

**REGULATIONS GOVERNING ALL ULSTER BRANCH LEAGUE AND CUP
COMPETITIONS
2017-2018**

SECTION 1 – GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. COMPETITIONS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (“CMC”)

(a) The CMC shall decide:-

- (i) the dates on which matches, including replays, shall be played
- (ii) the venues of matches
- (iii) whether or not extra time if necessary shall be played

(b) The CMC may at any time scrutinise team lists, reinstatements, referees’ reports or other relevant material, and apply competition regulations as appropriate.

(c) The CMC may refer matters of conduct and responsibility, or of discipline, to the Honorary Secretary of the Ulster Branch.

2. FIXTURES

(a) Fixtures shall be arranged at meetings of club representatives convened for the purpose and shall be placed before the CMC for its approval. In case the representatives of any 2 clubs cannot agree in regard to the date on which any match shall be played, the CMC shall decide the same.

(b) A club may agree with an opposing club to play a fixture, scheduled for a Saturday, on the following Sunday provided that: -

- (i) by the Friday of the preceding week (8 days prior to the fixture) both clubs have sought the permission of the CMC, and the CMC approves the request ;
- (ii) a referee is available ; and
- (iii) women’s’ fixtures on that Sunday take precedence over the re-arranged fixture.

3. DURATION OF GAME

(a) Save as provided in (b) below:-

- (i) The duration of a match shall normally be 80 minutes subject to the Laws of the Game.
- (ii) In the knock-out stages of all Cup Competitions extra time of 10 minutes each way will be played in the case of a draw at full time. Extra time will also be played in all play-off matches for promotion or relegation.
- (iii) In the finals of Cup Competitions where, after extra time, the match still ends in a draw the Cup will be shared.

(b) The duration of matches in Schools, and Youth, Cup Competitions shall be subject to the rules of such Schools, and Youth, Cup Competitions.

4. REFEREES

(a) The Ulster Society of Rugby Football Referees shall (whenever possible) appoint Referees for all League and Cup matches, except for the finals of Cup or League Competitions, when the Society, through its representative, shall, at a Committee meeting held prior to the date of the final of each Cup Competition, recommend the name of a Referee to the Branch Committee for its approval.

(b) In relation to Law 6 (Laws of the Game) if a referee, having been duly appointed for a Cup or League game, is not in attendance, or if such appointment was not made, or if a

referee who was appointed for a Cup or League game is unable to officiate for the whole period of a match, the game as scheduled may be postponed or in the latter case may be abandoned and reported to the CMC.

(c) If either Club offers an alternative person to referee (including a referee spectating at the ground) in circumstances covered by (b) to enable the match to be played or concluded, agreement to the arrangements should be confirmed by both Captains signing the team lists submitted to the Referee before the game or before the game is concluded.

(d) Save as provided in (c) above, changes of a referee's appointment after arrival at a ground can only take place with the approval of a Referee's Selector.

(e) Referees may refuse to permit players to take part in a game if not wearing the registered Club jersey. If the registered colours of teams in a match are of such similarity as would present playing or refereeing difficulties, it is the responsibility of the home team to make the necessary change and to notify the Branch and opponents of such change.

5. ENTRY TO COMPETITIONS

(a) Applications for all competitions must be made to the Branch on the appropriate form in accordance with Branch regulations.

(b) In the Regional Leagues (formerly Minor league), a team deemed to have completed less than four of its fixtures by the end of November shall not be eligible to enter the McCambley Cup competition in that season.

6. CUP DRAWS

The CMC shall arrange to make the draws for all knock-out cup competitions. Each competing Club shall be notified of the result of the draw, dates and venues of each round, and of the instructions to referees regarding whether extra time should be played in the event of a draw. (See 3 (b)).

7. COMPETITION PROVISIONS

(a) The team winning a league match shall be awarded four points. In the case of a drawn league game, each team shall receive two points. One bonus point will be awarded to a team scoring four or more tries in a league match, and one bonus point will be awarded to a team losing by seven points or less. Any team failing to fulfil a league fixture shall have five points deducted from its league points scored, and their opponents shall receive five points. The 2nd XV team of an All-Ireland league club which fails to fulfil a Conference league fixture will, in addition to having five points deducted from its Conference league points scored, also have five points deducted from its 2nd XV league points scored (providing it is entered in that competition). In the case of two or more teams having an equal number of points, a deciding match or matches may be arranged as the CMC may determine.

(b) Where a team in the Regional League is unable to field either sufficient numbers to play a competitive league fixture, or a suitably trained and experienced front row, but chooses to fulfil the fixture, the following provisions will apply :-

- (i) such team will forfeit the fixture and the opposition will be awarded 5 points ;and
- (ii) if the fixture is played in modified format, and is not in violation of the provisions of Regulation 21(a), the team forfeiting shall not be subject to a deduction of 5 points under the provisions of Regulation 7(a), but shall be subject to a deduction of 1 point.

(c) Any team scratching an away league fixture will forfeit home advantage in the return fixture. (If circumstances permit, this may be carried forward to the next season at the discretion of the CMC).

(d) Any team scratching more than 2 league matches in a season may, at the discretion of the CMC, be debarred from entering a particular league competition in the following season.

(e) Any team scratching from a cup competition, for which it has entered, may, at the discretion of the CMC, be debarred from entering that competition in the following season.

8. TEAMSHEETS AND NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

(a) The full names of the players of each team, and the number of their playing position, must be given to the referee before the start of each match and he shall retain same and forward them to the Branch if requested.

(b) The referee shall submit the result and number of tries scored by each team by text to the Branch immediately following the end of the game.

(c) In the event of any matter of importance affecting a match, including red and yellow cards or serious injury the referee shall submit a report about the incident on-line to the Branch within 24 hours of the end of the game.

(d) No later than 96 hours from the end of a game, each club shall submit to the Branch an electronic teamsheet setting out the names and registration numbers of the players who played or were named as substitutes.

9. REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS, AND PAYMENTS TO PLAYERS

(a) All Clubs are subject to the provisions of Regulation 6 of the Regulations of the Irish Rugby Football Union ("the IRFU Regulations").

(b) In addition the following provisions shall apply:-

(i) Clubs playing in Division Two of the Championship League, or in any division or league

below Division Two of the Championship League, shall be permitted to register with the

Branch, on or before 30 September in each year no more than one overseas player to play 1st

XV rugby. In determining the eligibility of players to register under this provision the provisions of (a) to (d) of paragraph 2 of the Annex hereto, entitled "Eligibility of Players", shall be deemed to apply for this purpose as they apply to clubs playing in Division One of the Championship League.

(ii) (A) Save as provided in (B) below, a player shall not be eligible to play for a club unless he is registered with that club in accordance with the IRFU Regulations, and in the case of knock-out Cup Competitions he shall be ineligible to take part in any such Competition unless he shall have been so registered before the commencement of the particular Competition.

(B) A school-leaver entering adult rugby for the first time, or a player enrolling in university and joining the university club, shall be eligible to play in knock-out Cup Competitions after the commencement of any such Competition provided such school-leaver or player is registered with his new club by 1 October at the

latest.

(iii) A player may not transfer as a playing member from one Club to another unless he is free from any financial obligation with the Club he is leaving.

(iv) A player whose transfer has not been completed in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6.4.4 of the IRFU Regulations by the 31 January in any year will not be eligible to play for his new Club in Branch League or Cup Competitions.

10. QUALIFICATION OF PLAYER – AIB LEAGUE AND CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

(a) Clubs playing in the All Ireland League:-

(i) are subjected to the provisions regarding the registration and eligibility of players set

down in Regulations 9.15 of the IRFU Regulations, and

(ii) shall, on or before 1st June in any year, submit to the Branch a copy of the list of players submitted to the Union under the provisions of Regulations 9.14.1 of the IRFU Regulations.

(b) Clubs playing in Division One of the Championship League are subject to the provisions regarding the registration and eligibility of players set down in the Annex hereto.

11. REINSTATEMENTS

(a) The CMC shall have the power to reinstate:-

(i) players who have become disqualified from league competitions, and

(ii) players (other than players cup-tied under the provisions of Regulation 15 (a), and players selected by a Club in breach of Regulation 15 (b), below, who have become disqualified from cup competition,

provided that application is made on the electronic teamsheet submitted to the Branch under the provisions of Regulation 8 above and provided that such application is received by the Branch by 10am 3 working days before the match in which the player seeks to play.

(b) A player becomes disqualified if, during the current season, he has played, in aggregate, five or more cup and league matches for a team in his Club playing in the next highest grade in which that Club has a team, or once for a team in a higher grade of League than the next highest grade.

(c) For the avoidance of doubt, the power of the CMC to reinstate a player under the provision of (a) above shall only arise after that player has become disqualified in accordance with the provisions of (b) above.

(d) A Club applying to reinstate a player shall:-

(i) provide the reason for such reinstatement;

(ii) state the league sections from, and to, which the player is to be reinstated;

(iii) provide the full playing record of the player for that season; and

(iv) include details of any previous reinstatements in respect of the player during that season.

(e) A player may be reinstated a maximum of twice in a season, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the CMC.

(f) A player who has played in aggregate five or more cup and league matches for a team in his club playing in the next highest grade in which that club has a team can only be

reinstated to the section below that for which he played such matches, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the CMC.

(g) A player cannot be reinstated from a Championship League Division 1 team after 16 March in any season, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the CMC.

(h) A club applying to reinstate a player in exceptional circumstances, as provided in (e), (f) and (g) above, shall provide full and detailed reasons in writing in support of its application.

(i) A player cannot be reinstated on the grounds that he is returning from injury unless he has been unable, by virtue of that injury, to play for a least the previous two weeks.

(j) (i) Save as provided in (ii) below, a club may not apply, in any one week, to reinstate more than 3 players to each section in which it participates.

(ii) An AIL/Ulster Premiership League club may not apply, in any one week, to reinstate more than 5 players to each section in which it participates.

(k) A dual status player, returning to play for his Championship League Club, shall be subject to the provisions of paragraphs (a) to (j) above.

(l) For the purposes of this regulation the grades of League shall be AIL/Ulster Premiership League, 2nd XV/ Championship/Conference, Provincial (formerly Junior)1 – 3, Provincial 4 - 6 and Regional.

12. UNQUALIFIED PLAYERS

If any Club includes in its team, any player who is not duly qualified to represent it, the team shall be deemed to have lost the match, and in the case of a league match will have two points deducted from its league total to date.

13. FALSIFYING TEAMSHEETS

If any Club includes in its team any player who is not duly qualified to represent it, and includes that player in the electronic teamsheet under a name or registration number other than his own, the team shall, in addition to any sanctions which may be applied under the provisions of Regulation 12 above: -

(a) in the case of a league match, have sixteen points deducted from its league total to date ;

(b) in the case of a match in a cup competition, be debarred from entering that competition in the following season, and the Club may be subject to further sanction by the Disciplinary Committee of the Branch if its conduct is held to be detrimental to the best interests of the Game.

14. THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND THE REPLACEMENT AND SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS

(a) Teams participating in the following competitions must comply with Law 3 of the Game in respect of the nomination and replacement/substitution of players.

	COMPETITION	NOMINATED SUBS OR REPLACEMENTS	FRONT ROW REQUIREMENT
(i)	Ulster Premiership League	5	2
(ii)	Championship League 1	2	1
(iii)	Championship League 2	2	1
(iv)	Championship League 3	2	1
(v)	Conference 1 involving AIL 2 nd XV's	2	1
(vi)	Conference 2 involving AIL 2 nd XV's	2	1
(vii)	Second Fifteen League	2	1
(viii)	Senior Cup (all rounds)	5	2
(ix)	Junior Cup (up to quarter-final)	2	1
(x)	Junior Cup (semi-final and final)	5	2
(xi)	Towns Cup (up to quarter-final)	2	1
(xii)	Towns Cup (semi-final and final)	5	2
(xiii)	McCrea Cup (to quarter-final)	2	1
(xiv)	McCrea Cup (semi-final and final)	5	2
(xv)	Gordon West Cup (to quarter-final)	2	1
(xvi)	Gordon West Cup (semi-final and final)	5	2

(b) Teams participating in the following competitions are not required to comply with Law 3 of the Game in respect of the nomination and replacement/substitution of players.

	COMPETITION	NOMINATED SUBS OR REPLACEMENTS	FRONT ROW REQUIREMENT
(i)	Provincial League Sections 1-6	3	0
(ii)	Regional League	3	0
(iii)	Crawford Cup/Shield (all rounds)	3	0
(iv)	Forster Cup/Shield (all rounds)	3	0
(v)	McCambley Cup/Butler Shield (all rounds)	3	0
(vi)	Ravenhill Cup (all rounds)	3	0

(c) In all competitions in which substitutions are permitted such substitutions shall be rolling.

(d) (i) Where a referee orders uncontested scrums during a match, as a result of injury to

a front row player and the team not having suitably trained and experienced front row players to replace him:-

- (A) the injured front row player must leave the field and cannot be otherwise replaced; and
 - (B) the match shall continue with that team a man short.
- (ii) A team in default under the provisions of (i) above shall forfeit the match.

15. CUP TIED PLAYERS

(a) A player may play for only one team in any particular Cup Competition.

(b) A Club may not select a player from a higher team to play in the semi-final or final of any cup unless the player has played in a previous round of the competition or in exceptional circumstances permission is granted by the C.M.C. For the purposes of this provision a player from a higher team shall be deemed to be a player who, during the current season, has played five or more matches in aggregate for a higher team or teams in cup and league competitions.

16. CLOSED DATES

League, Cup or Friendly matches must not be arranged for the afternoon, in Belfast and within a radius of 25 miles of Belfast, on dates closed by the Branch Committee.

17. STARTING TIMES OF MATCHES

(a) Normal kick-off time for all Saturday matches whether League, Cup or Friendly will be 2.30 pm. For matches on 'closed dates' the kick-off time will be 12 noon or earlier.

(b) Application to vary these kick-off times must be made in writing to the Branch Office 10 days before date of match.

18. CHANGE OF DATES

When the date and time of any match has been approved by the CMC the same shall not be changed without the prior permission of the CMC, other than under the provisions of Regulation 23, and any Club or Clubs contravening this regulation shall be deemed to have lost the match unless the CMC rules otherwise. Any postponed league game must be re-arranged, and notification sent to the Branch by the Home club, within 14 days of the original date, in default of which the game will be re-arranged by the CMC.

19. REFUSAL TO PLAY

(a) League and Cup matches must be completed by the date specified by the CMC

(b) In the event of a Club failing to play a match or replay on the stipulated date or refusing to play extra time if ordered to do so by the CMC having control of the competition, it shall be adjudged to have lost the match unless the CMC considers there was a reasonable and proper cause for the refusal and, if the match is a Cup match, shall be liable to a fine as provided in Regulation 20.

20. POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF MATCHES

(a) Any Club postponing a match (with the permission of the CMC in accordance with Regulation 18 above), or cancelling a match, for any reason, must immediately notify:-

- (i) The Honorary Secretary or an authorised official of the opposing Club
- (ii) The Branch in writing or e-mail (Branch will notify Referee if cancellation is more than 24 hours before kick-off)
- (iii) The Referee, if postponement or cancellation is within 24 hours of kick-off.

(b) Any Club failing to comply with (a) above shall be liable to a fine of £100 in respect of the expenses of a referee who travels, and may, at the discretion of the CMC, be held liable to pay the travelling expenses of the visiting Club.

(c) Save as provided in (d) below any Club postponing or cancelling a match within 24 hours of the fixture shall, in addition to the fine payable under (b) above, be liable to:-

- (i) A fine of £50 if notification of such postponement or cancellation is given under the provisions of (a) above on the day preceding the fixture, or
- (ii) A fine of £100 if such notification is given within 12 hours of the fixture, or in the event that no such notification is given.

(d) The provisions of (c) above shall not apply to a Club postponing or cancelling a match on behalf of its lowest **league team, provided such team competes in either the Provincial or Regional League**, but such Club shall, in addition to the fine payable under (b) above, be liable to a fine of £100 if notification of such postponement or cancellation is given under the provisions of (a) above within 4 hours of the fixture or in the event that no such notification is given.

(e) Any Club failing to fulfil a fixture in the following competitions will be fined as follows:-

	COMPETITION	FINE
(i)	Ulster Premiership League	£400 per match
(ii)	Second XV League	£300 per match
(iii)	Championship / Conference League 1	£300 per match
(iv)	Championship / Conference League 2	£200 per match
(v)	Championship League 3	£100 per match
(vi)	Senior Cup	£400
(vii)	Towns Cup	£300
(viii)	McCrea Cup	£200
(ix)	Junior Cup	£300
(x)	Gordon West Cup	£100

(f) A Club failing to fulfil an away fixture in any of the competitions referred to in (e) above shall be subject to an additional fine of £100.

(g) A Club failing to fulfil a cup fixture in a competition other than those referred to in (e) above shall be subject to a fine of £100.

(h) Where a Club is subject to a fine of £50 or £100 for late cancellation under the provisions of (c) or (d) above, such fine shall be in addition to any fine payable under (e), (f) or (g) above.

(i) A Club wishing to appeal against the imposition of any fine payable under this Regulation must do so in writing on Club note-paper signed by the Honorary Secretary or the President of the Club

to reach the Honorary Secretary of the Ulster Branch within 96 hours of notification of the fine.

(j) All postponed or cancelled League or Cup matches not previously notified to the Branch under the provisions of 20(a) above, must be reported by both clubs to the Branch by email within 48 hours of the scheduled match. The offending Club should confirm forfeiture of points if appropriate, or both Clubs should confirm match rearrangement if this has been mutually agreed, giving date, venue etc.

(k) If agreement cannot be reached on forfeiture or rearrangement this should be reported by both Clubs and the decision will stand referred to the CMC. The offending side MUST immediately inform the CMC of the reasons why they failed to fulfil the fixture and why the CMC should not award the match to the non offending side.

(l) Any team which is unable to stage a home fixture at the knock-out stage of a competition on two successive occasions will forfeit home advantage.

21. ORDER OF CANCELLATION

(a) Clubs must cancel or postpone League and Cup matches from the lowest team upwards.

(b) Cup games within their designated sections take precedence over league games.

(c) The penalty for violation of the above is:

- (i) If a team is scheduled to play a Cup or League match on the same day as the Club has cancelled a Cup or League match of a higher team then the result will be declared null and void and its opponents will be declared the winners, whether the match actually takes place or not.
- (ii) In the case of a League match, the offending team shall be deducted 2 points and their opponents shall receive 5 points

(d) Where a match commences with less than 15 players on a team, that team may be deemed by the CMC, for the purposes of this Regulation only, to have cancelled the fixture and, if such cancellation is in breach of the order prescribed above, the CMC may impose the above penalty.

(e) When cancellation in the order prescribed above is impracticable (eg because of late cancellation or difficulties arising from an assigned pitch being declared unplayable) full details must be sent to the Branch in writing by the Club responsible for the cancellation within 72 hours of the cancellation. The CMC will then decide whether or not the above penalty will be imposed.

22. PROTESTS OR APPEALS

A Club wishing to make an official protest or appeal to the CMC in relation to a fixture must do so in writing on Club note paper signed by the Honorary Secretary or President of the club to reach the Branch Office within 96 hours after the end of the match to which it relates.

23. FITNESS OF GROUND

Prior to kick-off the Home Club shall be the sole judge of the fitness of the ground for the playing of a League or Cup match. In the case of a public ground the decision shall lie with the groundsman in charge. Once a match starts the referee is the sole judge of the fitness of the ground.

24. TROPHY OWNERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

(a) The Trustees of the Branch for the time being shall be for all intents and purposes the legal owners of all cups and shields in trust for the Branch.

(b) Cups and shields shall be presented to winning Clubs at the final or conclusion of the competitions, where practicable. Clubs winning a cup or shield shall, when the presentation has taken place, give to the Honorary Secretary of the Branch, a written guarantee for its safe custody and return when directed by the Branch.

25 DECISIONS OF THE CMC

The Clubs Committee, at its regular monthly meeting, shall be the final arbiter of any decision of the CMC which is disputed by a Club, provided that where reference to a monthly meeting of the Clubs Committee is impractical a Club may appeal direct to the Branch Committee in writing on Club note paper signed by the Honorary Secretary or President of the Club, and addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Ulster Branch. Any such appeal must be lodged within 96 hours of the club receiving official notification of the CMC decision, and must be accompanied by a sum of £250 which may, at the discretion of the Branch Committee, be refunded in whole or in part.

26 ANTI-DOPING

For the sake of clarity the Branch affirms that: -

(a) the Irish Rugby Football Union Anti-Doping Regulations (“the Anti-Doping Regulations”) apply to the game in Ulster ;

(b) the Branch, and all persons participating in the game in any capacity under the jurisdiction of the Branch, are bound by, and shall comply with, the Anti-Doping Regulations;

(c) the Branch shall enforce the Anti-Doping Regulations and, in the event of a breach thereof, shall apply the sanctions set out therein.

ANNEX

REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS – CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

1. Operative Dates

(a) Only a player who is registered with a Club on the IRFU Clubhouse Player Registration system on or before 1 October in any year shall be eligible to play for that Club in Championship League Division One (“the League”). A person may be registered as a playing member with one Club only.

(b) A player enrolling in University and joining the University Club shall be eligible to play for that Club in the League if registered with the Club on or before 1 October in that year.

(c) A player who is registered with a Club prior to 1 October and who attains the age of 18 during the season shall be eligible to play in the League after he has attained his 18th birthday, unless he is a schoolboy who is eligible for the relevant schools competition.

2. Eligibility of Players

(a) The following are the registered players who are eligible to play in the League: -

- (i) A player who qualifies to play for Ireland under World Rugby Regulations. This includes players who have completed three years residency.
- (ii) A player who holds a passport issued by a country which is a member of the EU.
- (iii) A player who has a valid work permit as a professional rugby player and who is a national of a country which has an association / trade agreement with the EU as under the Cotonou agreement.

(b) In the above cases, players must both be resident in Ireland on 1 September and remain in residence until the commencement of the League.

(c) For the purposes of this provision residency is defined as “Permanent place of residence”.

(d) Exception

In any season each Club may register one player who does not satisfy the above criteria provided that he has taken up residence and has been properly registered on or before 30 September. For the purposes of interpretation, this player is classified as an overseas player and must be nominated as such to the Provincial Domestic Game Manager prior to the commencement of the League.

3 Dual Status Players

A player who is a bona fide playing member of a non All Ireland League Club may also play for an All Ireland League Club in the same season subject to the provisions of IRFU Regulation 9.15, and such provisions shall, in addition to applying in relation to matches in the All Ireland League and Cup, be deemed to apply in relation to matches in the Ulster Premiership League and the Ulster Senior Cup. Where the provisions of IRFU Regulation 9.15 are applied in relation to matches in the Ulster Premiership League or the Ulster Senior Cup, application, under Regulation 9.15.2.1, must be made to the Branch office as if the reference therein to the Unions office was a reference to the Branch’s office.