

DE-REGULATION FOR D&W RFU LEAGUES FOR THE SEASON 21-22

Working to Together to Grow Rugby in Dorset and Wiltshire



The RFU, through the South-West Divisional Organising Committee (SW DOC), has delegated to constituent bodies the organisation of leagues at Level 8 and below. Dorset & Wilts RFU, subject to the approval of SW DOC and the RFU, may de-regulate those leagues. The de-regulation that will be applied in Dorset & Wilts Leagues is summarised in this Appendix. Clubs should refer to their appointed League Secretary for guidance who will administer in accordance with RFU Regulation, the administrative instructions issued by the SW DOC and the de-regulation set out in this Appendix. The following changes are authorised for clubs in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues.

I. Structure.

RFU Regulation limits the eligibility of clubs to enter the Leagues. To enable players to play a game on a regular basis who might otherwise be prevented by weakness in a club's playing strength then any two clubs may nominate a joint (composite) team for entry in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues. This team may contain players registered for either club under RFU adult registration requirements but must be members of one or the other. The composite team will not be able to play in the same league as either parent club or at the same or higher level. One club must take responsibility for administration and discipline. A composite team is usually to be declared and entered prior to the start of a season but in the event that a team is expunged or withdraws during a season then with the agreement of the league secretary the players may then join with another club's players and form a composite team to fulfil fixtures in the league.

2. Principles of Promotion and Relegation.

RFU Regulation on level transfer only applies down to Level 7. The composition of leagues in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues will be recommended by Dorset & Wilts RFU and submitted for SW DOC approval before each season.

2.1. RFU Regulation governs the promotion of teams where two Leagues support one League. If there are two leagues at Level 8 in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues which are not all composed of eligible teams' promotion will be limited as if there were only one league, i.e. only two Club First XV's will be eligible for promotion from Level 8. If a team at the top of a Level 8 league is eligible then it will be promoted. Dorset & Wilts RFU may nominate eligible teams for promotion taking into account the principles of RFU Regulation or order play offs in accordance with the RFU regulation to establish which eligible teams should be nominated for promotion.

2.2. Below Level 8 if there are three leagues supporting two then those teams in the top position in each will be promoted if they are eligible. They are ineligible if a team from their club is already or will be at the level above. The eligible runners up in each may be offered promotion but in the event that more than 4 teams are eligible Dorset & Wilts RFU will nominate as per 2.1 above.

2.3. RFU Regulation requires notice to be given by 31 December but teams in Dorset & Wilts RFU leagues have until 31 March to express a preference not to be promoted. However, Dorset & Wilts RFU's recommendations to the SW DOC have to consider the merits of the case against the imbalances that might result in the structure. Promotion is likely if a team is eligible for promotion in two successive seasons.

3. Referees Touch Judges and Match Officials.

RFU Regulations cover the appointment of match officials. In the Dorset & Wilts Leagues at levels 9 and below, where a league fixture does not involve a 1st XV then the host club cannot rely upon the referee society to appoint a match official. The onus will be on the host club to arrange a suitably qualified referee and where this is not done, and where the League Secretary deems the host club has not made the necessary effort to appoint a referee, then a league fixture will be deemed to be forfeited and will not be postponed to a later date if that is the only reason for postponement.

4. Eligibility and Player Registration.

4.1. Registered and Unregistered players. RFU Regulation requires all players to be registered. In the Dorset & Wilts Leagues only players selected to represent Club 1st XV's will be required to have effective registration subject to the latitude that the regulations permit selection of up to two players at Level 9 without Effective Registration, in accordance with the provisos in that Regulation. They cannot play a second time without having been registered. The unregistered players' date of birth must be recorded against the players name on the result card.

4.2. Eligibility. Players registered for one club may not play for another at any level except where permitted under RFU Regulation or under the specific circumstances of a composite team as per paragraph 1 above. All teams are to list their team by name on or in the form provided for the match report.

Students at FE College or University who are not Registered may play for their club during a break from their studies, subject to the limits in 4.1 above. Dual registration is permitted in the circumstances specified in RFU Regulation where the limits in 4.1 above no longer apply.

4.3. Team Composition. In the event that a significant number of players who play routinely for a higher-level team in the club are nominated to play for a lower XV then the League Secretary may request an explanation and award up to 5 penalty points if they are not satisfied with the answer.

4.4. Higher Level Team Not Fielded. In the event that a lower team is fielded in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues and wins its match when a higher XV of that club does not have a fixture, or that fixture does not take place, then there will be grounds for appeal to the League Secretary to review the result if it is suspected that a significant number of players from a higher-level team have been fielded. In particular if a team defaults in the League and the club has a lower team in a league that plays and wins on the same day then that lower team may be deemed by the League Secretary to have played and lost, a Nil Nil score being returned. The circumstances of each such concession will be examined by the League Secretary.

(Comment: If the problem concerns fielding a front row and safety is an issue then clubs should field a XV without a full front row thereby conceding the game and playing uncontested. However, by playing a game they do not lose points nor endanger a lower team's result - see para 6 below.)

5. Replacements.

At Level 8 RFU Regulation applies in respect of replacements, hence the sides are restricted to 3 replacements, 8 interchanges and must include at least 4 players in the named team capable of playing front row.

For this season alone (2021-22), in the D&W leagues we will allow those teams that are just 1 team clubs to have up to 5 replacements, however still restricted to 8 interchanges.

At Level 9 in the Dorset & Wilts leagues the lowest or only XV in a club may have unlimited replacements. The lowest or only team in a club is judged by the fixture list centrally promulgated for the teams that the club has entered into the league or a non-regulated matrix, not by the circumstances of the day.

It does not have to have three replacements nor is it limited to three. If the club has a team in the matrix and it does not have a game, then the lowest league side at Level 9 will be able to field a match squad of up to 20 players. In the event that a team in a matrix ceases to be fielded during a season then if a club has a higher XV at Level 9 more than 3 replacements for the remainder of the season can only be authorised by application to the secretary of that league.

6. Front Row.

At Level 9 for a match to be valid a team must start with a front row capable of playing the fixture but if no suitably trained and experienced player is available to substitute in the event of injury, temporary suspension or dismissal (and the opposition are unable to assist with a suitable replacement) then the match will continue with uncontested scrums for the period necessary and the result will stand. RFU Reg 13 Appendix 2.15b will not apply at Level 9. This is the 'Man Off Rule'.

7. Concessions and Point Deductions.

Penalty points will be deducted if a team fails to fulfil a league fixture however if a team concedes a match but still enables a game to be played then no league points will be deducted. For example, if a team is unable to field at least 12 players or contest the first scrum of a match before any injuries have occurred to a front row player - i.e. they started the match without a front row - then the match is forfeit but no league points will be deducted as long as a game takes place.

8. Limitation on Uncontested Wins.

In the event that a team has caused matches to be played with uncontested scrums continuing up to the final whistle and has gained more than two wins in such circumstances then the League Secretary can decide not to award any further points for that team as a consequence of winning subsequent matches played with uncontested scrums.

9. Player Numbers at Level 9.

At Level 9 if a team is short of players the opposition is strongly encouraged to loan players to the team that is short of numbers in an effort to enable the game to take place. If they do not loan players, then the match will be played with sides of equal numbers based on the lowest number fielded by one of the sides. The minimum number for a valid match will be 12 in a team. (Comment: If a team only has 12 players and none are loaned, then the game is to be played at 12-a- side. Less than 12 players and the match has to be conceded by the team short of players but if any kind of contested game is played then points are not deducted as per para 6 above.)

10. Maximum score.

At level 9 when the scoring differential reaches 60 points the result will be recorded as at that time in the game. If mutually agreed, the match may continue to full time, but further scores will not be recorded or reported.

Notes:

1. Players should be loaned to ensure a game is played or continued with contested scrums. The result will stand.
2. Level 8 matches will require adherence to the usual Regulations for replacements and front row replacement, in particular using their interchanges in such a way as to enable FR replacement in accordance with the Regulation.
3. Any issue that arises over whether a league match can/cannot be played – such as ground condition or lack of players or lack of a referee – must be discussed prior to the scheduled kick off with the league secretary before any decision is made. Only the League Secretary can cancel a game and teams must seek authorisation of a postponement. Clubs should make every effort to play a game whenever possible.