**NORTH ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS 2025/26**

These Administration Instructions apply to any team playing in the RFU English Leagues organised and managed by the North Regional Organising Committee (NROC).

All teams should read these Instructions in conjunction with RFU Regulation 6 and Appendices 2, 3 and 4.

**1.** **Nominated League Contact (NLC):**

All teams must appoint a NLC to receive all information in connection with the administration of the Leagues. The team is deemed to have agreed that it has received any such information sent to its NLC who will be responsible for disseminating the information to the relevant members of their team.

The NLC must have unlimited access to a secure email account which can receive information from the NROC.

**2. Reporting of Match Results (this is the responsibility of the ‘HOME TEAM’):**

2.1 The result of the match played, together with the number of tries scored by both teams, must be reported by 1730 hrs on match day (for evening matches the deadline is 2200 hrs). This can be done by either: a) Completing the score and tries section of the Electronic Match Card (EMC) or, b) Where the EMC cannot be used, the result and number of tries should be messaged to 07908683303 or ring Snowdon’s on 01423 206575.

2.2 The EMC must make it clear who are the designated Front Row (FR) Players, including replacement FR Players, by ticking the relevant box. Failure to do so may incur a fine.

2.3 Failure to comply with submitting the result as required at 2.1, will incur a fine of £25.00 on first occasion, or greater if the Home Team persistently fails to complete and submit the EMC correctly.

**3. Postponed and/or Abandoned Matches**

Where a home club wishes (or considers it may be appropriate) to postpone a match because of Pitch/Weather Conditions:

3.1 The Home club must inform the League Secretary, Away club and Match Referee that the match is in doubt due to the pitch being unplayable because of poor weather conditions (or the forecast of poor weather conditions) as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Where the issue is one of ‘suitability of pitch’ the League Secretary may require an independent inspection of the pitch before any decision is made to postpone a match.

3.2  Where a pitch is pronounced unfit or is unavailable, it is the Home Team’s responsibility to source an alternative pitch. If it is the first of the two matches between the teams, the venue must be reversed if the opposition’s pitch and a referee are available. The League Secretary must be informed as soon as possible and, in any case, prior to kick-off.

Failure to conform with 3.1 or 3.2 will result in a £25.00 fine.

3.3 When a match is abandoned the Home Team must inform the relevant League Secretary giving the reason, the score and time of the abandonment before the 1730 hrs results deadline. Failure to do so will result in a £25.00 fine. In the event of a match not being played or completed, the EMC should NOT be submitted to GMS.

3.4  When a late decision (i.e. within 3 hours of kick off) as to the fitness of thepitch for playing a match is necessary: -

(a) the decision shall be made by Captains of the relevant teams.

(b) If both Captains agree that the match should proceed, the Referee shall also determine if the Match should proceed and remains entitled, in their sole discretion, to decline to officiate that Match on the grounds of safety or any other substantial reason.

(c) If one or both of the captains do not agree that the Match should proceed, the Match will not be played.

3.5  Any match that is not played on the grounds that the pitch was unfit or for any other substantial reason, shall be notified by the home club to the league secretary (or relevant Regional Organising Committee in the case of cup competitions) within 48 hours of the  decision not to play the match, together with the view by the referee of the fitness of the pitch, and the provisions of RFU Regulation 6 Appendix 3, shall apply.

Where the above procedure is not followed the home club may be fined and/or be deducted 5 league points and the match will be rearranged.

**4.** **Re-scheduled Matches and Reserve Weekends**

4.1 Any match ordered to be played or replayed for whatever reason shall be played on the next available weekend (NAW), unless the NROC directs otherwise. The League Secretary shall determine the date and notify the clubs as soon as the requirement is known. Any appeal concerning this must be lodged within forty-eight hours of being notified of the date. See section 7 below.

4.2 League matches may be played over the Christmas and New Year period and on Easter Saturday by agreement between the clubs. Any such agreement must be advised to the League Secretary. In extreme circumstances, these dates may also be designated by the NROC as available dates for the playing of previously unplayed or abandoned matches.

**Next Available Weekends (NAW) for 2025-26**

27th September

1st November

24th January (Regional 1 and 2 only)

7th February (Regional 1 and 2 only)

21st February

14th March

**Break weekends for 2025-26**

15th November

20th December (Counties 1 and below only)

27th December

4th April (Easter)

**RFU National Cup 2025-26 (Counties 1 and below only)**

20th September

25th October

31st January

2nd May (QF)

9th May (Semi Final)

16th May (Final)

**5.** **Unplayed Matches**

5.1 Where a Team declines, refuses, or is unable due to disciplinary reasons, to fulfil a League fixture, which the NROC deems unacceptable, it will (subject to its right of appeal for review) be liable to a fine, a deduction of League points or other sanction as deemed appropriate.

5.2 At Counties 1 or below, the following Walkover Protocol will apply:

(a) A team is required to fulfil a league match with the requisite number of eligible players specific to that league in accordance with Regulation 6 and the Laws of the Game. In all matches a team must commence with a suitably trained and experienced front row and contested scrums.

(b) If a team has insufficient players to fulfil this requirement, they will be liable to a 5 point deduction for an unjustifiable failure to fulfil the fixture. However, they will be able to avoid the deduction of points if they offer to play, and duly honour a friendly with a minimum of 10 players. This option will be available to a team a maximum of THREE times during the season.

(c) The non-offending team MUST accept the offer to play a friendly to be awarded a 5 point walkover. Should the non-offending team decline to play the friendly, they will not be awarded any league points.

(d) Terms for the friendly match, which shall be played at the time and venue of the scheduled League match, should be agreed between the two teams which shall not be unreasonably withheld. These may be broadly in line with `Game On` principles save that the result will not be recorded other than as a 5-point walkover to the non-offending team.

(e) In the event that the appointed referee withdraws from the friendly fixture then it will be the responsibility of the offending team to supply a referee who must be in addition to the minimum of 10 players.

(f) The offending team must inform the League Secretary and their opponents of their offer to play a friendly at the earliest opportunity and save for exceptional circumstances, by no later than 2000 hrs on the Thursday prior to the match. The non-offending team prepared to play a friendly must respond by 12 noon Friday.

(g) An Electronic Match Card cannot be used to record matches under this arrangement. The details must be communicated in accordance with 2.1.

(h) A Team cannot play more than three (3) fixtures per season as friendlies.

5.3  A Competition Match played pursuant to the authority of the Organising Committee under RFU Regulation 6, or any unplayed match where a notional 0-0 win or loss is recorded or where a match is not played for any other reason (for the purposes of this Administrative Instruction called ‘an unplayed match’) may at the end of the Season give rise to a requirement that the Organising Committee adjust the match points of one or more Teams to properly determine promotion (league winners or runners up) or relegation in accordance with RFU Regulation 6, Appendix 3, Para 3.

**6.  Fines (RFU Reg 6 (See Appendix 4)**

**7.  Appeals and Complaints**

7.1 Primary decisions are made by the League Secretary. If the club does not agree with the decision of the League Secretary or wishes to present mitigating circumstances, it may appeal to the NROC. All appeals must be in writing and by email addressed to the Secretary of the RFU North Regional Organising Committee, E mail: davidclarke51@yahoo.co.uk.

 The appeal must be lodged within seven days (48 hours in the case of decision involving the next available weekend) of receiving notice of a decision.

A fee of £75 is required (£100 Oral Hearing if allowed by the NROC), and no appeal or complaint will be heard if the payment does not accompany the application.

Payments may be made by BACS or cheques which should be made payable to the RFU North ROC. The club concerned must also notify the League Secretary of their appeal. The Bank Details are: - Name RFUNCC, Sort Code 20-33-51 Account Number 70289892.

**8. Kick Off Times**

8.1  Kick off times will be 2.15 pm (2pm for matches played in Durham & Northumberland CB) for the months of November, December, January and February and 3.00 pm for all other months. Variations in kick off times may be mutually agreed between the two clubs, but the League Secretary and the Match Referee must be advised.

8.2 Midweek games may be played at a mutually agreed time. The default time is 1900 hrs.

8.3 Matches played against offshore teams shall kick off at a mutually agreeable time, so that teams may catch their arranged flights.

**9. Unregistered Players**

9.1 All players must now be registered in order to be selected as players or replacements in accordance with RFU Regulation 13, save that at Counties 3 (formerly Level 9 and below) an Occasional Player(as defined in RFU Regulation 13) may play as a one off for a Club, without having registered in advance of the match, as long as they register by no later than 12 noon on the Tuesday following the match.

**10. Warning of Possible Sanctions (RFU Reg 6 Appendix 4)**

10.1 The North ROC is allowed to sanction any Club that does not comply with or adhere to the RFU Regulations and the North Regional Administration Instructions/Rules. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the sanctions the North Regional Organising Committee are able to impose on defaulting Clubs: - A Fine / deduction of points in the current or following season / ordering a game to be replayed / awarding the match to the non-offending side /determining the result of an abandoned match ‘removal of a result from the league table ‘awarding of points to a non-offending side / incorrect Match Card detail.

10.2 RFU Regulation 6 Appendix 4 give a more comprehensive list of the sanctions available to the North Regional Organising Committee to impose.

10.3 Enforcement of regulations now include: -

(i) Front Row Requirements – See RFU Reg 6.62 – 68)

(ii) A club shall also be responsible for not exceeding the number of permitted interchanges see below.

10.4 Player Interchanges & Replacements

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| --- | --- |
| Number of Replacements | Player Interchanges |
| Up to 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 9 |
| 5 or 6 | 10 |
| 7 | 12 |

**11. Additional Law Variations by North Regional Organising Committee**

The following Additional Law Variations have been approved for Leagues by NROC.

11.1 Cumbria Counties 1 - Five replacements with one FR Replacement.

11.2 RFU Regulation 6.18 has been amended for Cumbria clubs to include the following:- "unless the clubs are in the bottom league of the structure and it can be demonstrated that there is no meaningful fixture list available to a club which would otherwise be withdrawn from the RFU Leagues, then both clubs may be permitted to operate in the same league. Cumbria RFU have obtained dispensation to locally amend the current regulations under RFU Regulation 6.9 because of the particular issues prevailing in this area.

11.3 Durham and Northumberland 3 – Level 9 and below. Clubs may select up to five replacements with One FR Replacement.

11.4 Lancs/Cheshire 1 – Clubs may select up to three replacements with one FR replacement.

11.5 Yorkshire Level 9 – Clubs may select up to five replacements with one FR replacement.

11.6 Yorkshire Level 10 - teams may contain players who are not registered with that club. They should however be made up of bona fide club members; although if this is not possible then players may be borrowed from other clubs to make up the numbers and encourage participation in the game. However, such teams may not knowingly play players holding Effective Registration with another club at level 8 and above.

Notwithstanding this point, clubs at all levels are encouraged to continue to register their players.

If a team at level 10 and below justifiably cannot field a front row then the match will proceed with uncontested scrums. No league points will be deducted providing the fixture is honoured. The result at the final whistle will stand.

In the interests of encouraging participation in the game at Level 10 or below, the captains may agree prior to a match to more than 7 replacements being used, of which 2 should be capable of playing in the front row. At level 10 and below with surplus players are encouraged to lend the opposition surplus players to make up even numbers per side.

11.7 Should a club request the registration of a front row forward(s) after the Registration Date, owing to injury or unavailability, an application should be made to the Secretary of North ROC, no later than Tuesday 17:00 before the match on the following Saturday.

**12. Lower XV Selection in the Leagues**

A club with more than one team competing in the English Clubs Championship must always adhere to the principle of selection on merit of a 1st XV, 2nd XV and lower XV. The League Secretary of the lower team(s) may review the result and match squads of such matches if it is suspected that a lower team has been strengthened by a player(s) from higher-level teams.

The League Secretary has the power to record a notional 0 - 0 win to the opposing team(s) and award them 5 championship points and warn the club fielding the higher-level players. However, there will be no further sanction against the team fielding the higher-level players, unless the League Secretary deems that this is a recurring offence in which case a sanction may be applied

A club must always honour its highest fixture. If a higher team unjustifiably defaults and the lower team plays and wins on the same day then the lower team shall be deemed to have lost and a ‘0 – 0’ score shall be recorded unless the committee exceptionally agrees otherwise.

If a higher team fixture does not take place for reasons beyond their control or the higher team does not have a fixture, then any lower XVs should be selected as though the higher XV(s) were playing.

Post Transfer Deadline

Any player (apart from a nominated front row player) who represented the 1st XV in their previous league match will not be eligible to represent the 2nd or lower XV, unless:

(a) they were only playing for the higher team to replace an injured higher team player;

(b) they are returning from a period of injury, which needs to be more than four (4) playing weekends; or

(c) the committee exceptionally agrees otherwise. A similar guideline will apply on player movement between 2nd and 3rd XVs where applicable.

The League Secretary may request the playing and/or availability record for any player contributing to a breach of the above guidelines.

**13. Front row forward requirements and uncontested scrums**

RFU Regulations 63 – 69 apply. The provisions pertaining to front row forward replacements, number of front row forwards and uncontested scrums are as set out in the World Rugby Law 3 unless Game On is permitted in accordance with this Regulation 6.

In respect of the RFU Competitions, the RFU has exercised its discretion under Law 3.17 to invoke the ‘player-off’ rule in accordance with the Laws of the Game. A player whose departure has caused the referee to order uncontested scrums cannot be replaced.

If a front-row player is shown a yellow card, and the team cannot continue with contested scrums with players already on the field, then the team nominates another player to leave the playing area to enable an available front-row player to come on. The nominated player may not return until the period of suspension ends, or to act as a replacement.

If a front-row player is sent off, and the team cannot continue with contested scrums with players already on the field, then the team nominates another player to leave the playing area to enable an available front-row player to come on. The nominated player may act as a replacement.

**Sanctions for failing to field a qualified front row/uncontested scrums**

If a League match is completed or contains uncontested scrum(s) and a Club has failed to comply with the requirement to replace a front row Player with another suitably trained and experienced front row Player in accordance with the Laws of the Game, that Club shall forfeit the match which will be awarded to the other team who shall be deemed to have won with a bonus point. The match will be recorded a 5 League point win with a 0 points difference.

If a match contains uncontested scrum(s) the Organising Committee will investigate any suspected or alleged breaches of these Regulations and/or Law of the Game and, will be entitled to take such action and if in the event of a breach, issue such sanctions as it deems appropriate (including without limitation altering the result, awarding points to the opposition, match forfeiture or ordering a replay of the Match) and it shall notify the relevant Clubs. The Referee and the Clubs must provide such information and assistance as may be requested by the Organising Committee. Any Club may appeal against the decision of the Organising Committee in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.

Prior to the match, each team must advise the appropriate Match Official of their front-row players and possible front-row replacements and which position(s) in the front row they can play. Only these players may play in the front row when the scrum is contested and only in their designated position(s).

A replacement front-row player may start the match in another position.

It is a team’s responsibility to ensure that all front-row players and front-row replacements are suitably trained and experienced.