

De-regulation for Dorset & Wilts RFU Leagues Levels 8 to 10 for the Season 2017/18

The RFU, through the South West Divisional Organising Committee (SW DOC), has delegated to constituent bodies the organization 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.

2. Principles of Promotion and Relegation. 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 Competitions 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.

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. If it is not then the club may be subject to a fine. (The date of birth enables a check to be made to ensure the player is not registered for another club.)

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 registered for a club are nominated to play for a 3rd or 4th XV at Level 9 or below then the League Secretary may request an explanation and award up to 2 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 but with some loosening of restrictions to improve the chances of matches being played and a widening of opportunity for players to take part in a game. In the unusual situation where the only XV in a club is in a Level 8 league then it may have unlimited replacements but is limited to 8 interchanges. At Levels 9 & 10 the following will apply:

- 5.1. There will be no requirements for replacements.
- 5.2. There will be no limit to the number of interchanges allowed.
- 5.3. The lowest or only team in a club, judged by the regular fixture list published for the club and not by the circumstances of the day, does not have to have three replacements nor is it limited to three.
- 5.4. 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.
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 100 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, i.e. at least one front row replacement must be available in the nominated team.*
3. *RFU Regulations state that a player whose departure has resulted in uncontested scrums may not be replaced – this applies to all matches at Level 3 and below.*
4. *If a team at Level 8 has used all its permitted player interchanges and then suffers a FR injury, even though they may have a FR replacement still available, they would not be able to use him and would therefore cause the match to go to uncontested scrums and suffer any sanction imposed.*
5. *Any issue that arises over whether a league match can/cannot be played – such as ground condition or lack of players – must be discussed urgently with the league secretary before any decision is made to cancel a game. Clubs should make every effort to play a game whenever possible.*