

SOUTH WEST REGION ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS 2023-24

These administrative rules apply to (i) all Teams playing in the England Mens Leagues (“the Leagues”) organised and managed by the South West Regional Organising Committee (SWROC) and (ii) all matches played in the Leagues by those Teams.

These rules and the Leagues are subject to the applicable Rugby Football Union (RFU) regulations and any amendment thereof

1. Nominated League Contact

- 1.1 All Teams shall appoint an official (“Nominated League Contact”) to receive all information in connection with the administration of the Leagues. A Club is deemed to have agreed that it has received information sent to its Nominated League Contact who shall be responsible for disseminating the same to the relevant members of the Club. Such official must have access to a readily accessible email account able to receive information from the South West Administration office (the Admin Office)
- 1.2 Any change in the identity of a Nominated League Contact shall be notified immediately to the Admin Office via the South West website (www.swrugby.co.uk). Until such time as a Team has so reported a change it shall be deemed not to have changed its nominated contact.
- 1.3 Any failure to advise the Admin Office of the correct Nominated League Contact for season 2023-24 by the 1st August 2023 and any change in the identity of the Nominated League Contact within 21 days of its occurring shall be liable to a minimum fine of £50.00 (or such greater fine as the SW Committee shall decide)

2. Reporting of Match Results

The result of every match played and the number of tries scored by each team shall be reported as follows:

- 2.1 **By electronic match card** by 5.30pm on the day of the match. This can be achieved by completing the score and tries section of the card. See alternative arrangements in paragraph 2.2 if this is not possible. Subsequently the rest of the match card, containing the confirmed team line ups should be approved by the home team no later than 11:59pm on the Monday following the game.
- 2.2 If it is not possible to submit the score via the card before 5.30pm it is permissible to report the score and number of tries by telephone on the day of the match on **01822 678 007** as soon as possible after the match **and in any event before 5.30pm** if the match is played on a Saturday. As well as the score the Team should provide the number of tries scored by BOTH teams. Alternatively the details may be sent by text to 07908 683 303. The card should then be submitted by 11.59pm on the Monday.
- 2.3 Failure to report the match result as set out in 2.1 and 2.2 above will incur a fine of £25.00 for each offence. A Team will be further fined if it persistently fails to correctly complete the required match result cards.
- 2.4 The imposition of a fine will be notified to the nominated league contact. Failure to pay the fine within 14 days (except where an appeal has been lodged within 14 days of notification of the imposition of a fine) will result in further sanctions being imposed and the fine still

being outstanding. If a fine or fines is/are outstanding at the end of the season this may result in a recommendation to the RFU that the Team be suspended from the Leagues. Where the sanction of a deduction of League points is imposed for unpaid fine or fines at the end of season that deduction will be effective in the following season.

- 2.5 For the avoidance of doubt, Clubs playing in Leagues **where player registration is not required** must comply with the requirements of “Reporting of Match Results” listing guest or unregistered players as appropriate.
- 2.6 Any complaint or observation on the score (including the number of tries) as recorded on the Match Result Card must be made to the League Secretary, in writing, within 21 days of the game being played.
- 2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, if a match **DOES NOT START** for any reason, there is no need to complete & submit a Match Result Card, although the postponement/cancellation of the match **MUST** be reported as in paragraph 6 below. Teams **MUST NOT attempt to report a postponement or walkover via the match card.**

3 Rescheduled Matches and Non League Weekends

- 3.1 All matches shall be played (subject to the availability of a pitch and referee) on the dates/weekends specified in the Fixture Schedules issued by the SW Committee at the start of the season, unless agreed otherwise with the SW Committee. It is the responsibility of the home Club to ensure the availability of a referee and a pitch whether that be its normal home ground or elsewhere.
- 3.2 Where it is necessary for a match to be rearranged, due to the scheduled match being postponed or abandoned, the Teams will be informed of the new date for playing the match by the Admin Office within seven (7) days of the original date. This will almost invariably be the next available non-league weekend. If either Team does not accept the new date it **must ask for a review (within three days of being so notified) by the SW Review Panel** whose decision shall be subject to further appeal to the RFU if desired. If a Team so lodges an application to the SW, it must advise the opponent Team at the same time.
- 3.3 Teams in leagues of more than 10 will not be allowed to nominate any non-league weekends as unavailable for re-arranged League matches. Teams in 10, or less, leagues will be allowed to nominate up to one non-league weekend when they will not be required to play rearranged matches. This nomination must be made to the Admin Office via the website or the appropriate form, giving a minimum eight (8) weeks’ notice. If any application is not made with the requisite notice such nomination will be ineffective. Teams may not nominate a weekend which is laid down in the Structured Season as a playing weekend which shall be deemed to include the “play-off” weekends where “play-offs” occur in a particular league nor any other weekend where a re-arranged game has already been scheduled. Where appropriate a weekend also includes any following Bank Holiday Monday.

4. Postponed and/or Abandoned Matches

- 4.1 No match shall be postponed, for whatever reason, before and without consultation with the Teams League Secretary. Such consultation shall be conducted by the Nominated League Contact. Where the issue is the condition of a pitch the League Secretary may, at his absolute discretion, require that the home Team arranges or accepts a third party arrangement for a pitch inspection by the match referee or, when unavailable by a neutral referee.
- 4.2 Where there is a possibility that any game could be postponed for any reason, the Team seeking such postponement must keep the opposing Team against which the match was to be played fully informed through its Nominated League Contact of the proposed potential postponement and any action taken and decision made. Where in the opinion of the SW Committee a Team has not complied with this rule and the opposing Team has suffered a resultant loss or cost that could have been avoided the SW Committee may at its discretion require that the Team which has failed to comply with this rule should compensate the other Team to the extent of its cost or loss.
- 4.3 Where a ground is pronounced unfit or is unavailable for play and the scheduled match is the first of the two games in the season between the Teams the venue (shall where time allows and provided the reverse venue is not being utilised for another match in the England Men's Leagues) be reversed if the opposition's pitch is fit and available for play. The Admin Office must be advised prior to kick off. The home Team shall be the Team upon whose pitch (or suitable alternative) the game is played.
- 4.4 Where a match is postponed due to weather at the same venue for a second time the SW Committee may order the game to be played on the third attempt at a different ground, to be agreed or specified by the SW Committee. This may be at neutral venue or at the opposition's ground.

5. Higher Level Team Not Fielded

A club with more than one team competing in the England Men's Leagues or other RFU recognised competitions, must always honour its highest teams fixture.

If a higher team fixture does not take place for reasons beyond their control, or it does not have a fixture, there will be grounds of appeal to the League Secretary to review the lower team result if it is suspected that a lower team has fielded a significant number of players from the higher-level team.

After the Transfer Deadline (i.e., fixtures scheduled on or after the weekend of February 17th), a player who has been selected as a starting player or replacement in 50% or more league matches in a higher team or has played in the final fixture of a team in a higher league in the current season must not play for a lower team in any league fixture unless:

- they are only playing for the higher team to replace an injured higher team player;
- they are returning from a period of injury, which needs to be more than 4 playing weekends;
- the committee exceptionally agrees otherwise.

6. Reporting of Postponed, Cancelled or Abandoned Matches

- 6.1 Both Teams shall report the postponement or abandonment to its League Secretary as soon as possible giving full reasons, and in the case of an abandonment, the score and the time elapsed in the game before it was abandoned.

- 6.2 Separately and additionally, the home Team shall notify the Admin Office before kick off of any cancellation (including walkovers), postponement or abandonment of a match on the day it occurs and if it is cancelled by 2pm the day of the match by 3.30pm. This notification should be by email (admin@swrugby.co.uk), telephone (01822 678 007) or SMS text message (07908 683 303) **DO NOT report by** the electronic match card.
- 6.3 Where a match is postponed after 2pm on the day of the match and no prior notification has been given in accordance with the preceding sub-clauses a fine and/or a deduction of League points may be imposed by SW Committee.

7. Unplayed Matches

- 7.1 Where a Team declines or refuses to fulfil a fixture for reasons unacceptable to the SW Committee it will (subject to its right to apply for a review) be liable to a fine, League points deduction, relegation by one or more leagues or other penalty (including one or more penalties for the same offence) or sanction as is deemed appropriate. Any such League points deduction will not be limited to a deduction of five points where a harsher penalty is deemed appropriate.
- 7.2 At Counties 1 or below, the following Walkover Protocol will apply:
- (i) A team is required to fulfil a league match with the requisite number of eligible players as 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.
 - (ii) 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.
 - (iii) The non-offending team **MUST** accept the offer to play a friendly in which event they will be awarded a 5-point walkover. Should the non-offending team decline to play the friendly, or fail to honour the friendly once accepted, they will not be awarded any league points.
 - (iv) Terms for the 'friendly' match, which shall be played at the time and venue of the scheduled League match, should be as 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.
 - (v) 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.
 - (vi) 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 20:00 on the Thursday prior to the match. The non-offending team prepared to play a friendly must respond by 12 noon Friday.
 - (vii) An Electronic Match Card cannot be used to record matches played under this arrangement. The details must be communicated in accordance with 6.2
 - (viii) This protocol is subject local CB de-regulations which can be found on www.swrugby.co.uk/regs
- 7.3 Where a Team at Counties 2 or below plays a match as a friendly with borrowed or

unregistered players, the defaulting team must provide a minimum of 10 players in line with Game On principles game should have an equal number of players per side, excluding replacements, to qualify as a friendly. The League points will be awarded to the non-offending side, but the defaulting team will NOT suffer a points deduction PROVIDING notification of this is reported to the League Secretary and SW Administration Office before the scheduled kick-off. There is then no requirement to telephone the match score or submit a match card afterwards as it will be recorded as a 0-0 win to the non-offending team. A Team cannot play more than three (3) fixtures per season as friendlies.

- 7.4 Where a Team declines or fails to fulfil more than 25% of the fixtures it had scheduled at the start of the season, the SW ROC may recommend to the RFU Competitions Management Committee that it's league results be expunged from the League with immediate effect, unless there are exceptional circumstances beyond the control of that Team. Teams may and are encouraged to play the remaining fixtures as "friendlies", but the results will not be included in the tables. The committee may, at its discretion, recommend to the RFU Competitions Management Committee that the team be excluded from membership of the England Men's leagues in the following season
- 7.5 A Competition Match played pursuant to the authority of the Organising Committee under RFU Regulation 6.51 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 should cause an adjustment of match points of one or more Team to properly determine promotion (league winners or runners up) or relegation in accordance with RFU Regulation 6, Appendix 2, Paras 3 and 4.
- (i) an adjustment of match points will be made if either Team involved in the unplayed match is a contender for promotion (league winners or runners up) or relegation by virtue of an equal number of League points;
 - (ii) all match points in the corresponding fixtures of all other contending Teams will be removed from the playing records (a corresponding fixture is defined as the scheduled fixture at the same venue as the unplayed match or in a League where Teams play each other once only regardless of venue);

the adjustment referred to in para 6(i) above will not be made if it benefits the defaulting Team in the unplayed match to the detriment of another Team. Furthermore, where two or more Teams have complete records their positions relative to each other will remain unchanged by adjustments caused by a defaulting Team in an unplayed match.

8. Club/Teams Name

- 8.1 Each Team will be known by its Club name and numbered 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.
- 8.2 Clubs who comply with the relevant RFU regulation on change of Club name, must inform the Admin office of such change, by no later than 1st May 2024

9. Carrying over of sanctions to the following season

- 9.1 Where a Team or Club fails to fulfil a fixture, plays an unregistered player or is subject to any other sanction which involves the deduction of points after season's transfer deadline, RFU regulations permit such sanctions may be carried over to the following season if the application of the sanction will not affect the promotion or relegation of the team in the current season.

10. Reviews

- 10.1 Any Team or Club wishing to lodge an application for a review against any decision of a League Secretary shall do so by submitting their application in writing to the Admin Office or such other person or firm as may be notified to the Clubs within seven days of the receipt of the decision being challenged. A cheque in the sum of Fifty pounds (£50.00.) payable to “South West RFU Competitions” must accompany the application and will be returned if the review rules in the Club’s favour.

Reminder - the time period for lodging an application in relation to the re-arrangement of a match is three days.

- 10.2 A Team or Club wishing to appeal to the RFU against a decision of the SW Committee must do so in accordance with RFU Regulation 6.87 and 19.13.

11. Player discipline

If a registered player is red-carded or suspended the Club **MUST** inform the Admin Office, in writing, within 48 hours of the occurrence and subsequently the length of any suspension when it is known

***Notes:** Apart from registration of players and telephoning of match results a Club’s first point of contact in relation to the interpretation of these Rules or any regulation in relation to the Leagues is its League Secretary. Up to date details of League Secretaries are published on the S.W. Division’s website: www.swrugby.co.uk*

Player Registration forms must, on completion, be sent to SW Registrations at the SW Administration Office, P O BOX 3781, SWINDON, SN2 9GW. Special arrangements apply in respect of the receipt of “Expedited Registrations” – contact the South West Administration Office for details.

All enquiries regarding player registration must be made, preferably in normal office hours Tuesday – Saturday, to the Registrar at the South West Administration Office by; telephone (01822 678 272) or email admin@swrugby.co.uk