



**English Mens Leagues
South West Leagues
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire**
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Season 2024/25
Tribute Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
League Regulations (BBO Regulations)

*Please note links to RFU regulations may be subject to change and will updated whenever possible.

These BBO Regulations govern Rugby Football Union (RFU) Leagues named Counties 1 Tribute Southern North (C1SN), Counties 2 Tribute BBO North and South (C2BBON or S), Counties 3 Tribute BBO North and South (C3BBON or S), Counties 4 Tribute BBO North, South and Central (C4BBON, S or C), in conjunction with the RFU Regulations particularly those for the RFU English Rugby Men's Leagues 2023/24 (EML) Regulation 6 & 14 and the definitions contained in RFU Regulation 1.

In addition, the South West ROC Administrative Instructions (see www.swrugby.co.uk) and any particular written agreement or undertaking signed by a club as a condition for participation in EML will apply save for the exceptions and amendments contained in BBO Regulations 1-10 below.

Where there is a conflict between the RFU Regulations and the BBO Regulations, these BBO Regulations will take precedence and apply.

Any team playing in a League match in Season 2024/25 will have deemed to have accepted the applicable RFU regulations, any RFU protocol instructions, the South West Administrative Instructions, these BBO Regulations and any other applicable agreement or undertaking entered into, as a condition of continued participation.

1. Eligible Clubs:

At Counties 1 and below, 1st XV's of Clubs (of an appropriate standard) and Lower XV's of Clubs whose 1st XV plays in EML are eligible for inclusion in the BBO Leagues.

- This eligibility is subject to ongoing consent from the BBO Committee.
- These teams will be known by their Club name and numbered (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.).
- The decision regarding:
 - Which teams from which Clubs participate,
 - The level at which these teams enter, and
 - The structure of the BBO Leagues for the 2024/25 season and beyond,

It is delegated by the RFU South West Regional Organising Committee to the local League Organising Committee (BBO Committee), within the limits permitted by the RFU

2. Effective Registration:

Subject only to the exception in Regulation 3 below, all players playing in or named as a replacement in a match squad for League Matches comply with and be eligible under *RFU. Reg 13* and hold Effective Registration with the Club playing the League Match.



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3. Guest/Loan/Non-Club Member players:

At Counties 3 and below teams in a League Match will be allowed to have up to Six (6) guest players in their match day squad who do not hold Effective Registration with the Club of which the team is playing (Guest Players) provided that:

Guest Player Eligibility:

- The guest player cannot have played at Counties 2 or above during the current season.

Guest Player Information:

- Guest Player's must be registered on GMS and added to the match card within 48 hours of the completion of the match.

Guest Player Appearances:

- The Guest Player may only make four guest appearances for any one Club in the season.

4. Minimum Number of Players:

At Counties 3 and below clubs are able to follow the RFU **Game on Principles** referred to in [RFU. Reg 6.52 and 60](#) may be applied to League Matches in Counties 3 & below.

5. Front Row Requirements:

Match Forfeiture and Friendly Matches: [RFU. Reg 6.62-68](#)

- Officially, the result is recorded as a 5-point 0-0 win for the non-offending team.
- If played as a friendly, the home team must report this to the Admin Office and League Secretary by **5:30 pm** on match day.

Counties 3 & Below:

- Teams are encouraged to start with suitably trained front row players.
- If a full front row is not possible, the team must inform the **opposition** and **match official before kick-off**.
- The match may begin with uncontested scrums, and the result stands.

Note: The "man off rule" for uncontested scrums applies to League Matches

6. Non fulfilment of Fixtures:

Fixture Fulfilment: [RFU. Reg 6.69-72](#) & [Appendix 3](#)

- The non-offending team is awarded a 5-point 0-0 win.

Counties 4 Matches:

In Counties 4, a team can **four times** in the season agree with an opposition team to postpone (not cancel) their League fixture to the Next Available Weekend. The conditions are as follows:

- Both teams must **agree**.
- Both teams must notify their **League Secretary** via email by **10:00 am on the Wednesday** before the scheduled match weekend.
- The **Home Club** must notify the appropriate **Referees Society** of the postponement.

If these conditions are not met and the match is not played on the scheduled date, it will be considered **unplayed**. The non-offending team will be awarded a **5-point 0-0 win**, and the offending team will face a **5-point deduction**.



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7. Replacements/Substitutes:

Player Replacements: [RFU. Reg 6.55-68](#)

- At Counties 1, teams can have a maximum of **three** replacements.
- At Counties 2, teams can have a maximum of **five** replacements.
- At Counties 3 and below, teams can have a maximum of **seven** replacements.
- If one team lacks additional replacements, the other team is **encouraged to lend players** to even up the numbers.
- If no agreement is reached, **three** replacements per team are allowed to participate in the League Match.

Regulations: [RFU.Reg 6.64](#) does **not** apply to League Matches.

8. Match Result Cards and Result Notification:

This regulation will be enforced at all levels within the BBO Leagues. Please refer to [SW Admin Instructions](#)

Electronic Match Card (EMC):

- All teams in BBO Leagues must complete an Electronic Match Card (EMC) as prescribed by the RFU.
- Teams should comply with RFU requirements, except for variations in these BBO Regulations and South West Administration Instructions 3 & 7.
- The EMC must be transmitted to the RFU or relevant entity by the prescribed time following the weekend of the League match.

Final Score and Tries Notification:

- The home team must promptly notify the Admin Office of the correct final score and the number of tries scored.
- If the League match is postponed / walkover, notification should occur before **3:30 pm**.
- If the League match is played on a Saturday, notification should occur before **5:30 pm**.
- For matches played on other days, notification must happen **within one hour** of the conclusion of the League Match.

9. Promotion and Relegation:

[RFU Reg 6 Appendix 2](#) shall apply to all BBO Leagues, in as such;

Additional Decisions:

- Any further promotion or relegation required or deemed necessary by the RFU or the South West Organising Committee will be decided by the **BBO League Committee**.

Team Transfers:

- If the number of teams in any one League exceeds or falls short of the prescribed number, the BBO Committee has the power to **level transfer** teams to another League of the same level.
- The goal is to ensure that every club in the other League has the minimum travel distances required for fulfilling its League Match program.
- However, increased travel distances resulting from reorganisation shall not be grounds for any club to appeal the BBO Committee's decision to level transfer a team.

10. Extra Regulations for BBO Leagues only

Priority of Higher Teams:

- When a club has multiple teams in the EML or other approved leagues, the higher team's match always takes precedence over the lower team's match.
- If the club's **1st XV** or another higher team cancels or fails to play in the EML or another competition without a justifiable reason (insufficient players not being justifiable), and a lower XV from the same club plays in the BBO League, the following applies:

Result Implications:

- If the Club's Lower Team wins its League Match, the result of the lower team fixture will be set aside.
- The League Secretary will award a five-point nil-nil win to the lower team's opposition.



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- Additionally, the higher XV (if playing in BBO Leagues) will automatically have **5-points deducted** for failing to fulfil its fixture, resulting in a **0-0 win** for the opposition.

Appeals and Suspected Player Fielding:

- If a higher team fixture does not take place due to reasons beyond their control or if it has no fixture, there are grounds for appeal.
- The League Secretary can review the result if there is suspicion that a lower team fielded a significant number of players from the higher-level team.

Team Withdrawal and Honouring Fixtures:

- If a club wishes to withdraw a team from the EML competition, or if a team fails to honour 25% of its fixtures and is expelled, but still wants a lower team already participating in the Leagues to continue playing at its lower level, the BBO Committee has the power to decide.
- The Committee can determine whether any lower Club team should be allowed to continue participating in the BBO Leagues.
- The Committee's decision includes considerations such as:
 - Whether matches will be played as **friendlies** (with or without a five-point win to the opposition).
 - **Player restrictions** (e.g., players previously playing for the withdrawn or expelled team from the EML).
 - Whether the lower Club team can be **promoted**.

If a club fails to honour its "away" fixture in the BBO League after playing the "home" fixture against the same opposition, the League Secretary has the discretion to require that club to play both fixtures "away" against the same opponent in the following season (2025/26)

Additional Terms and Breach:

- If any club has additional terms or regulations (Additional Terms) in writing as a condition for membership or continued participation in the BBO Leagues, breaching these Additional Terms is considered a breach of the RFU.Regs and BBO Regulations.
- Sanctions can be reviewed under [RFU.Regs 6.94 to 6.99](#) and are subject to appeal under [RFU.Reg 19](#).

Unfulfilled Fixtures:

- Teams failing to fulfill **greater than 25%** of their scheduled League fixtures without BBO Committee approval may have their results and membership of the EML and BBO Leagues **expunged immediately**.
- The **25%** is determined by the actual number of unplayed matches as a percentage of the total scheduled League Matches for the season.
- Teams competing at Counties 4 will be **exempt** from expungement for the season **2024/25**

Re-Entry and Refusal:

- Teams with expunged results or voluntary withdrawal from the BBO Leagues can apply to re-enter the following season.
- Approval by both the Club's Constituent Body and the BBO Committee is required.
- Application deadline is **4th April 2025** or an earlier date specified by the RFU.
- The BBO League Committee reserves the right to refuse re-entry.
- Clubs can seek a review of refusal decisions or object to additional readmission terms within **14 days** in writing.
- A right of appeal under RFU Reg 19 is available if exercised within **7 days** of notification of the review outcome.

Special Note:

- These regulations establish a competitive structure for both 1st XV teams and lower-tier teams across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire.
- The goal is to encourage rugby participation by providing opportunities for more players.
- Any questions about these regulations should be directed to your **League Secretary**, not the match referee.
- In case of disputes, **the BBO Committee's** decision on interpreting the BBO Regulations is final, but clubs can seek review and appeal under **RFU Regulations**



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