

Age Grade Competitions 2021/22

Rules, Guidance and Match Card

Introduction and Principles

Age Grade Competitions in Dorset & Wilts are organised by the Age Grade Department. They are player focussed with the aim being to support the development and retention of players.

There is an assumption that Coaches & Managers can be trusted to show common sense and approach these competitions in a fair and reasonable manner with clubs working collaboratively and flexibly within the spirit and letter of the cut down rules and guidance we are now providing.

It is expected that Clubs will be determined to get games played and in doing this will be as flexible and creative as possible with a willingness to overcome difficulties. Cancellation should only ever be the very last resort. **This is particularly important as many Clubs build back from the pandemic and so flexible thinking by all is essential.**

There are some rules which have to be followed, mainly those that stem from RFU Regulations, and when referring to these we will use the word 'must'. If these are ignored, then a sanction is likely to be imposed by the Competition Organiser or the matter referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

We will sometimes use the word 'expected'. In these situations, Clubs should normally follow the rule or guidance but if there are extenuating circumstances these can be discussed with the Competition Organiser. If the Competition Organiser discovers that such a rule is not being followed, they will normally initiate the conversation with the Club and only if the breach continues will a sanction be applied.

We will sometimes use the word 'encourage' when we would like Clubs to follow something we regard as good practice, and which may become a requirement in future seasons.

Player Eligibility

To play in any of these competitions' players must be affiliated to the club they are representing (or one of the clubs involved if it is a combined team) accept that players may be borrowed from the opposing team for a particular game to allow that game to go ahead.

Players must only play in their own Age Grade unless all the necessary procedure described in RFU Regulation 15 have been followed. **Please not that combining Under 16 teams on block with Under 18s is not allowed but playing up or down in accordance with Regulation 15 is still permitted as long as the necessary conditions are met. This is done for individual players and is the exception rather than the norm. It must not be used to combine teams 'by the back door'.**

Fixtures

Other than Knock Out Finals and the Under 12 Tournaments all fixture dates are PLAY BY DATES and other dates can be used by agreement between Clubs. If agreement cannot be reached the default is the given date. The kick of time is determined by the home Club.

If a game is rescheduled for a date before the play by date the Competition Organiser must be informed. If Clubs wish to arrange a date later than the play by date, then the agreement of the Competition Organiser must be obtained in advance.

If a game has to be postponed due to bad weather or ground conditions the default date becomes the next available Sunday where there is not a clash with County training or matches. **If Clubs wish to play on a later date they require the permission of the Competition Organiser.**

If conditions are doubtful the home team are expected to arrange an inspection early enough to avoid the away team travelling unnecessarily.

Referees

The Referee's Society is notified automatically through GMS and WhostheRef of Competition Fixtures and asked to appoint referees to as many games from Colts down to Under 14 as possible. Society Referees are not normally appointed to Under 12 and Under 13 games.

All Clubs have one or more Referee Contacts registered with the Society who receive notification of all appointments. They can also log onto WhostheRef to check whether a referee has been appointed. Competition Managers do not have access to information about referee appointments.

For all Under 12 and Under 13 games and for other games where a Society Referee is not appointed it is the responsibility of the home club to appoint the most appropriate referee they can.

1. Ideally the referee appointed will be qualified but they must at a minimum have the competence and experience to referee the game safely and fairly.
2. Ideally the referee appointed should be neutral – i.e., not from either club.
3. If this is not possible than the next best option is to use a home club referee who normally works with a different group.
4. If it is necessary to have a referee from within the group playing, then the home club is expected to invite the away club to referee half the game if they wish and have a suitable referee present.
5. If the home club is unable to find a suitable referee the away club should be asked to do so.

Results

To avoid any confusion the Lead Coaches or Managers of both teams are encouraged to ask the referee to confirm the result at the end of the game. The referee's decision is final.

All our competitions now use Electronic Match Cards. Separate instructions are available.

If for any reason it has been agreed with the Competition Manager that an EMC cannot be used, an emergency paper Match Card (see below) should be used as a fall back.

Duration of Matches

The duration of matches will normally be the maximum time laid down for the Age Grade in Regulation 15. Colts & Under 16s – 35 minutes each way, Under 15s – 30 minutes each way, Under 14s & Under 13s – 25 minutes each way, Under 12s – 20 minutes each way (shorter games will be played in Tournaments with a maximum total of 70 minutes).

No additional time can be played other than time added on for injury stoppages.

From Colts down to Under 13 a game shall finish when the points difference reaches or passes 50 points unless both sides agree to continue. If the game continues the final score will be taken at the time when the 50 points difference was first reached or passed. No further scores should be recorded and must not be included in any published results.

For Under 12s any game must stop when the try difference reaches 6 tries and that shall be the final score. Only if steps are taken to balance the sides a separate friendly game can follow. The score in this friendly should not be recorded or published.

Expected & Minimum Numbers of Players

The expected numbers to play at each Age Grade and the minimum numbers required for a game to start or continue as part of the competition are given below. **These have been temporarily reduced for the 2021/22 season but this will be kept under review. Before the New Year (while all are playing to the rules of the age grade below) these numbers refer to the rules being played and not the age grade of the players.**

If at least one team is unable to field sufficient players, the side with the greater number of players must either lend players or reduce their numbers so both sides have the same. Teams are encouraged to lend and accept the loan of players but are not obliged to do so. The numbers on each side do not have to be equalised following a yellow or red card.

If the numbers available at the start or at any point during the game drop below the minimum teams are encouraged to play some form of friendly rather than cancel a game. If a friendly is played for competition scoring purposes the game will be awarded with maximum points and score difference to the side that has the necessary number of players, but the other side will still receive their point as if they had lost a competition game. A walkover will only be recorded if no game of any sort takes place and then only if the side claiming the walkover is deemed to have made all reasonable efforts to get the game played.

Colts through to Under 14 – 15 per side expected with 10 per side minimum for competition purposes.

Under 13 – 13 per side expected with 9 per side minimum for competition purposes.

Under 12 – 12 per side expected with 8 per side minimum for competition purposes.

Front Row

From Colts to Under 13, whenever possible teams are expected to include a trained and experienced front row and replacement(s). If this is not possible games may start or continue with uncontested scrums and the result will still count for competition purposes.

Under 12 scrums are formed of the nearest five players and only the strike is contested so specialist front rows are not required.

Match Day Squads

Unless agreed between the two Clubs or with the Competition Organiser the maximum size of Match Day Squad will be:

Colts through to Under 14 – 22; Under 13 – 19; Under 12 – 18.

Separate rules will be issued for the Under 12 and Under 13 Tournaments where generally more players are allowed.

‘Rolling substitutions’ are permitted in all our Age Grade competitions and there is no restriction on the number of ‘rotations’.

Use of All Registered Players

The aim is to encourage participation. While it is still viewed as good practice to share competition experience widely across the players in large squads there is now no requirement that each player plays in a specific number of games. This method of sharing game time has been replaced by the Half Game Rule.

Half Game Rule

Teams in all levels of Age Grade Rugby are required by the RFU to implement the Half Game Rule (see RFU Reg 15.12). Using the premise that we trust coaches unless and until they prove otherwise this will initially be self-policed. If justified concerns are raised that this trust is being abused Competition Organisers would have to impose a more onerous logging system on the team involved. Deliberate abuse of this rule would be regarded as a serious breach of discipline.

Scoring in Groups and Leagues

In Pools and Leagues the scoring system will be:

Youth (including Colts)	Win	5pts
	Draw	3pts
	Lose	1pt (as long as game is played as a competition game)
	Try Bonus	1pt (five or more tries scored)
	Lose Bonus	1pt (lose by seven or less points)
	Walkover	6pts and score of 50-0 (10 tries to nil)

The default score for a walkover is 50-0 (10 tries to nil) for Colts and Youth although Competition Organisers may adjust this result depending whether or not both sides have made every reasonable effort to keep the game on.

Midi	Win	4pts
	Draw	2pts
	Lose	1pt (as long as game is played as competition game)
	Bonuses	None awarded
	Walkover	4pts and score of 50-0 (10 tries at U13 and 30-0 at U12)

The default score for a walkover is 30-0 at under 12 and 50-0 at under 13 although Competition Organisers may adjust this result depending whether or not both sides have made every reasonable effort to keep the game on.

Splitting Ties in Groups or Leagues

If teams are finish level in a table, the order will be decided by:

1. The team with greater overall difference between points scored and points conceded in all games.
2. The team scoring the higher total number of points in all games.
3. The team scoring the higher total number of tries in all games.
4. The result (or aggregate result in leagues which play home and away) between the tied teams.

Drawn games in Knock Out Competitions

No extra time (other than time added on for injury stoppages) is played.

1. The winner is the team scoring the more tries
2. The winner is the team scoring the more penalty kicks
3. The winner is the team that scored the first try
4. The winner is the team that scored first
5. If there is no score the away team shall be declared the winner

Matters not covered, disputes and appeals

Matters not fully covered by these rules will be decided by the overall Competitions Organiser where necessary in conjunction with the Forum Chairs. Unless changed in these rules decisions will normally be based on previous rules and practice.

Disputes will be resolved initially by the Managers of individual competitions who may refer them to the overall Competitions Organiser.

Any disciplinary issues will be passed on to the Youth & Schools Discipline Officer.

Any appeals against decisions of the Competitions Organiser will be considered by a sub-group set up for that purpose.

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DORSET & WILTS RFU – AGE GRADE EMERGENCY MATCH CARD

DETAILS OF MATCH

Age Grade		Date of Match		Kick Off	
Venue		Name of Referee		Society / Club	
		HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM	
Name of Team					
Final Score (Points)					
Number of Tries Scored					

TEAM SHEET

Name of Team			
	Name of Player	RFU ID Number	FR
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

NB – Maximum Squad Sizes. U12 – 18, U13 – 19, U14 to Colts – 22

The Half Game Rule has been followed in this game. Any players who were unable to play for half a game for legitimate reasons (injury etc) are marked with '*'. *(Verified by Team Official not by Referee)*

SIGNATURES

Team Official Referee