

Season 2023/24
Tribute Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
League Regulations (BBO Regulations)

These BBO Regulations govern Rugby Football Union (RFU) Leagues named Counties 1 Tribute Southern North (formerly Level 7), Counties 2 Tribute BBO North and South (formerly Level 8), Counties 3 Tribute BBO North and South (C3N or S) (formerly Level 9) , Counties 4 Tribute BBO North and South (C4N or S)(formerly Level 10), 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 2023/24 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 (formerly Level 7) and below, 1st XV's of Clubs of an appropriate standard and Lower XV's of Clubs whose 1st XV plays in EML will be eligible to be included in the BBO Leagues subject to the ongoing consent of the BBO Committee (which can in the case of teams other than a Club 1st XV, be withdrawn at any time upon seven days written notice to the Club). Such teams will be known by their Club name and numbered 1st 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc.

The decision

- a) in relation to which teams from which Clubs
- b) the level at which these teams enter and
- c) the structure of the BBO Leagues both for season 2023/24 and for subsequent seasons

is delegated by the RFU South West Regional Organising Committee to the local League Organising Committee (BBO Committee) to the extent permitted by the RFU.

2 Effective Registration:

Subject only to the exception in Regulation 3 below, every player or replacement in a League Match must hold Effective Registration and Clubs are responsible for ensuring that all players playing in or named as a replacement in a match squad for League Matches comply with and be eligible under RFU.Reg 14. 2 and hold Effective Registration with the Club playing the League Match.

3 Guest/Loan/Non-Club Member players:

At Counties 3 and below (formerly Level 9 & 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:

- a) The Guest Player does not hold (and has not previously held in the Season) Effective Registration for any Club, whose 1st or other XV plays at Counties 1 (formerly Level 7) and above, and who has played for that Club's 1st or 2nd XV in a League Match previously in the Season
- b) The Guest Player's name, date of birth and any club of which he is a member is clearly indicated in the "comments box" on the Electronic Match Card (EMC). If the Guest Player is unattached to a Club, this must also be stated on the EMC.
- c) The Guest Player may only make four guest appearances for any one Club in the season unless and until he has become effectively Registered with that Club before the Transfer Deadline.
- d) No Guest Players may play in a League Match for any Club in the BBO Leagues after the Transfer Deadline of **16th February 2024** unless they he has become Effectively Registered with that Club before the Transfer Deadline

4 Minimum Number of Players:

At Counties 2 (formerly Level 8) a team may start a BBO League Match with a minimum of 12 players. Teams are encouraged to even the numbers up, should one have a full side or sufficient eligible players available but **there is no obligation** upon the opposition to do so. However, teams may not start a League match with more than one player advantage on the pitch.

- a) If, at Counties2 (formerly Level 8) a team has reduced numbers, but twelve or more eligible players (which includes three players capable of playing in the front row) it is entitled to insist that the game is played. The opposition team must play the fixture and the match result will stand.
- b) At Counties 2 (formerly Level 8) irrespective of numbers, the League match must start with contested scrums.
- c) This BBO Regulation 4 will not be applicable in the event of a yellow or red

card being awarded which alters team numbers for all or part of a League Match after the League Match has commenced

- d) At Counties 3 and below (formerly Level 9 and below) a team may start a BBO League Match with a minimum of 10 players in line with agreed RFU Game On Principles and the match result will stand

Note: **Game on Principles** *For the avoidance of doubt and clarification the RFU Game On Principles referred to in RFU. Reg 6.55 and 56 may be applied to League Matches in Counties 3 & below.*

*For further information, please refer to;
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/game-on>*

5 Front Row Requirements:

- a) At Counties 1 & 2 (formerly Level 7 & 8), teams are required to start each match with a suitably trained and competent front row, unless otherwise advised to the referee in advance of a match starting. Clubs, not the Match Referee, are responsible for ensuring all front row players are suitably trained and competent. For the avoidance of doubt, where matches go to uncontested scrums after the start of the match, the result at the final whistle will stand.
- b) A team that is unable start a match with three suitably trained and competent front row players, will forfeit the match, but it will not be deducted League points if the match takes place as a friendly with uncontested scrums. However, irrespective of points scored in that game for official league purposes the result will be deemed as a 5-point 0-0 win for the non-offending team. In the event of the match being played as a friendly the home team must report the fact to the Admin Office and League Secretary by **no later than 3.30pm on match day.** **There is no requirement to complete an EMC if the match is played as a friendly.**
- c) At Counties 3 & below (formerly Level 9 and below) teams are encouraged to start the game with suitably trained and competent front row. If a team is unable to start a match with a full front row, they must inform the opposition and match official prior to the kick-off. The match may start with uncontested scrums and the result will stand.

Note: The “man off rule” in the event of uncontested scrums (Laws of the Game) will apply to League Matches. See www.swrugby.co.uk/guidance

6 Non fulfilment of Fixtures:

- a) The only acceptable reason for not fulfilling a fixture on the scheduled date is that either that there is no referee available the home Club having made every reasonable and timely effort to find or provide a referee **or** if a pitch is deemed unfit to use and no suitable alternative is available. Failure to fulfil a fixture for any other reason, other than

the exception in 6 b shown below, will give rise to an automatic five-point deduction for the offending team, with the non-offending team awarded a 5-point 0-0 win.

b) Counties 4 (formerly level 10) Each team may postpone up to 3 (three) matches per season provided there is full compliance with the detailed conditions set out in Regulation 10.d below.

7 Replacements/Substitutes:

a) At Counties 2 (formerly level 8) teams will be allowed a maximum of five (replacements/substitutes) and at Counties 3 & below, (formerly 9 and below) teams will be allowed a maximum of seven (7) replacements however a fourth or subsequent replacement will only be allowed to participate (i.e take the pitch) in a League Match provided that the opposition team has two or more replacements available. In the event one team does not have additional replacements then the other is encouraged to lend players to even up the number of players available to each team at the start of the game. If no agreement can be reached to even up the number of replacements, THREE replacements per team will be allowed to participate i.e take the pitch) in the League Match.

b) All replacements must be carried out with the knowledge/permission of the match referee when there is a break in play and must take place at the halfway line.

c) RFU.Reg 6.63 (a to h) inclusive (Rolling Replacements) will apply to all League matches but RFU.Reg 6.64 will not APPLY TO League Matches.

8 Match Result Cards and Result Notification:

This regulation will be enforced at all levels within the BBO Leagues.

a) It is mandatory for all teams in BBO Leagues to complete an Electronic Match Card (EMC) as prescribed by the RFU. The teams must comply with RFU requirements with the exception of the variations in these BBO Regulations and the South West Administration Instructions 3 & 7, in relation to the completion of the EMC and its transmission to the RFU or relevant person, company or address by the prescribed time at or following the weekend of the League match.

b) The home team must notify the Admin Office of the correct final score and number of tries scored as soon as possible after the League Match and in any event **before 5.30 pm if the League match** is played on a Saturday and within **one hour of the conclusion of the League Match** if it is played on any other day.

9 Promotion and Relegation:

RFU Reg 6 Appendix 2 shall apply to all BBO Leagues, in as such;

a) The top team in Counties 1 (formerly Level 7) & all BBO Leagues below will be promoted to a League in the level above, subject to its meeting RFU criteria. I.e., 1st XV's only may be promoted into Regional 2 (formerly Level 6)

b) The bottom placed team in Counties 1 (formerly level 7) & all BBO Leagues below, will be relegated into the League below

c) Any further promotion & relegation required or deemed necessary by the RFU or the South West Organising Committee will be decided BBO League Committee

d) In the event that the number of teams in any one League exceeds or falls short of the prescribed number of teams in that League the BBO Committee has the sole and absolute power to level transfer any team to another League of the same level using such criteria as it deems appropriate and to attempt to ensure that every club in that other League has the minimum travel distances required to fulfil its League Match programme. PROVIDED always that if regrettably one or a minority of teams in the reorganised BBO League has a greater travel distance to fulfil its League Matches such increased travel distance(s) shall not be a ground for any Club to appeal the decision of BBO Committee to level transfer the team concerned.

10 Extra Regulations for BBO Leagues only

a) In the event of a Club having more than one team in the EML, (or other RFU approved league or merit table competition e.g Raging Bull League) the higher Clubs team's match in the EML or other competition) will always take precedence over that of the lower Club side. Therefore, if a Clubs 1st XV or other higher team cancels or fails to play an EML or other competition on the weekend of the scheduled date or without a justifiable reason (and insufficient players is not a justifiable reason) or that Club formally or informally withdraws one of its teams from the EML or other competition and/or announces that it will no longer be playing fixtures at any particular level and a Lower XV from that same Club plays its League Match in the BBO League (SUBJECT TO ANY DECISION UNDER REGULATION 10 b BELOW BY THE BBO COMMITTEE), the result of the lower team fixture will be set aside if the Club's Lower Team wins its League Match and the League Secretary will award a five point nil-nil win to the lower team opposition. Additionally, the higher XV will, if it is playing in BBO Leagues, automatically have five points deducted for failing to fulfil its fixture which will be deemed to be a 0-0 win to the opposition. Further to the above 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 result if it is suspected that a lower team has fielded a significant number of players from the higher level team.

b) In the event that a Club wishes to withdraw a team from the EML competition and/or BBO Leagues or a team fails to honour 25% of its fixtures and is expelled pursuant to Regulation 10 (f) below and yet wishes that a lower team already participating in the Leagues to continue to play in the League at its lower level, the BBO Committee shall have the power in its absolute discretion to decide whether or not any lower Club team shall be permitted to continue to participate in the BBO Leagues and if so upon what terms and

conditions it in its absolute discretion decides including without prejudice to the following;

- whether or not matches are played as friendlies (with or without a five point win to the opposition)
 - restrictions upon which players (e.g players previously playing for the team withdrawn or expelled from the EML) may play in League Matches
 - whether or not the lower Club team can be promoted
- c) In the event that a Club having played its “home” fixture in the BBO League fails to honour its “away” fixture against the same opposition the League Secretary may in his absolute discretion in addition to any other sanction that may be imposed require that Club to play both of its fixtures “away” against the Club against which it failed to honour the fixture in the following season (2024/25).
- d) A team in Counties 4 (formerly Level 10) may three (3) times in the Season agree with an opposition team that its League fixture may be postponed (rather than cancelled) to the Next Available Weekend provided that;
- i. both Teams have agreed
 - ii. both Teams notify their **League Secretary** of their agreement by email, **not later than 10.00 am on the Wednesday before the weekend the match was due to be played.**
 - iii. the Home Club has notified the appropriate Referees Society of the postponement.

In the event that the three conditions set out above in this BBO Regulation 10d are not met and the match is not played on the scheduled date, the game will be deemed to have not been played and the non-offending team will be awarded a 5-point 0-0 win. The offending team will be subject to a 5-point deduction.

- e) If any Club has entered into an agreement, an arrangement, assurance or understanding in writing as a condition upon membership or continued participation of any Club or Team in the BBO Leagues which imposes any additional terms or regulations (Additional Terms) any breach of the Additional Terms will be deemed to be a breach of the RFU.Regs and these BBO Regulations giving rise to sanction which can be reviewed under RFU,Regs 6.90 to 6.95 (incl) and which is subject to Appeal under RFU. Reg19
- f) Teams that fail to fulfil 25% of their scheduled League fixtures without approval of the BBO Committee will have their results and membership of the EML and BBO Leagues expunged immediately in addition to any other sanction that may be imposed. “25% “will be determined by the actual number of matches unplayed as a percentage of the total number of League Matches scheduled to be played in the season in the League.
- g) Teams that have had their results expunged or voluntarily withdrawn from the BBO Leagues may apply to the BBO Committee to re-enter the BBO Leagues the

following season, subject to approval by both the Club's Constituent Body and the BBO Committee such application to be submitted by 3rd April 2024 or such earlier date specified by the RFU.

h) BBO League Committee reserves the right to refuse re-entry to any teams that either voluntarily withdraw or who have had their results expunged for non-fulfilment of fixtures

Clubs have the right to seek a Review of any decision to refuse admission or to object to any additional readmission terms of conditions imposed by application in writing within 14 days of being informed of such a decision (but without the right of an oral hearing unless such right is agreed by the South West Organising Committee). A Club has a right of appeal thereafter under RFU Reg 19 provided that such right of appeal is exercised within 7 days of notification of the outcome of the Review.

Special Note:

These regulations are designed to provide a competitive framework to 1st XV and lower teams of a suitable standard in Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and at the lowest level with the intention to enable and encourage more players to play Rugby. For the avoidance of doubt, any queries relating to these regulations should be taken up with your League Secretary, and NOT your match referee. In any dispute the decision of the BBO Committee in relation to interpretation or effect of the BBO Regulations is final subject to a Club's right of review and appeal exercised in accordance with RFU Regs.