

NORTH WEST MEN'S LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2020

1. **APPLICABLE OPERATIONAL RULES**

The "North West Men's League" (NWML) sits within tier five of the RFL competition structure. All teams participating in the NWML are bound by the RFL Operational Rules for Tiers Four, Five and Six (Operational Rules).

2. **TABLES AND FIXTURES**

2.1 The League competition tables shall be compiled by the RFL, the positions in which shall be determined by the number of points gained with points being awarded as follows: two points for each Match won; and one point for each Match drawn.

2.2 The Club with the highest number of points shall be at the top of the league table and the Club with the lowest shall be at the bottom. Where Clubs have an equal number of points their relative positions shall be determined by points difference so that the Club having the greater points difference is placed above the Club with the lesser points difference. The points difference is calculated by subtracting the points scored against the Club from the points scored by the Club. If that still leads to a tie then the Club with the greater points percentage during the Season will be placed in the higher position. The points percentage is calculated by dividing the number of points scored by a Club by the number of points it concedes and multiplying by 100. If the positions are still equal, positions will be determined by the toss of a coin which shall be carried out at such time and place as the RFL shall direct and those Clubs concerned shall be entitled to witness the toss.

2.3 The notional scores in forfeited games shall be 24-0 and a points deduction 1 point.

3. **STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETITION**

3.1 Promotion and relegation shall normally be on the basis of two up and two down in between all divisions. The Management Group shall have the final decision on the composition of the divisions prior to the season commencing.

3.2 If two or more clubs finish level on points at the end of a season the application of competition rule 2.2 will decide which team finishes above the other.

3.3 If a club withdraws from the League having failed to complete 50% of its scheduled games, then the club's record shall be expunged. If a club completes 50% or more of its scheduled games, the points will be awarded to the opponents in line with competition rule 2.3.

3.4 If a club is expelled or suspended, its record will be expunged, irrespective of how many games that club has played.

3.5 The play-off format for all divisions will be as follow: 1 v 4, 2 v 3 with the highest placed team having home advantage.

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- 3.6 Only players who have played 3 or more League fixtures for their respective team are eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the competition. The NWML Management group have the discretion to allow players eligibility who have not met the 3 match criteria upon reasons presented by clubs.
- 3.7 Only players who have played 1 or more Cup fixtures for their respective team in the current season are eligible to participate in the final of any NWML Cup competition. The NWML Management group have the discretion to allow players eligibility who have not met the 1 match criteria upon reasons presented by clubs.
- 3.8 Teams who have forfeited two or more games through the season shall not be eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the competition. In this event, the next qualifying team will be entered into the play-off stages.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership of the NWML is open to all clubs playing rugby league within the North West Region who are capable of meeting any Annual Entry Criteria as specified by the Management Group.
- 4.2 Applications from new clubs must be submitted in writing to the Competition by the first working Monday in January each year. Membership shall be granted to a club for one season only and all clubs must reapply for membership each year.
- 4.3 The annual subscription for membership of the league shall be £50 per first team and £30 for any additional team from the same club. Merit League teams will also be subject to a £30 fee.
- 4.4 Subscription for membership of the League shall be reviewed annually and paid by 31st May each season. Any team not having paid its annual subscription by 31st May will not be allocated competitive fixtures for the remainder of the season until such fees are paid.
- 4.5 In addition to the League Fees identified clubs will be required to pay a bond at the start of the season. This will be held by the RFL until the end of the season and will be returned subject to the clubs fulfilling specified criteria which will be communicated by the Management Group at the start of each season.

4.5.1 The bond tariffs are as follows:-

Premier Division - £150.00
Group One/Two - £100.00

The Management Group have the discretion to apply additional tariffs as it sees fit.

- 4.6 Each Club will be required to ensure that the Volunteers listed below are appropriately qualified (where applicable) and registered on LeagueNet:
- Coaches
 - Club Welfare Officer
 - First Aiders

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- Game Day Manager
- Club Secretary
- Club Chairman

START AND END DATE OF THE COMPETITION

- 5.1 The NWML Management Group shall determine the commencement date of its competition and the date upon which it shall cease, these dates will fit between the 1st March and 30th November in any year.

6. PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

- 6.1 All players shall annually register to the Club using the RFL LeagueNet system. The League will circulate a link to the registration portal to the Clubs to commence the registration process.

- 6.1.1 There is no restriction on the maximum number of players allowed to register per team in the NWML, however fifteen is the minimum number per team and scheduled fixtures will be refused until 15 players are registered.

- 6.1.2 New Players can be signed on 'on the day' using the League Net system. Clubs must make every effort to confirm that players are free to register in this manner. Clubs are responsible for ensuring that a player is eligible to play for them before allowing the player to play. A Competition Officer/Administrator can be contacted on match day to check a player's eligibility.

6.2 Professional Players

- 6.2.1 The NWML shall allow professional players to play within the Competition in accordance with the Operational Rules and any regulations that are in place relating to the dual registration of players.

6.3 Transfers

- 6.3.1 Clubs may register or transfer players from other clubs, using LeagueNet. It is the responsibility of the Club the player is moving to initiate the transfer. The player has final sign off of the transfer. The process must be completed in full, including player sign off, before a player plays. The Club shall follow any other policies issued by the RFL in relation to the registration of players.

- 6.3.2 All players must fulfil all financial obligations to their current club before any transfer to another club, including professional clubs will be permitted. This also applies to a player wishing to sign for a different club in future seasons.

- 6.3.3 The deadline date for transferring of players shall be the 31st August each year subject to Management Group discretion.

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7 FIXTURES

- 7.1 All games must be played as per the fixture list, or the points for such games forfeited, unless an alternative date mutually agreeable by both teams and The Competition Officer can be sought. Any club wishing to rearrange a fixture must consult their opponents, agree a new date and submit the request to the Competition Officer. If clubs cannot agree a new date within 14 days of the original postponement then the competition officer will issue a new date for the fixture. If the fixture is not played as instructed by the competition officer the points will be awarded to the non-offending club.
- 7.2 Where programmed into the fixture programme, backlog dates should not be considered as a free weekend and the team should be prepared to be allocated fixtures on these days.
- 7.3 Postponements will not be considered because of injuries or any other matter not considered exceptional.
- 7.4 Any club desiring to arrange a friendly must seek permission from the Competition Officer. No friendly fixtures shall be arranged on a League fixture date without prior approval of the Competition Officer.
- 7.5 Clubs must accept fixtures given at seven days' notice by the Competition Officer.
- 7.6 If a club fails to fulfil a fixture, the Club Secretary must inform the Competition Officer that they are conceding the points.
- 7.7 Any club failing to play a fixture on a scheduled date will be made to play the reverse fixture, if it has not already been played or forfeited, on their opponents' ground.
Clubs failing to fulfil fixtures will be fined as per the following scale;
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Premier, Division 1 and 2 | £30 |
| Division 3 and 4 | £20 |
| Other divisions | £15 |
- 7.8 Any clubs failing to fulfil a fixture in the premier division, more than one fixture in divisions one and two, or more than two in any other division, will be automatically relegated irrespective of League placing, unless that club was due for promotion, in which case it will remain in the same division the following season. The next highest placed club will be promoted.
- 7.9 Any team that concedes more than 3 consecutive league fixtures will be withdrawn from their respective division and placed in the Merit League for the remainder of the season subject to Management Group discretion.
- 7.10 Any club failing to fulfil a fixture must pay reasonable expenses to the non-offending club, as determined by the NWML Management Group. This may include the referee's full fee and expenses.
- 7.11 Any club which fails to notify their opponents of its inability to raise a team 60 minutes before the scheduled kick-off, shall also be liable to pay any expenses, up to a maximum of £40, which their opponents may incur, including kit washing, or medical costs such as strapping.

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- 7.12 In the case of a home club failing to fulfil a fixture, a visiting club that has travelled, may claim up to a maximum of £50 towards transport costs.
- 7.13 If a club running two or more teams is unable to raise a team on any particular day, then the highest ranked team fixture must be played.
- 7.14 Any club with more than one team at home, in any competition, must provide an alternative pitch in case of a clash of fixtures.

7.15 **POSTPONEMENTS**

- 7.15.1 In the event of the home Club suspecting that its ground will not be fit for play owing to adverse weather conditions or other cause, the home Club must immediately call a Match Official on the approved list recognised by the RFL to carry out a ground inspection. If the Match Official states the ground is not fit for play, and in their opinion, there is no chance of it being so before the scheduled kick off, then that decision must be communicated immediately to the visiting Club, appointed Match Official and the Competition Administrator. Any Club failing to fulfil this instruction may be guilty of Misconduct and in addition to any sanction will be responsible for the reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses incurred by any Match Official or Club not so notified.
- 7.15.2 All postponements made in accordance with 7.15.1 must be notified to the Competition Administrator within 1 hour of the decision being made.
- 7.15.3 Where a Match does not take place because the away Club fails to turn up then in addition to such Club being found guilty of misconduct it shall also be liable to pay £50 compensation towards refreshment costs.

8 **MATCH DAY OPERATIONS**

- 8.1 All games shall, unless there is mutual agreement between competing clubs to the contrary, be organised and staged on Saturday afternoons with a kick off time scheduled for 2.30pm. If fixtures need to be played mid-week then the Competition Officer must be notified at least one week prior to the scheduled fixture.
- 8.2 To maintain the continuity of the playing programme the Competition Officer shall be empowered, if necessary, to bring forward to an earlier date fixtures scheduled for later in the season.
- 8.3 **Team Sizes**
 - 8.3.1 A maximum of 17 players may be named for each side taking part in a fixture including league and cup fixtures, play-off games and finals. The maximum number of players can be increased to 20 - subject to the agreement of the opposition. If agreement is not sought or permitted with opponents then a maximum of 17 players should may be named. For any fixture, this must be confirmed by Thursday evening prior to the weekend's game with the appointed referee and Competition Officer.

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8.4 Contacting Opponents and Kit Obligations

In accordance with the Operational Rules it is the responsibility of the home Club, during the week preceding a game, to contact both its opponents and the relevant Match Officials regarding team colours and ground directions by no later than 8pm on the Thursday before the following Saturdays fixture.

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

8.5 Technical Areas

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

8.6 Medical Requirements

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

- 8.6.2 First aiders should be listed on the team sheet and are required to register on the LeagueNet system as a volunteer.

- 8.6.3 In the event a player sustains an injury to the head and the match official suspects they are suffering from concussion then they will stop the game and ask for the first aider to come on to see them. If the first aider suspects concussion the player should be removed from the field of play. If the player refuses to follow the first aider's advice, then the match officials can hold up play until the player follows the instruction of the first aider. Advice for managing concussion can be found here. https://www.rugby-league.com/the_rfl/concussion

8.7 Reporting Injuries and Concussion

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

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8.8 Post Match Arrangements

- 8.8.1 The home club shall be responsible for supplying all the competing players, club officials and appointed Match Officials with a suitable post match meal. The visiting club is obligated to accept such hospitality.
- 8.8.2 In the case of away clubs failing to fulfil a fixture the home club may also claim up to a maximum of £50 towards refreshment costs. Any club which will not be requiring refreshments should notify its opponents in advance of the game, otherwise the club will be liable to pay £50 compensation to the home club.
- 8.8.3 In the event a match is called off after 5.00pm on a Friday evening the maximum cost for refreshments will be added to the standard fine for conceding the fixture. The equivalent ruling will apply to midweek fixtures, where by notification should be received by 5.00pm the previous day.

8.9 Team Sheet and Reporting Results

- 8.9.1 Official team sheets must be completed correctly before the commencement of matches and shall be signed by a recognised official from each club and the Match Official.
- 8.9.2 Completed team sheets should include the full forename and surname (no initials), of all participants and must be sent by the home club official to the Competition Officer. Details of the man of the match from both the participating clubs must also be included. The failure of a club to complete and return team sheets correctly will incur a £10 administration fine.
- 8.9.3 It is the responsibility of the both clubs to ensure that the team sheet information, including point scorers and result information, is entered on the LeagueNet system within 48 hours following the completion of the game. Failure to do so will result in an £10 administration fine. For the avoidance of doubt prior to inserting the result both Club must agree with the Match Official the final result.
- 8.9.4 The home club, in consultation with the Match Official and designated officer from the opposition, must agree the result immediately on completion of the game and enter the result on to LeagueNet within 60 minutes. Failure to comply could result in a £10 administration fine.

8.10 Abandonment of Games

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

8.11 Requests for Postponement due to Representative Rugby League

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- 8.11.1 A club with two or more players selected to participate in a RFL recognised representative fixture (as determined by the Operational Rules) may apply to postpone its fixture scheduled that weekend.
- 8.11.2 Such club applications should be submitted in writing and lodged with the Competition Officer and copied to the clubs opponents for receipt within 96 hours of the scheduled representative match.

9 DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSIONS AND FINES

- 9.1 A NWML discipline panel is in place to deal with all discipline matters arising. The disciplinary panel shall have the full power to expel, suspend and/or fine any club, player, official or other person, subject to the Operational Rules, found guilty of misconduct and/or breach of these rules and/or breach of the Operational Rules and to order them to meet any costs incurred.
- 9.2 A written report of a Match Official on the misconduct of any club, player or official must be sent via email to the Competition Officer with a copy to the offending club for receipt inside 48 hours from the conclusion of the game.
- 9.3 Reports of brawling – defined as three or more players involved - should via email be sent by the Match Official, for receipt within 48 hours of a game's conclusion, to the Competition Officer. Separate copies of the report will then be forwarded to the clubs concerned.
- 9.4 Any club which does not receive, within 48 hours, a report outlining a dismissal or brawl having occurred should contact the Competition Officer immediately. The failure of a club to receive a written report will not prevent action being dealt by the relevant discipline committee.
- 9.5 A reported club, player, official or any other person may, to defend an allegation of misconduct, send a letter for receipt by the Competition Officer within ten days of the date of the match. The club or such persons may in their own defence request a personal appearance and/or bring witnesses to the hearing, provided that they notify the Competition Officer within ten days of the alleged offence. If a Club requests a personal hearing but fails to attend, then an additional £20 fee will be charged in addition to any fines which may be imposed.
- 9.6 Unedited DVD evidence shall be an accepted method through which to defend or confirm the alleged actions that have been reported to the committee by a Match Official.
- 9.7 Club secretaries or their deputies, pursuant to the hearing having not received a verdict after five days, should contact the Competition Officer regarding the result.
- 9.8 Should a case of alleged assault by a player, club official or spectator be lodged it will be reported to the Competition Officer by a Match Official. The Match Official will then be instructed to make himself available to the disciplinary committee, for the purposes of interview, due notice of which shall be given in writing. A Match Official shall in such circumstances be entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses.

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- 9.9 A player's suspension shall commence on the Saturday following the meeting at which the suspension was imposed, with the exception of any suspension of six matches or more which shall take immediate effect.
- 9.10 All organised competition games, (including SRL fixtures, and RFL representative games) provided that they were arranged prior to the player's offence may be counted towards his list of suspended games.
- 9.11 A suspended player is not permitted to play in any other game of Rugby League until any fines are paid and his suspension is served, and the completed Notification of Games Served Form has been completed and received and approved by the Competition Officer. Any player or club violating this rule will be fined not less than £100 and the offending player shall be suspended for a further six matches and will not be able to play until such time as the fine is paid. In the event of a game having been won by a club fielding a player under suspension then the competition points gained shall be forfeited automatically. The Management Group, should it deem appropriate, reserves the right to apply other sanctions which may include a club's suspension or expulsion from the competition.
- 9.12 All fines, payable to the RFL must be settled within 28 days and must be forwarded to the Competition Officer. Failure to meet this obligation shall result in the fine being doubled automatically. If a further seven days elapse without receipt of payment then the club's fixtures will be suspended.

10 APPEALS

- 10.1 All appeals against disciplinary sanctions imposed by the NWML are to be dealt with by an independent RFL appointed panel.
- 10.2 Clubs who have the right to appeal may do so within 14 days of a decision made. A £40.00 fee, payable to the "RFL", should be submitted together with an accompanying letter outlining the reason why the appeal is sought. This must be forwarded to the Competition Officer.
- 10.3 An appeal by a club may be based solely on the following grounds: a) the finding of guilt or b) the severity of sentence imposed.
- 10.4 No member of the Management Group actively involved in a decision taken at the initial hearing other than the Competition Officer - who has no voting rights - shall be permitted to adjudicate on matters which will be the subject of appeal.
- 10.5 Adjudication by the Appeals Panel precludes the right of individual players or their clubs towards seeking a further representation.