

De-regulation for Dorset & Wilts RFU Leagues Levels 8 to 10 for the Season 2019/20

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 which comprise Dorset & Wilts 1, 2 & 3 North & South (Levels 8, 9 and 10).

1. 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 the Competition sub committee and submitted for approval by the SW DOC before each season.

2.1. RFU Regulation governs the promotion of teams where two Leagues support one League. Although there are two leagues at Level 8 in the Dorset & Wilts Leagues they are not all composed of eligible teams and so 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, otherwise the Dorset & Wilts RFU Competition sub committee 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 will be offered promotion. In the event that more than 4 teams are eligible the Competition sub committee will act as per 2.1 above.

2.3. RFU Regulation requires notice to be given by 31 December but teams in Dorset & Wilts Level 9 or 10 leagues have until 31 March to express a preference not to be promoted. However the Competition sub committee in its recommendations to the SW DOC has 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 without Effective Registration at Level 9 or below, 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 the form provided for the match report and only bona fide members of the club may represent the club at any level. 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.

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 3rd or 4th XV at Level 8 or below then the League Secretary may request an explanation and award up to 5 penalty points if he is 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. In the Dorset & Wilts Leagues RFU Regulation applies in respect of replacements with the exception that the lowest or only XV in a club may have unlimited replacements. At Level 8 it is limited to 8 interchanges but at Levels 9 & 10 there will be no limit to the number of interchanges allowed. In the event that the lowest team ceases to be fielded during a season then the authority of the league secretary of the next lowest team must be sought before that team can field unlimited replacements. At Levels 9 & 10 the following will apply:

5.1. Lowest Team. The lowest or only team in a club is judged by the regular fixture list published for the club not by the circumstances of the day. It does not have to have three replacements nor is it limited to three.

5.2. Front Row. 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.

5.3. The 'Man Off Rule'. RFU Reg 13 Appendix 2.15b will not apply in Levels 9 & 10.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Player Numbers in League Levels 9 & 10. At Levels 9 and 10 if a team is short of players the opposition is 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.*)

9. Maximum score. At level 9 and below, 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.*