Once the medical staff have been declared, if any changes are made, this is also done so entirely at the Club's risk and the Club must ensure that Gameday is updated to reflect the change. If a Club is in any doubt as to whether an individual is appropriately qualified, please contact any of the Emergency Contacts listed in the MDOM.

### **5.2. New Signings**

If a Club is attempting to make a new signing, it should leave a space in the declared 21 player squad and state that they are attempting to make a signing. The final squad should then be confirmed once the registration team has confirmed approval of such registration.

### **5.3. Players Charged with Misconduct**

If a player has been charged with Misconduct and is scheduled to appear before a Tribunal, and the Tribunal is scheduled for after the deadline for declaring a Squad, in circumstances where the Club intend the Player to be part of their 21 player squad if he is found not guilty or not banned, the Club should name this Player and then complete a squad amendment if the result of the Tribunal means that the Player is unable to play in that Match. For the avoidance of doubt, in this situation, the amendment to the 21-player squad shall not result in the Club losing an interchange.

The same process will apply in relation to Appeals.

#### **5.4. Squad Amendments**

If a Club needs to make a change to the 21-player squad it has declared for a Match, it can only do so in accordance with Section B 3.1 below.

## **SECTION B – PLANNING IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE MATCH**

**The provisions of Section B shall apply to matches played in 2026 as directed by the RFL. The applicable protocols that the RFL may bring into force from time to time, shall take precedence.**

### **1. Key Personnel**

#### **1.1. Ground Safety Officer**

Each Club shall ensure that an appropriately qualified and experienced Ground Safety Officer (GSO) takes responsibility for the safe management of its ground on Match days. Such GSO shall be a current member of the Rugby League Ground Safety Officers Association (RLGSOA). Membership fees for the RLGSOA will be deducted automatically from a Club's central distribution. All Persons Subject to the Operational Rules must follow any safety instruction given to them by the GSO or a member of the safety team.

They should take a proactive approach to implementing the RFL policies in relation to Unacceptable Behaviour or Language and other elements of anti-social behaviour and should ensure that other members of the safety staff to do likewise.

They should conduct a pre-match briefing with Match Officials and also submit a post-match report within 5 days of a Match taking place.

#### **1.2. Match Commissioner**

The Match Commissioner is the RFL's representative at each Match in Super League and Challenge Cup matches featuring Super League clubs, and any other matches whereby the RFL deem it appropriate for a Match Commissioner to be present. They will report to the RFL any failure to meet the RFL Operational Rules or Codes of Conduct.

The Match Commissioner will facilitate successful compliant Match Day procedures; however, Clubs still remain ultimately responsible for compliance with the Operational Rules and Codes of Conduct at all times. All Persons Subject to the Operational Rules must comply with all reasonable requests made by a Match Commissioner.

#### **1.3. Grounds person**

The home Club Grounds person must be available on Match days to make any changes to the pitch or pitch markings that the Referee or Match Commissioner may order.

#### **1.4. Timekeeping Arrangements**

##### **1.4.1. Timekeeper – Men's Super League**

The RFL will appoint an RFL Timekeeper to each Super League and Championship Match with each Club being allowed to have an observer sit with the RFL Timekeeper. The RFL will appoint timekeepers to all Matches in the Challenge Cup from Round 2 onwards involving Professional Clubs, and the 1895 Cup and televised Women's Super League/Challenge Cup. The Club should

provide good seating for the RFL Timekeeper in a central location, with a good view of the pitch and with access to the signalling equipment, e.g., hooter. All timekeeping equipment shall be placed in situ by the Club and / or communication engineer and/or broadcaster at least one hour before to the match.

Where space does not allow for two official observers priority will be given to the away team observer.

The staff who are responsible for liaising with the RFL Timekeeper should be aware of the following key points:

- Solely in relation to Super League:
  - The I-Pad which controls the game clock, shot clock and game hooter, will be located on the TV production truck at each ground a Super League match takes place and will be placed in the timekeeping location by the television production company prior to each game.
  - The Time Keeping device (iPad) needs to be in close proximity to a charging point in case this is required during the game –It is the home club’s responsibility to ensure this is available. The RFL Timekeeper/Television Production Company will be responsible for the connection of the timekeeping device (iPad) to the big screen
  - The time-keeping device (iPad) requires a power outlet and a stable internet connection by ethernet cable.
  - The RFL Timekeeper needs a table or desk to put the equipment on, with adequate space to operate such equipment.
  - The RFL Timekeeper and their equipment should be placed in a sterile environment with unobstructed views.
  - The Television Production Company will return the time-keeping device (iPad) after the Match
  - Each club should ensure that the time-keeping device is able to be connected to the stadium PA system and that the audio is clear throughout the duration of the match.

**1.4.2. Timekeeper – For all other matches where the RFL appoints a timekeeper.**

The home Club must provide a Timekeeper and the away Club has the right to provide a Timekeeper. The Timekeeper must be registered with the RFL.

If the away Club provides a Timekeeper, provision should be made for him/her to sit with the home Club Timekeeper. Each Timekeeper shall be responsible for providing his/her own timekeeping equipment e.g., stopwatch and ensure that this is synchronised.

The Club should provide seating for the Timekeeper(s) which has a good view of the pitch and is centrally located.

The home Club shall be responsible for providing signalling equipment which must be loud enough to be heard clearly at the furthest point on the field with a capacity crowd in attendance. There should be a contingency in place, e.g., hand-held air horns, should the main equipment fail.

It is recommended to sound the hooter as the Referee is entering the field of play, so he can identify the sound. The Referee will usually acknowledge the hooter by raising his arm.

The Timekeeper should make themselves known to the Referee and Match Commissioner (if applicable) at least 40 minutes prior to kick off.

The Timekeeper should be aware of the health and safety implications and consider using ear plugs. Furthermore, the Timekeeper should consider the effect the hooter may have on spectators.

The Timekeeper should be aware of the rules surrounding 'Extra Time' in the Competitions to which it is relevant.

The hooter will sound immediately when 40 minutes has elapsed in each half regardless of where the ball is unless a player is taking a kick at goal in which case it will be sounded as the ball leaves the kicker's foot. The Referee will acknowledge the sounding of the hooter by raising his arm as he would do to signal last tackle. He will then blow his whistle to end the Match when the ball is next out of play, or a tackle is affected.

**1.4.3. Non-first Grade Matches inc Women's Super League (With the exception of Televised Matches in the Women's Super League and Women's Challenge Cup)**

The Referee will be the sole arbiter of time.

**1.4.4. Hooter**

The home Club is responsible for providing a hooter which is sufficiently loud to be clearly heard by the Referee when he is at the furthest point on the pitch from the site of the hooter. Clubs should consider the sound absorbing qualities of a full stadium i.e., testing will be required when the stadium is full. Clubs should have a contingency plan if the hooter fails, e.g., a hand-held hooter.

**1.4.5. Countdown Clocks**

Countdown clocks will be visible on the big screen and fed directly from the time-keeping device (I-Pad) for any Match where a television production company is present.

Should Championship Clubs wish to install countdown clocks within the stadia, permission and guidance should be sought from the RFL Operations team.

## **2. Postponement, Suspension or Cancellation of Matches**

This section should be read in conjunction with the applicable sections of the Operational Rules.

### **2.1. General**

The Ground Safety Officer is responsible for the safety of the ground and spectators and ultimately any decisions on evacuation and crowd safety will be made by the Ground Safety Officer, unless the emergency is such that he hands over control & ultimate responsibility to the Police match commander. The RFL (where applicable represented by the Match Commissioner) is concerned with the safety of the players and the reputation of the Match. There may be some circumstances where these two conflicts, or where player safety or the reputation of the Match are at risk such that a Match should be postponed, suspended or abandoned despite there being no risk to spectator safety. In such circumstances the RFL (represented, where applicable, by the Match Commissioner) must liaise with the Ground Safety Officer.

### **2.2 Postponement (prior to the day of the Match or before the arrival of the Match Commissioner or for matches at which no Match Commissioner is appointed)**

#### **2.2.1 Ground Not Fit to Play the Match**

If the home Club suspects that its Ground may not be fit for play owing to frost or any other cause, the home Club must immediately call a Referee or Match Commissioner who is on a list approved by the RFL to carry out ground inspections to inspect the Ground (an "Inspector"). If the Inspector states it is not fit for play and in his opinion, there is no chance of it being so fit for kick-off, then the Match should be postponed, and that decision must be communicated by the home Club to the away Club, the RFL and to the media immediately. It is unlikely that a decision under this Rule can be made more than 24 hours before the Match is due to kick off save in exceptional circumstances.

If, having made such inspection, the Inspector says there is a doubt as to the fitness of the Ground but is not certain that it will be unfit, the home Club must immediately advise the away Club and the RFL of the position and a schedule for re-inspecting the Ground shall be agreed with the Inspector (in the event of dispute the Inspector's decision on the schedule for re-inspecting shall be final).

The competing Clubs shall not place the Inspector under any undue or adverse pressure whilst he is making such a decision, and the Inspector shall consult with the Ground Safety Officer and where appropriate the broadcast partner prior to reaching his decision.

In the case of Friendly Matches or Player Development Programme Matches, the home Club can make the decision on its own; however, the RFL reserve the right to deploy an Inspector to verify the decision and reserve the right to overturn the decision. The RFL decision in this respect is final. For the avoidance of doubt, the home Club remains responsible for notifying the away Club, the Match Officials and the media immediately.

## 2.2.2 Other Causes

If either participating Club suspects, at short notice, that it will not be able to play a Match in accordance with the Fixture List for any reason (including but not limited to availability of its Ground), the following process shall be followed:

- The Club that suspects it will not be able to play a Match in accordance with the Fixture List shall immediately notify the Head of Delivery Professional Games Competition (the "RFL Representative");
- A conference call will be arranged between the RFL, RL Commercial and the participating Clubs to discuss the relevant circumstances and any possible alternatives including but not limited to:
  - The Match being played on a different date or time on the weekend on which the fixture was scheduled to be played.
  - The Match being played at a different venue.
  - If it is a League Match, the Matches between the two Clubs being switched. For the avoidance of doubt any such switch would require the agreement of (and may involve the payment of compensation by the originally scheduled home Club to) the originally scheduled away Club.
- If applicable, RL Commercial shall liaise with the broadcast partner to ascertain their views.
- The RFL Representative will make a recommendation as to when the Match should be played (which for the avoidance of doubt may include a recommendation that the Match is played as originally scheduled);
- Either of the participating Clubs may appeal the RFL Representative's decision to the Board (or, if determined by the Board, a sub-committee of the Board). The decision of the Board (or sub-committee) shall be final.
- In making a recommendation or decision the RFL Representative or Board (as applicable) will consider:
  - The underlying circumstances.
  - What steps the Club could have taken to avoid the underlying circumstances or mitigate the effect.
  - The integrity of the Competition(s).
  - The reputation of the RFL, the Competitions and the game.
  - The impact on the applicable Broadcast partner and other commercial partners and RL Commercial's contracts with the same.

- The impact on the other participating Club.
- The impact on other Clubs facing similar situations; and
- Such other factors as it considers appropriate in the applicable circumstances.

### **2.3 Postponement, Suspension or Cancellation (during the Match or within two hours of kick-off)**

The Match Commissioner (or Referee in the case of Matches where no Match Commissioner is appointed) will liaise with the Ground Safety Officer regarding any potential postponement or abandonment where possible.

The Match Commissioner (Referee) shall have the power to:

- Postpone a Match before kick-off.
- Delay a scheduled kick off.
- Suspend a Match in progress.
- Abandon a Match after kick off;

When any of, but not limited to, the following situations arise:

- They receive the advice of the duly appointed Ground Safety Officer (GSO) on the day that the GSO believes it is impossible to start or continue the Match without compromising spectator safety.
- They receive the advice of the duly appointed GSO that the GSO believes that the Match kick off should be delayed or the Match in progress should be suspended on the grounds of public order and/or spectator safety.
- They believe at the time of inspection that the condition of the pitch is such that it is unfit for play and remains unfit for play (unfit for play means that it is not safe for the players to play on the pitch e.g. ruts or frost) after such alterations and/or improvements as he may order have been made to either the playing surface or the surrounding area or subsequently that the weather conditions are such that it is unsafe for the players to take or remain on the field of play e.g. electric storm;
- One of the competing teams is reduced by four players due to injuries and/or dismissals.
- The behaviour of the players or the crowd is such that the Referee can no longer control the Match.
- There is unacceptable behaviour from the crowd which cannot be brought under control by the GSO and stewards/police.
- Fog descends or thickens while a Match is in progress to the extent that if the Referee takes up a position on the centre of the 20m line

he cannot clearly see the corner flags at the opposite end of the pitch.

- Before or during the Match fog is such that the spectators and/or the Broadcast partner (where the Match is being transmitted live) cannot see the pitch from a reasonable viewing position as advised by the GSO; If fog descends or thickens during the Match, the Match Commissioner (where appropriate) shall liaise with the GSO and if they are both of the opinion that a significant number of spectators cannot see the playing area, that it is not possible to move those spectators to a closer vantage point, that safety monitoring and supervision of spectators cannot be sustained as advised by the GSO, that the safety of spectators would not be put at risk by an abandonment, then the Match Commissioner should decide that the Match should be abandoned and should signal to the Referee and inform him that the Match shall be abandoned. For matches at which a Match Commissioner is not present the GSO should speak to the Reserve Referee who will signal to the Referee to allow the GSO and Referee to discuss the situation.
- Other adverse weather threatens the safety of either players or spectators.
- A player dies on the field of play.
- There is floodlight failure, and the Ground Safety Officer advises that power cannot be restored within a reasonable period considering all the circumstances.
- A Team Doctor or the Match Doctor fails to attend, and a replacement cannot be found within a reasonable period.
- The Pitch Side Replay system is not operational.
- There are other circumstances which lead the Match Commissioner (or Referee) acting reasonably to believe that the only option available to him is to postpone, suspend or abandon the Match.
- The Match Commissioner should consult with the Ground Safety Officer (and Broadcast Manager if televised) and the On Duty Officer about any potential delayed kick-off.

## **2.4 Advice in Specified Situations**

### **2.4.1 Snow**

Clubs should ensure that ground staff are following best practice regarding clearing snow off the pitch. When snow is cleared, ground staff should ensure that snow is taken at least 3 metres away from the pitch and not just left on the touchline or behind the dead ball line. Failure to do this may result in the excess snow becoming an "ice wall" around the pitch which if within the 3m clearance may lead to the Match being cancelled due to safety reasons. Alternatively, it could lead to flooding on the pitch when the snow melts.

Also, please give due consideration to the condition of car parks, paths and terraces which may be slippery and hazardous. Appropriate measures should be taken to make areas safe, which may involve a change from a normal Match Day operation, e.g., closing parts of the ground to enable staff to focus on the essential areas.

The Ground Safety Officer should be consulted regarding these issues.

### **2.4.2 Fog Before the Match**

If fog descends before the kick-off the Match Commissioner (where appropriate), Ground Safety Officer, and whenever possible or appropriate, the Referee, coaches and a representative from a Broadcast partner, should take up a position at the furthest vantage point at which a spectator may stand. They shall look to see whether they have a view of the corner flags at the far end of the field. If this is possible then the Match should go ahead.

At low attendance Matches it may be possible, in consultation with the Ground Safety Officer, to position spectators on or near the halfway line so that most of the playing area is visible.

It will be helpful if the home Club can provide an up-to-date weather prediction from the nearest weather centre to assist any discussion.

Spectators and the media must be kept informed of current situations and immediately informed of any decisions taken.

### **2.4.3 Lightning Before the Match**

If lightning strikes prior to the Match or potentially may strike, the Match Commissioner, Ground Safety Officer, and whenever possible or appropriate, the Referee should ensure that players and officials leave the field of play immediately and return to the dressing rooms or if the Match is yet to re-start, remain in the dressing room.

Ground Safety Officers should update spectators with respect of the possibility of potential lightning strikes and risk assess and put in place any appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of spectators within the ground.

#### **2.4.4 Thunder**

The likelihood of thunderstorms occurring should be considered as part of pre match planning. A further review of the weather should take place on the day of the match. If pre match planning identifies the probability of thunderstorms occurring consultation must take place with match officials (referee and/or Match Commissioner) and agreement made with regard to delaying the kick off or suspending the match. Ultimately the Ground Safety Officer will make the decision to delay or suspend a match.

The Possibility of thunderstorms should be included in the stewarding teams pre match briefing along with probable action to be taken (storm damage may affect the action to be taken).

Other key personnel should be informed of the possibility delays or suspension including the PA Announcer who may have to inform spectators of the reasons for the delay or suspension.

All persons within the stadium are potentially at risk but those in open spaces more so. Players and officials are particularly at risk both during the warm up and the game. While open terraces are obviously exposed covered terraces also offer little protection meaning that spectators are at risk. Stewards and other staff who work out in the open must be considered.

Where the weather forecast identifies there is a possibility of thunderstorms and persons identified as being at risk are present in the stadium the Ground Safety Officer must continually monitor for the approach of thunderstorms.

### **3. Squads**

#### **3.1. Squad Amendments**

Changes to the 21-player squad are only permitted for the reasons set out below and must be supported by an amendment form.

Any squad amendment made including for the avoidance of doubt as permitted under this MDOM, will result in the loss of one interchange, with the only exceptions to this rule being, a Player named and subsequently banned in accordance with provisions of 5.3 (Section A, pre-match planning) or a Player who is replacing another player withdrawn due to genuinely exceptional circumstances approved by the RFL,

The Match Commissioner or Referee, in the case of Matches where no Match Commissioner is appointed, shall be responsible for reducing the number of interchanges and communicating this to the Broadcast partner. Please see Section C Clause 10 for further clarification.

#### **3.2. Injuries**

The nature of any illness or injury must be indicated on the form, and this must be signed off by the Club's medical staff. The amendment must be sent to [squads@rfl.co.uk](mailto:squads@rfl.co.uk) as soon as the Club is aware that the change is required. This is to ensure transparency of team selection and to ensure the needs of the sport's broadcasters and media partners are met. If the medical staff are not available at this stage, then a duplicate form signed by the doctor

must be handed to the Match Commissioner (or Referee if no Match Commissioner is present) prior to the Match – the Club must not delay notifying the change.

### **3.2.1 Submission of Team Sheet**

If a Club is unsure whether a player will be Match fit for a Match, they should name that player in the 21-player squad then, if necessary, replace him after the relevant fitness test. The fitness test must be done at least 90 minutes before any First Team Match to enable the Club to declare an accurate 18-player squad in accordance with the applicable rules.

### **3.2.2 Procedures once the 18-Player Squad has been Named**

Once the 18-player squad has been declared and the team sheet submitted, any changes to that 18-player squad shall be deemed to be an interchange, subject to the following.:

- Where a previously fit player who has been named in the 18-playersquad gets injured/ill in a pre-Match warm up (within the 90 minutes prior to the KO of the match) a Club may: (a) replace the injured player with either the, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> member of the 21-player squad and this shall not count as an interchange; or (b) replace the injured player with a player from outside of the 21 player squad; however, this shall count as an interchange.
- If the replacement is the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> player, a squad amendment form is not required.

If the replacement is an additional Player who was not originally in the 21-player squad, an amendment form must be completed.

Once the 18-player squad has been declared and the team sheet submitted, any movement of a Player out of positions 1-13 onto the bench, and Players 14-18 moving off the bench and into the starting 13, shall be classed as an interchange, other than where a Player is injured or ill in the pre-match warm up and ceases to be part of the 18-player squad. NB. The Player moving into the 18-man squad does not have to take the exact position of the injured player.

All such changes must be immediately notified, and the amendment form completed (if required) and handed to the Match Commissioner (or Referee if no Match Commissioner is present).

If a Club declares a Player in a 21-player squad, but subsequently loans out that Player, the Club can replace the Player in the 21-man squad, but this will result in the loss of an interchange.

### **3.3. Players Charged with Misconduct**

If, as result of a Tribunal that takes place after the 21-player squad was declared, a player is unable to play in that Match the Club must complete an amendment form in accordance with 3.1 above, however, the medical staff are not required to sign the amendment form. The same process will apply in

relation to Appeals. As stated above, this shall not result in the loss of an interchange.

### **3.4. Other Exceptional cases**

A Club may exceptionally seek the consent of the RFL Board to make amendments to their 21-player squad in other circumstances and/or for such amendment to not count as a loss of an interchange. Such consent must be sought and obtained in advance of the relevant Match. For the avoidance of doubt consent will only be granted where the reason for the change is exceptional and was not known and/or outside of the control of the Club at the time the 21-player squad was initially declared. If a Club wishes to make any such change, they should contact Pat Cluskey

## **4. Arrival at Ground**

For all First Team Matches, each Club shall ensure that all members of its team and officials are at the ground at which the Match is to be played at least 90 minutes before the scheduled kick off.

If a Club is concerned that they may arrive late they should call the Match Commissioner (or Referee if no Match Commissioner is present). A Club who arrives late will usually be given 45 minutes from arrival to kick-off, however this period may be shorter if circumstances dictate.

If a small number of Players arrive late, the Match Commissioner (or Referee) has the discretion to delay kick off by any period he sees fit, or to order that the match shall kick off at the scheduled time. It may be necessary to instruct a team to begin a Match without all substitutes present or for a Club to have to bring other Players into the squad via the squad amendment process.

## **5. Dressing Rooms & Tunnel Area**

### **5.1. Home and Away Dressing Rooms**

The home Club is responsible for ensuring that the dressing rooms are secure, and that only essential Match Day staff/broadcasters etc. have access to the area. No person under the age of 18 should be present in the dressing rooms, save for relevant players or Match officials. On Match Day children should not enter the changing room two hours prior to the Match and two hours after it has finished. This is in place to protect all children and Players.

The following should be adhered to by each Club, as appropriate, in respect of the use of facilities/dressing rooms:

- The away Club must not cover up any branding in the dressing room area.
- The home Club must ensure that there is reasonable space for the away Club to affix any posters, photographs etc. to the wall.
- It is compulsory for the home Club to provide a massage table for the away Club.

- Hand basins (with hot and cold running water), toilets, showers and benches must be cleaned with disinfectant after each training session and Match.
- Drains must run freely.
- A liquid antiseptic soap dispenser, disposable hand towels, brooms and wash buckets must be readily available.
- Sponges must not be used at any time.
- Spitting is prohibited in or around the area.
- Urinating, other than in the toilet, is prohibited.
- Sharing of equipment, including use of another's towel or use of clothing to stand/sit on whilst drying is strongly discouraged.
- Players should have a clean pair of flip flops to wear to and from the shower/toilet.
- All Clubs must display an appropriate Players Blood Borne Infectious Diseases Notice within the Dressing Room Area.

## **5.2. Ice**

The home Club is responsible, on request, for providing ice in the dressing rooms for the reasonable medical/performance requirements of both teams.

## **5.3. Match Officials Security and Car Parking**

On Match days, the Ground Safety Officer or the nominated deputy should brief the Match Officials 75 minutes before kick off in the Match Officials' Room and all Match Officials including (where applicable) the Match Commissioner, must ensure that they are present in the Match Officials' Room for this briefing.

To assist and supplement the verbal briefing it is recommended that notices containing useful safety information are displayed within the Match Officials' Room.

Match Officials should be provided with a steward escort when necessary to ensure their safety - this should include a steward ensuring that they can leave the field of play and be protected from any abuse etc. GSOs should take responsibility to liaise with Match Officials regarding any actual or perceived risk.

It is not acceptable for Match Officials to have to make their way to and from the ground from on street or public car parking. Match Officials should be provided with secure car parking at the ground for their own safety. The secure parking should be as close to the Match Officials' Room as possible. Match Officials should report any issues to the Match Commissioner at the time or to the RFL.

Match Officials should not be subjected to abuse, comments or harassment from Players, coaches, officials or supporters whilst making their way to or

from the Ground, including for the avoidance of doubt whilst on public transport and at transport hubs, including airports and train stations.

#### **5.4. Match Officials' Room**

No person (other than the appointed Match Officials and the Head of Match Officials and/or his authorised representative) may enter the Match Officials' room or open the door to the Match Officials' room at a ground either during the half-time interval or during the period beginning 90 minutes prior to any Match and ending 30 minutes after the completion of the Match.

After kick-off, no Club personnel may have any communication with the Match Officials, other than in the carrying out of duties such as interchanges or discussing an issue with the Match Commissioner (where appropriate), until after the Match Officials have left the dressing room area post-Match.

Any person wishing to speak to the Match Officials should normally do so through the Match Commissioner; where this is not possible, contact should be made by knocking on the door and waiting for a response.

Match Officials should not be subjected to abuse, comments, or harassment (including missile throwing, spitting etc.) from Players, coaches, officials or supporters on their way to or from the dressing room before, during or after the Match. Any incidents should be reported to the Match Commissioner at the time or to the RFL Compliance Manager.

Each Club has been supplied with a notice which must be displayed on the Match Officials' Room door on Match days. Copies of the notice can be obtained by contacting the Operations department.

#### **5.5. Match Officials' Refreshments**

The Match Officials should be offered hot drinks and bottled water with a minimum of 2 bottles allocated per appointed official.

#### **5.6. Doping Control Room**

Home Clubs must provide a suitable Doping Control Room for use by the DCOs. The room should preferably be part of the dressing room complex and should comply with Minimum Facilities Standards. The following must be provided as a minimum:

- Integral toilet.
- Basin with hot & cold running water.
- Bottled water.
- Soap & paper hand towels (or air-driers).
- Small table & chairs (4).
- Own dedicated entrance.
- Bed (Medical or massage);

- the required number of seats in the technical area to the side of the home dug out to allow easy access to the players post-Match.
- DCOs will carry UK Anti-Doping passes and event accreditation.

The home Club is responsible for providing an adequate selection of sealed soft drinks within the Doping Control Room - still bottled water is preferred.

#### **5.7. Medical Room**

The Medical Room must be open and available for both Clubs and Match Officials from arrival on Match Day. If the Medical Room is locked at any time from the arrival of the Clubs, the steward with the key must always be stationed on the door. The Medical Room must be for the sole treatment of Players and officials; a separate first aid room must be provided for the general public. The following should also be adhered to:

- The Medical Room must meet the standards set out in the Medical Standards.
- The Medical Room must be cleaned after each Match.
- The rubbish bin must contain plastic liners, which are to be disposed of after each training session/Match.
- Clinical waste must be disposed of in Yellow Clinical Waste bags and disposed of in the correct manner (incineration under controlled situations either hospital or Local GP/ as per local Health Authority guidelines);
- Needles/syringes must be disposed of after use in a suitable waste disposal kit in a sharps bin, which when full must be incinerated in the proper manner (as per LHA guidelines); and
- The Medical / First Aid kit must contain disposable protective gloves, Hito scrub (or equivalent) and plastic bags for disposal of contaminated equipment / clothing.

Should the medical room be incorporated into the home dressing room and there is no other medical facility available, there should be suitable access for the away team to enter and utilise the facilities.

#### **5.8. Team Sheets**

Clubs must follow the below procedures in relation to team sheets at all levels of the Game:

- Each Club shall complete a team sheet by printing out the team sheet from the Gameday system. Home Clubs should assist away Clubs with any printing requirements they may have.
- Clubs must allocate the role to a responsible member of staff.
- Clubs must ensure that the team sheet is accurate in all respects particularly with the numbering of players.

- Players' names must be written next to the position they will take on the field of play and their squad number should be written in the adjacent box.
- The team sheet has specific spaces to record the names of the Doctors, Physios and Player Welfare Officer - it is compulsory for the names to be recorded here. The Player Welfare Officer must not carry out any other bench role eg Trainer or Water Carrier.
- Clubs must put a copy of the team sheet on the dressing room door at least ninety minutes before kick-off for all Super League and Challenge Cup ties involving a Super League team and one hour for all other First Grade fixtures. At the same time the Club must provide a copy to the Referee or Match Commissioner.
- Nobody is allowed in the bench area unless their name is recorded on the team sheet.
- Referees must make sure the above procedures are followed and report any discrepancies to the RFL. The Referee must not accept a handwritten team sheet or must have sight of an updated Gameday team sheet with any late changes incorporated prior to leaving the Match.
- The Match Commissioner if one is appointed, or if not, the Referee must make sure that the name of each Player is recorded correctly.
- Clubs must ensure that time is taken to ensure that Players' names are spelt correctly. This is particularly important for televised Matches.
- With Captain's Challenge available at televised games, the Captain and Vice-Captain should be identified with a C or VC next to their name.
- Should a player outside of first team play in a different shirt to that listed on a Teamsheet, changes must be made on GameDay to ensure accuracy for review purposes.

## **6. Press Obligations**

The following procedures should be adhered to in relation to press obligations:

- The Press box facility is to be for the exclusive use of the media and not to be used to accommodate timekeepers, statisticians, coaches etc.
- The Press box should be always stewarded.
- Working Wi-Fi must also be available in the press areas.
- A separate area for entertaining the press before and after the Match and for holding post-Match press conferences should be provided at all Matches.

- In Super League, the post-match press conference should consist of a top table for the coach to sit at, which should be positioned in front of either the Super League provided backdrop, or a Club's own branded backdrop.
- The mixed zone should be identified and stewarded.
- Clubs should only admit members of the media in possession of the current RL Commercial Media passes or another recognised RL Commercial accreditation. Access should not be unreasonably withheld.

## 7. Personnel

### 7.1. Ball Crew

It's the responsibility of the home Club to provide sufficient ball crew to provide an efficient service in its ground. It shall normally be expected that at least eight ball crew be provided. There shall be one adult responsible for the ball crew at all times who must have been DBS checked and have completed relevant Safeguarding Training. Young people can gain valuable experiences when being part of a ball crew and is something they should enjoy. However, to protect children from undue pressure or criticism of performance, children who wish to take part in the ball crew should be no younger than 12 years of age where Time Management Principles are applied. The following should also be always adhered to:

- Ball crew must be told who to report to if they are subject to abuse by the crowd or others.
- Ball crew should not show any favouritism or give any advantage to either team.
- Ball crew should be smartly dressed and wear identical clothing, which distinguishes them from Players and Match Officials.
- Ball crew should not wear playing kit.
- Ball crew must not play with or pass the balls or run about on the pitch including before and after the Match or at half time.
- Efficient Ball crew are essential to make sure the Match keeps moving without a delay while Players wait for a ball.
- If a Ball person is unable to retrieve a ball from the crowd, they should ask a steward for assistance and must not go into the crowd themselves
- The Supervisors should make themselves aware of the procedures to be followed if a ball leaves the ground. Ball crew should not be sent to retrieve a ball if doing so might put them at risk of injury.
- Each Ball person should be issued with a ball by the Supervisor that they should return after the Match.
- The Supervisor should ensure that there is a ball provided to the Referee to start the Match no later than 15 minutes before kick-off.

- In Super League, the Supervisor should also ensure that there are always two balls in each ball bin at either end of the field.
- In other Competitions, a ball must always be made available behind the dead ball line and directly behind both posts at each end of the pitch.
- Match balls must not be given to the dressing rooms for warmups - teams should bring training balls for this purpose.
- Ball crew should be evenly placed around the field - there should be a ball person on the halfway line.
- If Ball crew have to position themselves in front of advertising boards, they should ensure that they are at a join between two boards and not in the middle of a board; central contract boards must be clear at televised Matches.
- Ball crew should stand clear of the touch line whilst the Match is in progress always keeping out of the way of the Touch Judge.
- Ball crew should ensure they keep out of the way of standing cameras, photographers, cameramen, trainers and water carriers.
- At a penalty kick for touch, the Ball person on the touch line near the position of the penalty should monitor where the ball enters touch and place the ball on the line after the Touch Judge has indicated touch. The Ball person should wait until the Touch Judge indicates touch. The ball should then be placed on the touch line next to the Touch Judge.
- Ball crew are not to throw the ball to a player after the penalty kick.
- If an extra ball appears on the field whilst the Match is in progress, the Ball person nearest to the ball should ask a player to remove the ball.
- After a try has been scored, one of the Ball crew (who should be identified prior to the kick off) should ensure that a ball is available to restart play by placing a ball on the centre of the halfway line. This is the only time a Ball person should enter the field of play. Please note this only occurs at a conversion after a try has been scored and not at a penalty kick at goal. At a conversion, if the attempt was successful or not, play would resume with a restart at the centre of the halfway line.
- At a penalty kick at goal the Player may miss so play would continue either with a 20 metre drop out if the ball went dead or if he failed to find dead from the penalty the defensive Player would be allowed to run the ball clear.

## **7.2. Club Mascots**

The RFL recognises that Club Mascots are an integral part of a Club and that on Match days the Mascot is important as part of the pre-Match entertainment.

However, it is important that the conduct of the Mascot does not conflict with the work of the stewards on Match Day or interfere with play on the field. It is also important that mascots are mindful of their individual and Club responsibilities and do not engage in misconduct, foul or vulgar language or antagonise sections of the crowd, particularly as this suggests to young supporters that this is acceptable behaviour.

It should be emphasised that mascots are subject to the Operational Rules and may have charges of misconduct brought against them if they fail to abide by the Code of Conduct or breach the Operational Rules in any other way. Charges may also be brought against the Club for failure to control the Mascot.

Club mascots must be 18 years of age or older and be aware that they must follow the RFL Safeguarding Policy and must be DBS checked.

Mascots must not:

- Stand in unauthorised areas.
- Impede Match officials or cameramen.
- Run onto the pitch in celebration or otherwise during the Match.
- Interfere with play in any manner or attempt to distract Players.
- Act in a manner which suggests dissent to Referee's decisions.
- Act in a lewd or vulgar manner.
- Antagonise opposing supporters.
- Mimic or carry out acts of violence including to the opposing Mascot.
- Display any written material which may cause insult or incite a section of the crowd.
- Act in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Match.
- Remove their heads whilst in view of the public.
- Enter the field of play during the Match.
- Mimic a Match Official; or
- Encroach within 3 metres of the dead ball line during a televised Match as this could obstruct a video Referee decision.

Mascots must:

- Ensure the Safety Officer knows they are attending in advance.
- Report to the Safety Officer or his designated representative on Match Day and abide by the instructions of the safety staff which will vary from ground to ground; and

- Restrict their area of operation and times to those allowed at each ground.

### **7.3. Child Mascots**

Welfare - Clubs should ensure the RFL Safeguarding Policy and Implementation procedures are applied regarding Match Day operations, including the provision of an opportunity to young people to be mascots.

Appropriate written consent should be obtained from parents/carers that names, personal information and photographic images can be used appropriately by the Club if desired, e.g., posted on the Club website or printed in a Match Day magazine. The RFL have produced a template to this end. Should a child mascot be subject to a court order, special reference should be made on the consent form and their identity should be protected.

Suitable levels of supervision should be in place, and if required, an appropriate/secure changing facility should be available, although it's recommended that children arrive wearing the correct clothing. Accompanying Parents/Carers should be present and should be supervised, along with the child, by a suitably experienced & DBS checked person representing the Club at all times. The Health and Safety of those involved is also a key consideration due to the nature of the stadium environment on Match days in the tunnel and pitch area.

Equal opportunities must also exist in terms of selection/access processes to this Match Day opportunity. If an injured or disabled child is selected as a child mascot, then a risk assessment should be carried out to establish if the child can participate safely and to identify if any additional safety measures are required.

Advice/guidance on all the above can be obtained from the Club Welfare Officer or the RFL Safeguarding Team.

### **7.4. PA Announcer**

PA Announcers have important responsibilities in keeping spectators informed and entertained at Matches. PA Announcers should also work closely with the Ground Safety Officer to ensure that any safety messages can be broadcast in an effective and timely manner. Spectators come from a broad spectrum of society - all should be warmly welcomed, and all should be thanked for their attendance in supporting their Club and supporting Rugby League in general.

It should be emphasised that PA Announcers are "Persons subject to the Operational Rules" and may have charges of misconduct brought against them if they fail to abide by the Code of Conduct or breach the Operational Rules in any other way. Charges may also be brought against the Club for failure to control the PA Announcer.

It is good practice for the Club to draw up a full script of PA announcements in the week prior to the fixture for use by the PA Announcer; a copy of this Code of Conduct should be attached to the script.

The script should include any safety announcements as required by the Safety Officer e.g. pre-Match warning re Unacceptable Language and/or Behaviour remaining seated for the comfort, enjoyment and safety of all

spectators etc. as well as all marketing or entertainment announcements and should also give timings. A copy of the PA Script should be given to the Safety Officer.

PA Announcers must:

- Be articulate and speak clearly.
- Give the name of all try & goal scorers after they have scored.
- Adhere to all requests made by the Safety Officer - a good working relationship is essential.
- Give equal treatment to home and away supporters.
- Know their responsibilities in respect of emergency evacuation messages or in respect of other ground contingency where appropriate; and
- Ensure that they are familiar with the RFL Enjoy the Game campaign and literature and ensure compliance with and recommendations contained therein

PA Announcers must not:

- Make any public criticism of the Match Officials or their decisions.
- Make any public criticism of either Club or its officials.
- Make comments which may antagonise any spectators.
- Use any language which may encourage prejudice or discrimination against any section of the population.
- Use Unacceptable Language or foul and abusive language.
- Make any comments about supporters which could be derogatory in any way.
- Use music in a manner which is intended to suggest any of the above.
- Speak or play music over safety messages where the ground does not have a safety override on the PA system.
- Act in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the game; or
- Play music or use the PA system whilst the ball is in play which may cause a distraction to Players, including at goal kicks and when play is restarting.

## **7.5. Photographers**

All photographers should wear a bib that clearly distinguishes them as having an official role, and has a visible number on the back, which should be issued by the home Club.

The home Club is responsible for only allowing appropriate personnel to take photographs throughout the Match Day, including checking ID passes, issuing bibs, etc. No photographer shall be allowed in a pitch side position unless he holds an RL Commercial photographers pass and a numbered bib.

Clubs should restrict the movement of photographers and other media representatives inside their perimeter fences at Matches which are covered by a Broadcast partner so that these do not interfere with camera coverage.

All Clubs should take all reasonable steps to provide pitch side access on Match days that allows photographers to capture images from behind, or parallel to the in-goal area.

Super League Clubs should provide a photographers' room, with the following facilities:

- Power points
- Reliable Wi-Fi

## **8. Disabled Spectators**

It is important that Clubs are proactive to provide a high level of service to disabled supporters. Please refer to the guidance documents circulated by the RFL from time to time

## **9. Entertainment Etiquette**

Any pre-Match entertainment and/or appearance plans which could have an impact on kick-off time, or where a guest is being presented to the Players and Match Officials, must be submitted to RL Commercial for approval in a timely manner. This will not be unreasonably withheld however, the scheduled kick-off time cannot be compromised, especially for televised Matches.

Where the entertainment consists of a 'double header' Match, this Match must be scheduled to finish one hour prior to the first team Match if that first team Match is scheduled to be televised live.

In addition, any such plans should be communicated in advance of the Match to the opposition, the Match Commissioner and broadcast partners for televised Matches.

Additionally, any plans which may attract regional or national media coverage should be communicated to the RL Commercial Media Departments.

Consideration should be given to the name of any troupes; if the chosen team's name could be considered demeaning to women, then they should be asked to change the name before being invited to take part in a Match.

Joining or participating in a cheerleading team or dance troupe should not be restricted to female or male only participants, and neither should there be an expectation that participants must have a certain body type and appearance.

## **10. Kit & Equipment Inspections**

Each Club shall make all its Players available for kit and equipment checks before the Match and at any other time on Match Day as reasonably required by an appointed Match Official. Such inspections shall usually be made 60 minutes prior to kick off.

In any Super League Match, if a jersey is damaged during the Match, it shall be immediately replaced with a jersey containing the same number and player name that was worn prior to its replacement. For all other levels, unnumbered jerseys can be used in this situation.

## **11. Toss for Choice of Ends/Kick Off**

Each Club shall make its captain available to toss for choice of ends as reasonably directed by the Referee or the broadcast partner in the hour before the scheduled kick off.

## **12. Warm Up Rules & Facilities**

The home Club must provide a safe and adequate warm up area, which shall usually be the main pitch, to include:

- Appropriate lighting.
- Close proximity to the dressing rooms.
- Fenced & stewarded to prevent contact between players and spectators.
- Even grassed or synthetic turf surface (NB. If synthetic turf, this must meet the Artificial Pitch Standards in accordance with the Operational Rules); and
- Safe passage to and from the dressing room.

Due to pre-Match entertainment or the condition of the pitch it may be necessary to restrict the amount of space permitted for warm-ups. The home Club should decide whether any restrictions are in place in the week leading up to the Match as part of their pre-Match planning. This should then be communicated to the away Club and the Match Commissioner or Referee. Any restrictions should apply equally to the home and away Clubs. Unless otherwise advised the following shall apply:

- Warm-ups should be conducted from the dead ball line to the 30m line.
- Teams should be allowed access to the pitch to set the warm-ups up no later than 45 minutes prior to kick-off Teams will be allowed a minimum of 25 minutes to warm-up
- Teams must return to the dressing room at least five minutes prior to the scheduled kick off.
- Where there is only room for one team to warm up on the main pitch then the home team must use the alternative facility.
- Medical staff must be pitch side during warm-ups.
- Players warming up on the side of the pitch during a Match must wear a yellow bib to differentiate them from the Players currently on the field of play; and

- Clubs must ensure that they do not interfere with the warm-up of their opponents.

### **13. Viewing Point for Coaches**

The home Club shall ensure that the away Club is provided with four seats or spaces in the stand as high as possible and as close to the halfway line as possible, for use by coaches and statisticians, these being seats or spaces not in a public area and with a sterile or stewarded area around them. The facility provided to the away Club should include a bench with power for laptops and equipment and must provide access to the live feed and replay systems as the home Club provides to its own coaching staff..

In addition, the home Club shall ensure that there is a designated route from the dressing room to such viewing point and that officials of the away Club are briefed on the route to be always taken and provided with a steward escort if the route goes through a public area. The viewing point for the away Club should not be inferior to the position of the coaching seats used by the home Club.

## **SECTION C – MATCH RELATED INFORMATION**

**The provisions of Section C shall apply to matches played in 2026 as directed by the RFL. The applicable protocols that the RFL may bring into force from time to time shall take precedence.**

### **1. Kick-Off**

Each Club shall ensure that its team is ready to take the field, and does, as and when directed by the RFL Match Official or the broadcast partner's floor manager.

Unless otherwise directed by the RFL or requested by the broadcast partner, the away team will enter the field first, followed by the home team.

Two minutes before kick off the Match Official will signal, and teams must leave the dressing rooms.

### **2. Late Start**

Each Club shall ensure that its team is ready to take the field as and when directed by the RFL Match Official. Any Club at fault for the late start of any Match shall be guilty of Misconduct. The Referee's watch shall be deemed to be correct, and all times will be based on this.

### **3. Match Duration**

Each League Match and Cup Match shall be measured by the Timekeeper (where appointed in accordance with Section B 1.4) and shall be 80 minutes played in two equal halves with an interval of 10 minutes (or such other period as may be specified by the Match Official prior to kick-off with due regard to the requirements of any broadcast partner). The home Club can ask the Referee to extend the half time interval to 15 minutes, which should normally be granted subject to weather conditions or broadcast requirements, the away Club should be notified prior to kick off.

The hooter will sound immediately when 40 minutes has elapsed in each half regardless of where the ball is. If a kick at goal is scheduled to take place the hooter should be sounded as the ball leaves the kicker's foot. The Referee will acknowledge the sounding of the hooter by raising his arm as he would do to signal last tackle. He will then blow his whistle to end the Match when the ball is next out of play or a tackle is affected.

### **4. Time Management Principles**

#### **Super League**

Time management principles, known as 'shot clock' shall apply in the Super League Regular Season and Play-off matches, as per Appendix 2.

#### **Championship**

Championship time management principles shall apply in the Championship Regular Season and Play-off matches, as per Appendix 2.

## **Challenge Cup and 1895 Cup**

Championship time management principles shall apply in matches to which an RFL Timekeeper is appointed.

### **Compliance**

Any action (or lack of action as applicable) which results in the time management principles, or the shot clock being undermined and/or corrupted and/or negatively interfered with and/or not complied with will be considered Misconduct and referred to the Compliance Manager and dealt with in line with section D1 of the Operational Rules, which sets out the procedure for Misconduct

## **5. Breaches of Time Management Principles**

In relation to the Competitions to which it is applicable (for 2026 Super League, Championship, Challenge Cup (Round 2 onwards involving Professional Clubs) and 1895 Cup, any breaches of the time management principles will be dealt with by the Compliance Manager in line with section D1 of the Operational Rules, which sets out the procedure for Misconduct.

### **5.1 Kicks at Goal**

The Timekeeper will inform the Match Commissioner of any Player who does not take a kick at goal in line with the principles set out in Appendix 2. The Match Commissioner will usually include it in his report to the Compliance Manager, however if the Compliance Manager becomes aware of any breach other than via the Match Commissioner, he is still entitled to take appropriate action. Any fine for any breach will be as set out by the RFL from time to time.

### **5.2 Ball Crew Operations**

In the event that the ball crew do not operate in line with Section B – 7.1, and this leads to a breach of the time management principles, this will be referred to the Compliance Manager and the fine will be as set out by the RFL from time to time.

### **5.3 Player Returning to the Field**

A Player who goes down injured after the time management principles have been activated may only return to the field in line with Section C 9.10. In the event a player enters the field when not permitted to do so, he will be considered ineligible, and this will be referred to the Compliance Manager.

### **5.4 Players Feigning Injuries to Delay the Time Management Principles**

The Compliance Manager will be made aware of potential incidents involving players who may attempt to corrupt the time management principles by feigning injuries. Compliance action will be taken where it can be proven to the comfortable satisfaction of the Compliance Manager that a Player has feigned an injury. The fine and/or suspension levied will be as set out by the RFL from time to time.

## **5.5 Injury Stoppage Requested By Physios (on Field Policy)**

If requested to do so by a physio or doctor due to a serious injury, the referee will stop play. If the player involved is not interchanged/taken off for a HIA, then the referee will instruct the player to leave the field for 2 minutes.

Where a Physio or Doctor communicates to a touch judge and/or the Referee (by any means) that play should be stopped due to a serious injury (other than a possible head injury requiring on-field assessment), and the Referee stops play, the player involved must either be interchanged or taken off the field of play before he is permitted to return to the field of play.

A Club may use one of their interchanges to allow the player to remain on the pitch. This must happen whilst the player remains in the playing area. If he leaves the playing area and wants to return within the defensive set, he can, but this would be classed as two interchanges.

As per the Match Officials On Field Policy any Club which is found to have used a head injury assessment for the purposes of avoiding this Rule C 5.5 (for example, where it is found that the players' injury was clearly other than a possible head injury) the Club will be deemed to have gained an unfair tactical advantage in the Match and be subject to penalty under the Operational Rules.

## **6. Minutes Silence / Applause**

The Referee should signal the start and end of the minute with his whistle. Clubs should ensure that the Players stand to attention in a line for the minute's silence and do not form huddles or groups which may be misinterpreted and considered to suggest a lack of respect by members of the public.

## **7. Match Officials**

After kick-off, no Club personnel may have any communication with the Match Officials, other than in the carrying out of duties such as interchanges or discussing an issue with the Match Commissioner, until after the Match Officials have left the dressing room area post-Match.

Match Officials should not be subjected to abuse, comments, or harassment (including missile throwing, spitting, etc.) from Players, coaches, officials or supporters on their way to or from the dressing room before, during or after the Match. Any incidents should be reported to the Match Commissioner at the time or the RFL Compliance Manager.

## **8. Player & Other Personnel Behaviour**

Gestures or language which are either abusive or which may incite the crowd will not be tolerated. All reported incidents will be referred to the Compliance Manager. Players and coaching/support staff must be aware that whatever the provocation, their behaviour on the field and surrounding areas, must always be totally professional. Behaviour of this sort will be considered Misconduct - see Misconduct above and RESPECT below.

Players should ensure that they do not react to provocation from the crowd, whether this be verbal or even, in some cases, physical and should ensure that they do not make any gestures to the crowd which could be misconstrued as threatening or offensive. The same standards must apply to Club coaching staff and other officials.

Ground Safety Officers are requested to ensure that attention is paid to the stewarding of the crowd near the bench areas in particular the away Club bench area, which often receives a level of abuse from the crowd which is unacceptable.

## **9. Coaching & Support Personnel**

### **9.1. Team Requirements**

Each Club shall:

- Ensure that only Club personnel registered with the RFL are allowed access to and occupy the bench area together with Players (including substitutes). All personnel named in the bench area must have a role relative to the actual play.
- Clubs are allowed additional personnel in the dugout area for the purposes of shadowing club medical staff, not wearing coloured shirts, for training purposes.
- The team sheet for each Match shall specify which of the officials in the bench area is responsible for the conduct of that Club's personnel in the bench area. The official should be specified on the team sheet by placing an asterisk next to their name.
- Ensure that those of its officials and players in the bench area remain in the technical area at all times, with the exception of substitutes warming up (who should be wearing yellow bibs) and those entitled to enter the field of play as described in Non-Playing Personnel Entering the Field of Play below.
- Ensure that all personnel in the bench area do not use foul and abusive language.
- Ensure that no-one under 18 is in the bench area unless they are a player named on the team sheet; and
- Ensure that Players or officials under suspension are not located in the bench area.

### **9.2. Non-Playing Personnel Entering the Field of Play**

Each Club may nominate the following personnel who must wear appropriate accreditation and distinctive clothing listed as follows. Persons who fill these positions must be over 18 and must not be Players under suspension. Only registered players and/or registered support or medical staff or other Persons subject to the Operational Rules may undertake these roles. The Pantone references for the recommended colours of the shirts are given where relevant; these colours stand out and should prevent any clashes with any Club colours.

Save where permitted in accordance with other RFL Regulations, devices switched on or otherwise must not be taken outside of the technical area at any time, e.g. when a non-playing person leaves the technical area with a Player who is about to be substituted, he must leave any electronic devices within the technical area.

### **9.3. Head Trainer (Yellow Top PMS 803 2X FLUORO)**

The Head Trainer may enter the playing field in the following situations:

- When a try has been scored.
- While awaiting a Video Referee decision in relation to a try.
- During a time out called by the Referee for an injury.
- To inform a Player he is being interchanged (maximum time on the field of play in this situation should not exceed three tackles); and
- assist the Physiotherapist with an injured player, carry water or deliver individual messages in the above situations.

The Head Trainer must:

- Leave the field as quickly as possible (i.e. running) and not remain on the field of play for longer than three tackles.
- Leave the field immediately as soon as their assigned task, which are listed above, has been completed and return to the bench area.
- Not enter the playing field carrying any electronic device switched on or otherwise and must do so in a manner that does not interfere with play.
- Not speak to the Match Officials; and
- Only communicate with other Players whilst carrying out the interchange (and the new Player cannot enter the field of play until the interchanged Player reaches the touchline);
- The Player Welfare Manager may not act as the Head Trainer
- The Fourth Official must report any Head Trainer who breaches this rule to the Referee immediately. In the case of a breach, the Referee will stop the Match and send the Trainer to the stand. The Club will be allowed to use a member of staff named amongst the bench staff for interchanges, provided they wear the specified clothing for a Head Trainer. The Head Coach cannot act as a trainer.

### **9.4. Physiotherapist(s) (Orange Top - PMS 804 2X FLUORO)**

The Physiotherapist:

- Is allowed unlimited access to the playing field to assess or treat injured Players.
- Must go directly to the Player concerned and in instances of severe injury may indicate to the Referee that the game should be stopped.

Is not allowed to pass on messages at any time.

- Must enter and leave the field as quickly as possible (i.e., running).
- Is not allowed to be involved in the on-field interchange process save that when they go on to treat a player that they can bring that player off i.e. escort him to the touchline - they can have no further involvement in the interchange process; and
- May track play on the touch-line closest to the benches and where there are two physios one may track on the far side of the pitch. Physios should not loiter in the in-goal area when games are being broadcast. Physios who are tracking play must remember that touch judges, ball crew and camera operatives all have right of way, and it is the physio(s) responsibility to ensure that there is not a collision.

#### **9.5. Water Carrier (Blue Top - PMS 801 2X FLUORO)**

Two Water Carriers are permitted to enter the field of play in the following circumstances:

- After a try has been scored.
- After the Referee has stopped play for an injury; and
- After the Referee has referred a decision to the Video Referee.

The Water Carriers must:

- Carry an approved water carrying device or unit and must leave the field before play has recommenced.
- Enter and leave the field as quickly as possible (i.e., running).
- Not enter the playing field carrying any electronic device (switched on or otherwise); and
- Enter and leave the field of play in a manner that does not interfere with players

The Head Coach or Player Welfare Manager cannot act as a Water Carrier.

#### **9.6. Doctor(s) (Red Top)**

The role of the doctor is as follows:

- The Doctor must arrive at the ground at least one hour prior to kick off.
- The Doctor can enter the field of play when they are medically required to do so using their clinical judgement.
- The Doctor must be in the bench area during the Match.
- In the event the Doctor is required in the Dressing Room area or tunnel area to assist with an injury or concussion assessment the Match can continue provided the changing room areas are adjacent

to the pitch and there is an agreed communication system in place to recall the Doctor to pitch side.

#### **9.7. General Points**

All non-playing personnel must enter the field from the designated bench area and return to that area after coming from the field. They are not permitted to station themselves around the field, other than when managing a Player who has been removed from play due to being injured during the shot clock or when time management principles have been implemented (as applicable), (other than tracking physios) and are always subject to the control of the Match Officials.

In hot conditions, water may be stationed safely around the perimeter of the field.

In any Match a Player may come to the touchline to receive water.

It is permissible to have a further person over and above those listed to take onto the field a kicking tee for penalty kicks at goal, conversions, and halfway restarts. This person must wear a blue top.

Suspended players may not have any of the above roles while under suspension.

When entering the field of play non-playing personnel should be aware of the location of all other personnel including Players, Match Officials, and broadcast staff.

#### **9.8. Treatment on The Pitch, Touchline or Bench**

Medical staff should be aware that, other than in an emergency, medical procedures should not be carried out in public.

In addition, if it is necessary to administer supplements or other alternative treatments during a match then a dual-chamber container or other suitable container should be used. It is not acceptable to use a syringe.

#### **9.9. Communications Equipment for Medical Staff – Best Practice**

It is considered Best Practice at all levels for doctors and physios to communicate by electronic communications equipment subject to the conditions set out below. Any breach of such conditions shall be Misconduct. The medical staff must use a different set of radios to the coaching staff and operate on a wavelength to which the coaching staff do not have access. This is to ensure that: (i) the medical radios are not used to communicate messages from the coaching staff or perceived to be used for that purpose; and (ii) the wavelength is not blocked as this could lead to vital medical communications failing.

No member of the coaching staff shall use medical staff communications equipment in any circumstances.

The medical staff equipment must be clearly marked either using green handsets (where possible) or by using green tape to identify the equipment.

Match Commissioners shall be entitled to check both the medical staff and coaching staff communications equipment before and/or after Matches.

Clubs are under no obligations to use medical staff communications equipment, and when using it are responsible for ensuring a manual back up system if the equipment fails or the signal at the ground is insufficient for reliable communication (this should be checked before every Match.)

#### **9.10. Shot Clock Injury**

A player who is injured after the clock has started and beyond the point that the shot clock has run down must be brought off the field of play as soon as it is safe to do so from a clinical perspective.

The injured Player can either a) return to the field of play immediately if the Club use one of their available interchanges, b) be interchanged for another Player (at which point the Player entering the field can come onto the field of play immediately) or c) return to the field of play at the earlier of either the next stoppage or when their team regains possession. A stoppage here means a scrum, drop out, 20-metre restart or a handover.

It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any Player returning to the field of play does so in an on-side position at the correct time. In the event a Player enters the field when not permitted to do so, he will be considered ineligible, and this will be referred to the Compliance Manager.

### **10. Interchange**

#### **10.1. Interchange Rules**

For all First-Grade Matches and other competitions, the rules regarding substitutes are set out below unless otherwise directed by the RFL.

In the case of Extra Time, the procedures described in the Extra Time section above shall apply.

In respect of Concussion interchanges, please see Section 12.

- In Super League, Championship, Challenge Cup, 1895 Cup, Women's Super League, Reserves, Academy and WSL U19s each team shall be allowed to make 8 interchanges from the four replacements that are named on the official team sheet. Where a Club has amended the 21-player squad declared (other than those permitted in accordance with [Section B 3.3-3.4]), the number of interchanges will reduce by the number of amendments made.
- The RFL will appoint an Interchange Official who will manage the interchange process. The Interchange Official will not be responsible for ensuring Clubs comply with the correct interchange procedure.

A replaced Player must have left the field of play before the interchange Player takes his place on the field.

- If a Club decides to interchange a Player who is bleeding and has left the field of play, this interchange will be included as one of the interchanges allowable for that Club.

- If a Player is fouled by an opponent and that opponent is dismissed from the field, sin binned or placed on report and the fouled Player is injured as a direct result of the tackle or incident causing him to leave the field immediately, then this interchange will not be included as one of the interchanges allowable for that Club. If the fouled Player subsequently returns to the field later in the Match, that interchange will be included as one of the interchanges allowable for that Club. This does not include players who have failed a HIA.
- Should an Interchange Official become aware of a breach of the interchange procedures, he will immediately inform the nearest Touch Judge and, at the earliest opportunity, the Match Commissioner. He should also submit a written report to the Compliance Manager to arrive by 9.00am on the first business day following the Match.
- Each Club will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the interchange procedures.
- Failure to comply will result in an investigation and possible disciplinary action.
- Interchange Officials must not be subjected to any abuse or harassment before, during or after carrying out their duties.
- Where a Player is to be interchanged at half time, the Club should inform the Interchange Official and hand the relevant interchange card to the Interchange Official.

## **10.2. Interchange Process**

The following procedures should be adhered to in relation to the interchange process:

- Interchanges may take place during general play, after any scoring has been completed or when play has been suspended by the Referee.
- Interchanges cannot be made after the Referee has ordered a scrum until after the scrum has been completed. This applies regardless of whether or not the Referee has temporarily called time off or not, unless the time has been called off due to an injury. The Player leaving the field may do so at any time, but the replacement cannot enter the field until the ball emerges from the scrum.
- Each Club will have a set of interchange cards that will be numbered 1 – 10.
- It is the responsibility of each Club to have these cards available for the Interchange Official at the start of each Match. Each Club will also be responsible for collecting and storing these cards after the Match.

- Before the commencement of the Match, an official from each Club should remove the cards from the folder and give the folder to the Interchange Official. The Club official shall retain the cards on the bench for use during the Match. The empty folder must be handed to the Interchange Official so that the cards can be replaced in the folder as each interchange is carried out. These will then be returned to the Club official after the Match.
- If a Club amends its original 21-player match day squad, prior to the kick off, this will result in the loss of an interchange and interchange card Number 1 should be handed to the Interchange Official prior to kick off. Each subsequent Player brought into the Match Day squad from outside the original 21-player Match Day will result in the loss of one further interchange per amendment and the above process should be followed with card number 2, and so on (save where an exemption is granted by the RFL Board.) .
- As each interchange is to be made, the Player going on to the field must report to the Interchange Official. Once the Player who is to be withdrawn comes to the side-line the Player going onto the field will give the card to the Interchange Official. It is not acceptable for the Player to throw the card to the floor. The interchange cards should be handed over in sequential ascending numerical order (i.e. first interchange will hand over No. 1, second Interchange will hand over No.2 etc. The last interchange Player will hand over No.8. If any period of extra time is playable (Golden Point or otherwise) interchange cards numbered 9 and 10 should be used. (Also see 16.7)
- If a Player hands his card to the Interchange Official, but before he enters the field of play, it is decided not to proceed, the Interchange Official will hand the card back to the Player so it can be used for the next interchange.
- If a Player reports to the Interchange Official without a card, he will be sent back to the bench to obtain a card before the interchange will be allowed to proceed.
- As the interchange takes place, the Interchange Official will hold up the number of the interchange given to him, to allow spectators to note the number of changes.

## 11 **Bleeding Injuries During Match**

It is the Players' responsibility to report all wounds and injuries in a timely manner to medical and /or coaching staff, and their responsibility to wear appropriate protective equipment.

If a Player suffers a cut during the course of a Match, the Player(s) must leave the field as soon as practicable, and the following procedures will apply:

- In the presence of a clearly visible amount of blood on a Player's jersey or other clothing or on a wound dressing or padding applied to any body part, the Player must leave the field of play for the jersey/dressing to be changed before he can be allowed to return to play to avoid the risk of transfer of infection.

- Super League Clubs must have spare numbered jerseys available should a Player need his jersey replacing due to blood contamination. All other levels can use unnumbered jerseys in this situation.

## 12

### Concussion Interchange

The below should be read in conjunction with the standard rules relating to Interchange:

- If a Club wishes to use a 'free interchange' to allow the assessment to occur, it is responsible for ensuring that a concussion interchange card is passed to the Interchange Official.
- Save where inconsistent with these provisions, all rules that apply to normal interchanges, apply equally to concussion interchanges.
- If a Player is interchanged normally and an interchange card passed to the Interchange Official, this cannot be retrospectively changed to a concussion interchange card.
- The 15-minute period will start from when the Player crosses the touchline.
- The 15-minute period is 'real time' and not Match time.
- The Match Commissioner or Reserve Referee shall be responsible for timing the 15 minutes.
- At Women's Super League, Reserve and Academy Matches (and any other Matches at which a Match Commissioner is not present), the applicable Player's Club shall be responsible for timing the 15 minutes. At all such Matches, each Club must specify on the team sheet which of its personnel is responsible for the timing.
- The removed Player shall not return to the pitch until the 15 minutes has been elapsed.
- If the Player is deemed fit to Return to Play, then the Player must be with the Match Commissioner or Reserve Referee and ready to return to the field of play at the expiry of the 15-minute assessment period.
- The Match Commissioner or Reserve Referee shall then release the Player to the Interchange Official.
- The Interchange Official shall return the Player to the field of play as per the normal Interchange Process. For the avoidance of doubt the interchange may take place during general play, after any scoring has been completed or when play has been suspended by the Referee.
- The latest time that a Player must return to the field is immediately their team is in possession at the commencement of a new set of six tackles for his team. If the interchange is not made on or before this time, then the concussion interchange will convert to a normal interchange and the Club must hand the next interchange card to the Interchange Official.
- If a removed Player is not ready to return to the pitch when 15 minutes has elapsed (or at the start of the second half if the 15 minutes elapses during half time or, if applicable, the start of extra time where the 15 minutes elapses between the end of normal time and the start of extra time) then the concussion interchange will convert to a normal interchange and the Club

must hand the next interchange card to the Interchange Official. If the Club has used all its interchange cards, then it must immediately remove a Player (not necessarily the Player who went on at the time of the concussion interchange) from the pitch and play the remainder of the Match with one less Player.

- For clarity, where a player is removed by Medical Staff as a result of Criteria 1 or 2 signs or symptoms in the last 15 minutes of the match, the free concussion interchange can still be activated even in the event of all 8 substitutes being used. Should match time extend beyond the 15-minute assessment period, and the player passes the HIA, the assessed player may return to the field and the free interchange card passed to the Interchange Official. Should the player 'fail' the HIA, the team must then play with 12 players.

For the avoidance of doubt, for the interchange rules, the 15-minute rule is strict unless there are demands on a doctor's time (e.g., if there are 2 players to assess at the same time). In this circumstance, additional time to complete the HIA can be requested by the team doctor, to the match commissioner or reserve referee, who will consider the request and inform the team doctor of any additional time granted. Their decision shall be final and binding. When a doctor is required to conduct two HIAs within the same 15-minute period, e.g. two Players removed for the same incident or a second player removed during the initial HIA period, the following shall apply:

The Match Commissioner or Reserve Official should be informed that an extension is required to the 15-minute head injury assessment period. In the instance where a player is removed and a doctor is otherwise occupied, for example, completing an alternative HIA, an extension can be granted with the 5-minute rest period counted within the wait time. Following this, a ten-minute test window then applies.

***NB*** if more than one doctor, or equivalent, is present, who is able (including being insured to do so) to conduct a HIA, they can be done simultaneously.

The following example has been provided for clarity: Two players leave the field together for HIAs. Time of removal for both is **0 minutes**.

Player 1 rests for 5 minutes, then completes a 10-minute test. Player 1 can return at **15 minutes**, provided they pass the HIA.

At 15 minutes, Player 2 completes a 10-minute test (their rest period having occurred during the period Player 1 was being assessed). The soonest Player 2 can return is at **25 minutes**, provided they pass the HIA. The free HIA interchange process applies for both, as above. If a testing window takes longer than 10 minutes, the free interchange is converted to a full interchange.

It is at the discretion of the Team Doctor which Player undertakes the first HIA, if both are removed simultaneously. If one Player is removed sooner, their HIA must be carried out first.

For example, Player 1 was removed at 5.00 minutes, and another removed at 8.00 minutes. In this instance, Player 1 must have their HIA carried out first.

In the circumstances where one doctor is covering two teams, and two players are removed simultaneously from each team (home and away) the normal procedure shall be that the home team player is assessed first, unless there is a clinical reason otherwise.

- If the removed Player returns to the pitch, they may replace any other Player (it is not a requirement that the Player who went on at the time of concussion interchange is removed).
- For the avoidance of any doubt, the concussion assessment will not be influenced by the introduction of any shot clock.

The mandating of mouthguards is part of player professional playing contracts and will be enforced in Super League Men's and Women's competitions in 2026. Medical exemptions will be considered through an application process. A player without an instrumented mouthguard used in the study will not be permitted an HIA within the match and must not return to the field following removal. They may undertake an HIA post match.

### 13 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement

A Team may activate its 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement to replace another of its Players who has become ineligible to play in the following circumstances only:

*Where two of that Team's Players in a Match have been designated ineligible to return to the field by the Team Doctor following a Head Injury Assessment.*

The 18th Player Replacement can also be activated:

*Where one of a team's players is designated ineligible to return to the field by the Club Medical Officer due to any injury (head or otherwise), where the relevant injury:*

- (a) is caused by the foul play of an opposition player; and
- (b) the opposition player is placed on report, sin-binned or dismissed from the field because of the foul play.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement is not permitted to enter the field of play or have any involvement in the conduct of the Match except as provided by this rule.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement is an additional reserve Player who may only take part in a Match if activated by team management in accordance with this rule. Until activated, the 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement:

- must sit with the reserve bench,
- is able to warm-up with the other interchanges replacements
- must wear the provided bib identifying them as the 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement at all times unless and until activated.
- is not permitted under any circumstances to be interchanged or otherwise enter the pitch.

The process for activation of a Team's 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement is:

- The Team Doctor must confirm to the Match Commissioner or Reserve Referee which player(s) have been ruled ineligible to return to the field of play following Head Injury Assessments/game ending injury through foul play resulting in the placing of their opponent on report or their sin-binning or dismissal
- Those Player(s) will not be permitted to return to the field of play.
- Post game the Match Commissioner will complete the 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement Form and the Team Doctor, and a member of the coaching staff must sign to confirm the 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement Form is accurate, true and correct.
- The usual Interchange procedure shall follow thereafter.

The activation of an 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement does not affect the number of interchanges spent or remaining available to a Team in a Match. Once activated, the 18th Player Replacement must be interchanged according to the Interchange processes, including with respect to any free interchanges.

- the designation of a Player(s) as ineligible to return to the field is irrevocable and no such Player is permitted to return to play in that Match regardless of any improvement in their medical condition.
- If another player is deemed ineligible to return to the field of play following a Head Injury Assessment there are no further replacement players allowed save for any interchanges permissible under the Head Injury Assessment rules or the standard Interchange procedure.
- The 18<sup>th</sup> Player Replacement cannot be activated where less than two players have been deemed as ineligible to return to the pitch following a Head Injury Assessment (or one if due to foul play).

#### **14 Dismissed Players**

Any Player who is permanently dismissed from the field must return to the dressing room. They may only leave the dressing room when they have changed and must not return to the bench area or pitch side under any circumstances unless the match is played Behind Closed Doors, in which case the player should be seated in the area within the stands designated for that team.

Temporarily dismissed (sin binned) players should sit in the bench area until the Reserve Referee gives them permission to return to the field.

In any Match where the live review Video Referee system is in use, then a temporarily dismissed player who is due return to the field during the time the conversation is being taken at a try, may only return to the field of play once the Video Referee has confirmed the try has been awarded.

Where a player is temporarily dismissed and their time off the field will overlap both halves then any time after the hooter sounds that play continues until the Referee blows his whistle to end the half will count toward time off the field and so will be deducted from the remaining period to be served of dismissal by that player.

#### **15 Green Card**

In any Match where the Green Card Policy is in place, a player who has been green carded must remain off the field for 2 minutes of game time before they can return to play. The reserve official will be responsible for instructing the player when they can return to the field

If a green carded player is due to return to the field of play after a try has been scored, they can only return once the try has been confirmed by the Video Referee.

Should a player be Green Carded with less than 2 minutes remaining of the first half, any amount of time expired between the hooter for half time sounding and the Referee blowing his whistle to end the half will be taken off the green card time remaining in the next half.

The provisions of Extra Time as set out in this Match Day Operational Rules Manual shall be in force throughout the 2026 season for each relevant competition unless otherwise notified by the RFL.

### **16.1 Super League Regular Season**

The Timekeeping rules from the last five minutes of the Match will continue into Golden Point. In the Super League Season, where at the completion of 80 minutes of regular time and the scores are level, the Referee will stop the Match. Coaches will not be permitted to enter the field of play. The Match Commissioner will then immediately enter the field with a coin and join the Referee with the two captains at the centre of the halfway line. A toss of coin will then take place, with the home Club tossing the coin and the away Club calling the choice. The captain winning the toss shall decide to either kick-off or choose which end his team shall defend. The losing captain shall take the other of the alternatives. The Match will restart with a kick-off. At any time where a point is scored the Match will end immediately. Golden Point will be played to a maximum of ten minutes, which is divided into two five-minute halves. At the completion of the first five-minute half, the teams will change ends immediately and they will restart the game with a kick-off. After a maximum of ten minutes the game will be declared a draw.

### **16.2 Super League Play-off Matches**

The provisions of 14.1 will apply, however, as a result is required in Super League Play-off Matches, Golden Point extra time will continue to be played in five-minute halves until a point is scored and for the avoidance of doubt, will not be limited to a maximum of ten minutes. At the completion of each five-minute period the teams will change ends immediately and they will restart the game with a kick-off. Upon a team scoring a point, the Referee will blow for full time immediately. If the Golden Point is a try there will be no conversion attempt.

### **16.3 Women's Super League and Championship Regular Season**

The provisions of 14.1 will not apply unless amended by the RFL and notified to all Clubs.

### **16.4 Women's Super League, Championship and Academy Play-off Matches**

The provisions of 14.1 shall apply; however, as a result is required in the Women's Super League, Championship and Academy Play-off Matches, Golden Point extra time will be played in five-minute halves until a point is scored, and for the avoidance of doubt, will not be limited to a maximum of ten minutes. At the completion of each five-minute period the teams will change ends immediately and they will restart the game with a kick-off. Upon a team scoring a point, the Referee will blow for full time immediately. If the Golden Point is a try there will be no conversion attempt.

In relation to Academy Play-off Matches only, if a Match Commissioner is not appointed to the Match, the Referee will toss for choice of ends or kick off - the winner of the toss choosing either which way to play or to kick off.

## **16.5 Challenge Cup and 1895 Cup**

The provisions of 14.1 shall apply, however, as a result is required in each knock-out Match in the Challenge Cup and 1895 Cup, Golden Point extra time will be played in five-minute halves until a point is scored, and for the avoidance of doubt, will not be limited to a maximum of ten minutes. At the completion of each five-minute period the teams will change ends immediately and they will restart the game with a kick-off. Upon a team scoring a point, the Referee will blow for full time immediately. If the Golden Point is a try there will be no conversion attempt.

If a Match Commissioner is not appointed to a Cup Match, the Referee will toss for choice of ends or kick off – the winner of the toss choosing either which way to play or to kick off.

## **16.6 Reserves, Academy and Scholarship Regular Season**

There shall be no Extra Time in the Regular Season.

## **16.7 Interchanges During Extra Time**

During Golden Point extra time Clubs shall be allowed to make two additional interchanges to those allowed during regular time. Any unused interchanges from regular time can be carried over into Golden Point extra time. Should further periods of extra time be required at any Match then each Club will receive one additional interchange for each new period of extra time played.

## **17 Remain on Field of Play**

No Player or member of coaching or support staff shall leave the playing area or bench and enter the spectator areas during, before or after Matches unless acting under the specific direction of a steward.

## **18 Advice in Specific Situations**

### **18.1 Fog During the Match**

If fog descends or thickens whilst a Match is in progress to the extent that the Referee cannot see the corner flags at the far end of the field from the centre of the 20m line, then the Match should be halted. A discussion should then take place between the Match Commissioner (where appropriate), Ground Safety Officer, Referee, coaches and a representative of a broadcast partner if present, to examine options for completing the Match. E.g., advice from the local weather centre may indicate that fog should lift within a short time, at low attendance Matches it may be possible to move spectators to a better vantage point.

Spectators must be informed of the outcome of any discussions immediately they are known.

In both the above scenarios the health and welfare of the Players and spectators must be the priority along with whether spectators can have a 'viable' view of the Match should it be decided to proceed or continue after a break.

## **18.2 Lightning and Other Adverse Weather Conditions During the Match**

If lightning strikes during the Match or potentially may strike, the Match Commissioner (where appropriate), Ground Safety Officer, and whenever possible or appropriate, the Referee should ensure that players and officials leave the field of play immediately and return to the dressing rooms or if the Match is yet to re-start, remain in the dressing room.

In the event of other adverse weather conditions for example persistent heavy rain the decision as to whether the pitch remains playable shall be at the sole discretion of the Referee.

## **18.3 Floodlight Failure**

In the event of a failure the Ground Safety Officer, Match Commissioner (where appropriate), Referee and Broadcast Manager (if appropriate) should convene to decide the best course of action.

## **18.4 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle/Drone – During the Match**

In the case of an unauthorised drone is sighted within the stadium during a Match, the Players are to be taken off the pitch.

If a decision is made that the Match cannot be allowed to continue safely, the Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer will inform the senior management of the Club of the circumstances. In addition, the public-address system will be used to inform the public and staff within the stadium of the reason for the suspension of the event to allay any concerns and prevent any adverse crowd reaction.

Once the situation has been brought under control and it is deemed safe for the event to resume the Stadium Safety Officer/ Deputy Safety Officer will ensure that all parties are informed of this fact and public address announcements are made accordingly.

## **19 Drinks Containers**

The following apply:

- During Matches, Players must drink only from recommended water containers possessing spouts.

Players should not contact or touch the nozzle of squeeze bottles.

**WARNING:** The potentially life-threatening meningococcal disease can be transmitted by sharing drink containers.

## **19 Hot Weather Water Code – Best Practice**

Where a Club's medical staff believe that the heat and/or humidity is such that Players require additional water, they should approach the Match Commissioner (or Referee if there is no Match Commissioner) to request one or both of the special measures below: (The Match Commissioner shall consider this request and, where reasonable, shall grant it. He shall ensure that the other Club, the Match Officials, home club officials and broadcast partner are aware of his decision.

- The positioning of water containers around the ground (ensuring that there is no danger to Players or spectators) to enable Players to help themselves.
- If there have not been sufficient natural pauses (e.g., tries) for water to be brought onto the field, there will be a two-minute break at an appropriate natural pause in the game approximately halfway through the first and second halves to allow Players to take on extra water.

## **SECTION D – POST MATCH INFORMATION**

**The provisions of Section D shall apply to matches played in 2026 as directed by the RFL. The applicable protocols that the RFL may bring into force from time to time, shall take precedence.**

### **1. Post-Match Presentations**

Where at the conclusion of a Match a post-Match presentation is being made to one or both Clubs then all players and officials shall remain on the field of play until the presentations have been concluded unless specifically instructed to leave the field of play by a safety steward or RFL Official.

### **2. Children on the Pitch**

Children should only be allowed onto a pitch after a Match has concluded if the stadium and home Club have agreed that this may occur and a risk assessment has been produced, which (in the stadium and home club's view) determines that it is safe to allow children onto the pitch.

### **3. Drug Testing**

Each Club should ensure that it always co-operates fully with the Doping Control Officers (DCOs).

#### **3.1. DCO Arrival**

Please be aware that DCOs may arrive after kick-off so the Doping Control Room must be available for use upon their arrival.

#### **3.2 Notification of Selection for Testing**

In accordance with UK Anti-Doping procedures and the RFL Anti-Doping regulations players must report immediately to the Doping Control Station as soon as they are notified by a DCO that they have been selected to provide a sample.

Prior to reporting to the designated Doping Control Station Players may:

- Warm down.
- Collect personal belongings.
- Participate in a cup/Man of the Match presentation.
- Fulfil a media commitment.
- Complete a training session.
- Locate a representative/interpreter; and/or
- Receive medical treatment.

DCOs would normally allow the Player to return to the dressing room while under observation from a Chaperone after completing the relevant paperwork, however attending a team de-brief is not a permitted activity

under the WADA Code so this is entirely at the discretion of the Doping Control Officer. Doping Control Staff (DCOs and Chaperones) must be given access to the dressing rooms; however, the Player will remain under constant observation and must report to the Doping Control Station to provide a sample in a timely manner.

### **3.3. Draw**

The draw to select those Players to be tested will be carried out by the DCOs on their own without reference to any members of Club personnel. If Players or Club personnel wish to discuss any aspect of the draw, queries should be directed to the RFL Compliance Manager and not to any Doping Control Personnel.

### **3.4. Injured Players**

When the draw is made, provision is made for a reserve should one of the selected Players require hospitalisation. Please note that the Club Doctor will need to sign to state that either "the Player has been hospitalised during the Match or that failure to allow him immediate hospital treatment would have unacceptable implications for the Player's physical and/or mental welfare". Only Doctors on the team sheet or on the list of medical staff held by the RFL will be able to sign on behalf of a Club - the list has been drawn up from the Medical Staff Registration forms submitted and forwarded to UK Anti-Doping who may make further enquiries in order to validate the fact that a player has been injured and was unable to provide a sample.

## **4. Reporting Death or Serious Injury - Mandatory**

When a Player has died, or suffers a life-threatening or catastrophic injury, the RFL must be notified immediately using the emergency contacts below:

The information does not necessarily need to be provided by a Doctor and the information required does not breach any medical confidentiality.

### RFL CONTACTS

Robert Hicks	07710 009244
Kelly Barrett	07739 819750

Please make sure the RFL Official is provided with the following:

- Name of the Player
- Initial prognosis
- Contact details for the Player's family.
- Age.
- Nature of injury.
- Cause of injury if apparent.
- Venue where injury occurred.
- Name of the Player's Club.
- Club contact details.
- Hospital to which the Player has been taken if known.
- Any other relevant information.

The RFL will:

- Inform the Benevolent Fund who will provide emotional support to the Player and his family and advise them of the financial support which may be available.
- Provide emotional support for those involved where required.
- Handle any enquiries from the media in conjunction with the Club, family and other relevant parties as appropriate.
- Inform the RFL's insurance brokers where relevant.

## **5. Criticism of Match Officials**

It is an offence under the Operational Rules for any Person subject to the Operational Rules to criticise, in any way which may become public, the way a Match Official has controlled a Match.

Coaching staff when questioned by the press about the Match Officials or their decisions are advised to say no more than that if they have any comments about the Match Officials they will be raised through the official channels.

The RFL will refer all incidents of public criticism of Match Officials to the Compliance Manager for investigation and possible action where appropriate.

## **6. Match Recordings**

The home Club shall make a complete, unedited recording of each Match.

For Super League the home Club must submit the footage immediately following the completion of the Match and be available for download from the Opta site within 4 hours of the completion of the Match. Clubs must submit both tight and narrow angle footage.

For Championship and Women's Super League the home Club must submit the footage via the online system as instructed by the RFL. Such footage must be submitted by 9am on the first working day after the Match.

For Reserve, Academy and Scholarship Matches footage should be submitted via the online system as instructed by the RFL with the link sent to the RFL Match Officials department within 24 hours of the Match completion.

Any Club not submitting footage of a Match within the timelines set out above, shall be liable to a fine. Clubs should retain the entire unedited copy of that recording for a period of 14 days and shall, if requested, re-submit it to the RFL.

Footage should not include commentary and in Super League and Championship should contain the Referee microphone recording.

The recording should be of a resolution of 1080p (Full HD) in no more than two halves correctly tagged. The recording should be taken from an elevated, central position, which is unobstructed with a full view of the whole pitch and should be of a quality deemed satisfactory by the Head of RFL Match Officials. If during a Match play is stopped for any reason such as injury, the camera should continue to record throughout the stoppage with the focus of the recording being on the cause of the stoppage. The recording should continue until all players and Match Officials have left the field of play.

The away Club should be allowed to record the Match if they wish to and if facilities allow.

## **7. Ice Baths**

Usually, the away Club should bring their own ice for use in an ice bath, however the home Club should be prepared to assist in providing ice if required.

Clubs should be aware of the risk of Blood Borne Infectious Diseases when using ice baths and subsequently players with open wounds should not be allowed in an ice bath.

Should an ice bath be contaminated with blood it is important to completely drain and clean thoroughly with bleach to prevent the spread of Blood Borne Infectious Diseases.

Clubs should ensure that appropriate medical advice is taken about the general and specific use of ice.

Player comfort and welfare should be considered when using ice baths.

## **8. Refreshments – Players & Match Officials Post**

The Home Club must provide a post-Match meal/buffet for up to 25 players/coaching staff from the away Club and for the Match officials which includes the Match Commissioner and Timekeeper. The meal/buffet must be provided in a room from which the public are excluded unless the Team/Match Officials agree otherwise. Food should not be served in the dressing rooms unless the Team/Match Officials agree otherwise.

Refreshments should be sufficient for purpose, e.g., high in carbohydrate content and protein for player's post-Match meal. Trans fats should be avoided. Portions should be of an appropriate size. Vegetarian options should also be available.

## **9. Press Conference Appearances**

Clubs must ensure that Players and coaches make themselves available for all reasonable media requirements, whether they are at live broadcast Matches or RL Commercial convened events.

All coaches and Players are to be available for the live broadcast in line with the commitments of RL Commercial broadcast agreements and as supported by the relevant Codes of Conduct.

RL Commercial commit to not making unreasonable demands on playing and coaching staff and to give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice where possible (ideally at the start of the week of the fixture) via the Media Manager of the Club(s) in question. On Match Day all Players and coaches must respond reasonably to the broadcast partner's requests for pre, post-Match interviews.

RL Commercial will not insist that any personnel need to comply during Matches. Clubs may use their own discretion during Matches.

The press box facility is to be for the exclusive use of the media and not to be used to accommodate timekeepers, statisticians, coaches etc.

The press box is to be always stewarded on Match days, for the provision of Match programmes, team sheets, information etc., but also for the checking of press passes and the maintenance of good standards of cleanliness and repair.

A separate area for entertaining the press before and after the Match and for holding post-Match press conferences should be provided at all Matches.

The mixed zone must be identified and stewarded.

Clubs should only admit members of the media in possession of the current RL Commercial Media passes or other recognised media accreditation.

Access should not be unreasonably withheld.

### **9.1 Post-Match Media Arrangements**

Post-Match arrangements for Matches televised by the contracted broadcaster will be as follows:

- All coaches and Players are to be available for the live broadcast in line with the commitments of the RL Commercial broadcast agreements and as supported by the relevant Codes of Conduct.

Post-Match arrangements for non-televised Matches will be as follows:

- A media conference should take place as soon as possible after the final hooter.

Priority of access should be given in the following order:

- National newspaper journalists with 'live' deadlines.
- National and local radio reporters wishing to record interviews.
- Non-rights holding ENG TV crews obtaining post-Match reaction.
- RL Commercial Content Teams wishing to record interviews.

### **9.2 Mixed Zone Requirements**

The home Club Media Manager should ensure the smooth running of both the press conference and the Mixed Zone.

- The mixed zone should not open to the media until the first set of team representatives have entered the press conference and have begun answering questions.
- The Club should ensure that personnel who are walking to the press conference (coach, captain, requested players etc.) are not delayed by media waiting in the mixed zone.

Mixed zone media may only interview such personnel after they have completed the press conference.

## **10. Ground Safety Reports**

Clubs must ensure they send a Ground Safety report following all First Team Matches, (including First Team friendlies) on a template provided by the RFL from time to time and submit to the following email address, [gso.report@rfl.uk.com](mailto:gso.report@rfl.uk.com) within five days of the fixture.. Non-submission will result in Clubs being referred to the RFL Compliance team.



**Appendix 1 – Time Management Principles**

2026 Principles	Super League	Championship Challenge Cup (Round 2 onwards) 1895 Cup	Women's Super League  Academy Reserves Scholarship
<b>Time Management – Scrum and Dropouts</b>	<p>25 second Shot Clock introduced for scrums</p> <p>25 second Shot Clock introduced for Dropouts</p> <p>Shot Clocks are operated by the Timekeeper but visible on the field of play</p>	<p>25 second countdown introduced for scrums</p> <p>25 second countdown introduced for Dropouts</p> <p>(In cup games without an appointed RFL Timekeeper this will not apply)</p>	<p>The teams will get the ball back into play in a timely manner at scrums and dropouts. If a team is deliberately delaying restarts, then the referee will warn the team captain on the run, so not to delay the game. If this occurs again, the referee will penalise the player delaying the restart.</p>
<b>Goal Kicking</b>	<p>A maximum of 1 minute 20 seconds playing time will be permitted for the goal kick to be taken, following the scoring of a try or an election to kick at goal at a penalty. Should this time elapse then the game clock will stop until the kick is taken.</p> <p>In addition, the kicker will have 60 seconds from the moment the try is confirmed as scored by the Video Referee/the touch judges are in position at a penalty to attempt the kick at goal, if that time elapses then the shot clock will sound and the kick will not be taken.</p>	<p>A maximum of 1 minute 20 seconds will be permitted for the goal kick to be taken, following the scoring of a try/electing to kick at goal from a penalty. If this time elapses then the clock will be stopped until the kick is taken</p>	<p>A maximum of 1 minute 20 seconds will be permitted for the goal kick to be taken, following the scoring of a try/electing to kick at goal from a penalty.. If this time elapses then the clock will be stopped until the kick is taken</p>

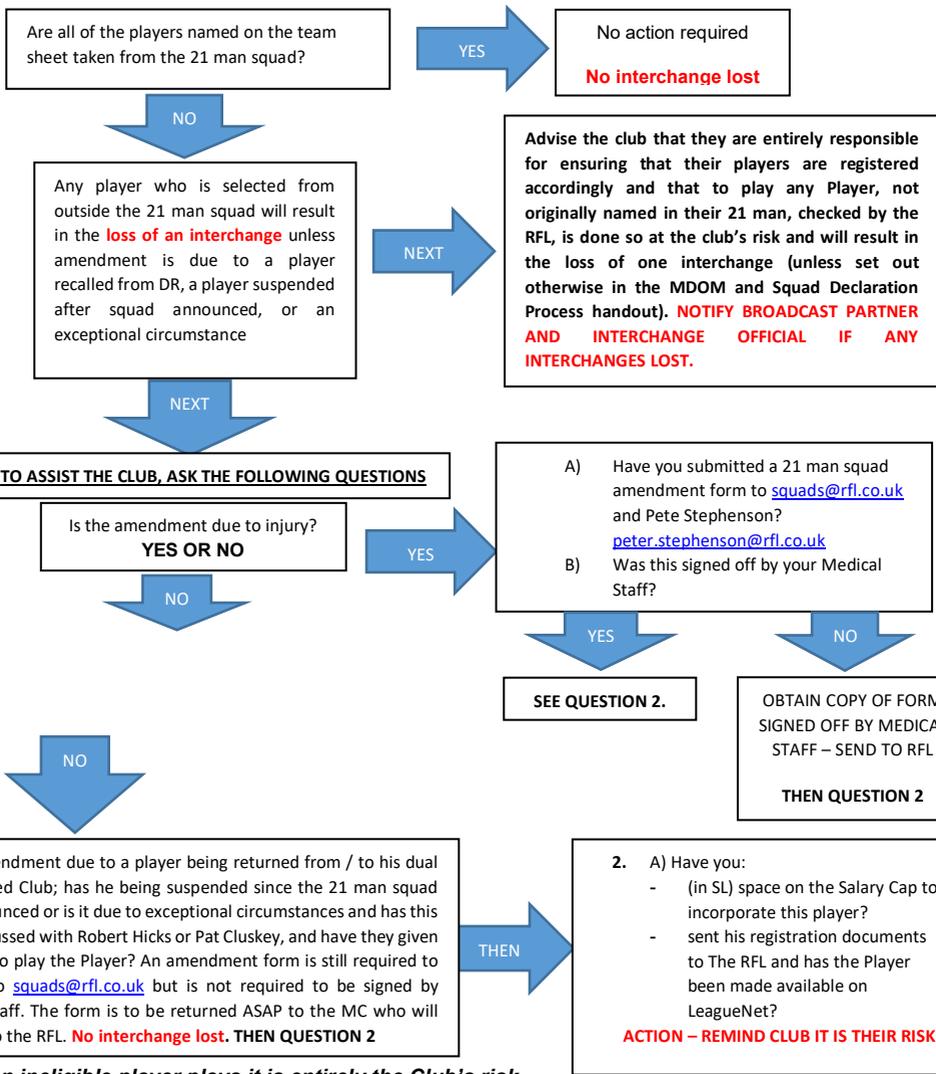


**Appendix 2**

**21 MAN SQUAD AMENDMENT FLOWCHART**

The purpose of this form is to help Match Commissioners and Match Officials to prompt Clubs on relevant issues regarding player registration

Match Commissioners and Match Officials are not empowered to authorise any player registrations



***If an ineligible player plays it is entirely the Club's risk***

