



**IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**  
**(ULSTER BRANCH)**

**REGULATIONS FOR YOUTH RUGBY**  
**2019 – 2020**

**PART 1**

**REGULATIONS**

**PART 2**

**INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE**

## PART 1

# REGULATIONS GOVERNING YOUTH RUGBY

## SECTION 1 – GENERAL REGULATIONS

### 1. INTERPRETATION

(a) In these Regulations:

“Branch” means the Ulster Branch of the Irish Rugby Football Union;

“Branch Committee” means the Committee of the Branch provided for in Byelaw 7 of the Byelaws and Regulations of the Branch;

“Competitions Management Committee” means the Competitions Management Committee established as a sub-committee of the Clubs Committee of the Branch;

“Cup” has the meaning assigned to it in Regulation 29 below;

“**Framework Agreement**” means the Framework Agreement for player release set out in the Explanatory Note in Appendix A, and made between schools participating in the Schools of Ireland Scheme and clubs affiliated to the Branch;

“IRFU Regulations” means the Regulations made by the Irish Rugby Football Union;

“Laws of the Game” means the Laws of the Game as laid down by World Rugby, formerly known as the International Rugby Board;

“League” has the meaning assigned to it in Regulation 28 below;

“Matrix” means the template agreed by the Youth Committee to assist in determining kick-off times;

“Registration Card” means the registration card provided for in Regulation 6 of the IRFU Regulations;

“Registration Number” means the registration number provided for in Regulation 6 of the IRFU Regulations; and

“Youth Committee” means the Youth Committee established as a sub-committee of the Domestic Game Committee of the Branch to manage the playing of youth rugby football by clubs affiliated to the Branch.

(b) These Regulations shall be construed as applying to all Youth Rugby whether played by boys or girls teams unless the contrary is expressly provided.

### 2. YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Youth Committee shall consist of the following persons:

(a) a Chairman appointed by the Branch Committee pursuant to the provisions of Byelaw 7(viii)(c)(4) of the Byelaws and Regulations of the Branch;

(b) an Honorary Secretary (“the Youth Secretary”) elected annually by the Youth Committee at its first meeting of the season;

- (c) Four League and Cup Co-ordinators (“the Youth Co-ordinators”) elected annually by the Youth Committee at its first meeting of the season;
- (d) the Junior Vice-President of the Branch;
- (e) the Rugby Support Manager of the Branch;
- (f) the Community Rugby Manager of the Branch;
- (g) a representative from each club participating in youth rugby football (“the Youth Representative”);
- (h) a representative from the Ulster Society of Rugby Football Referees (“USRFR”);
- (i) a representative from the Elite Player Programme;
- (j) a representative from the Mini-Rugby Committee; and
- (k) a representative from the High Schools Committee.

### **3. YOUTH COMPETITION COMMITTEE**

- (a) The Youth Committee shall appoint a sub-committee called the Youth Competition Committee (“the YCC”) to perform the functions assigned to it under the provisions of these Regulations.
- (b) The YCC shall consist of the following persons:
  - (i) the Chairman of the Youth Committee;
  - (ii) the Youth Secretary;
  - (iii) four of the Youth Representatives;
  - (iv) the representative from the Mini-Rugby Committee elected under the provisions of Regulation 2(j) above; and
  - (v) the Youth Co-ordinators, elected under the provisions of Regulation 2(c) above, who shall decide:
    - (aa) the dates on which matches, including replays, shall be played; and
    - (bb)
- (c) The quorum for a meeting of the YCC shall be four.
- (d) The YCC, acting collectively or by any of its members, may at any time scrutinise teamsheets, reinstatements, referees’ reports, registration cards, or other relevant material to check the eligibility of players, whether or not in the context of any protest or appeal, and apply competition regulations as appropriate.
- (e) The YCC may refer matters of conduct and responsibility, or discipline, to the Honorary Secretary of the Branch.

### **4. FIXTURES**

- (a) The Youth Co-ordinators shall arrange the League fixtures and place them, together with dates for the Cup competition, before the YCC for approval at its May meeting.
- (b) A club may seek the agreement of an opposing club to play a fixture on a date before the date approved by the YCC under the provisions of (a) above and, where agreement is reached, the home club shall notify the Youth Co-ordinators, and the Branch, of the change of date.
- (c) The YCC may, at the request of the Youth Co-ordinators and without prior notice, decide to terminate the League, or a Section or part thereof, on a date other than that originally approved by the YCC, and the match results up to and including that date shall decide the outcome of the League, or that Section or part thereof.

- (d) Any club failing to fulfil an away League fixture shall forfeit home advantage in the return fixture or, if appropriate and at the discretion of the YCC, in the equivalent fixture the following season, provided however that this provision shall not apply where a club has partly fulfilled such fixture by playing a match in, at least, one of the age grade levels set out in Regulation 28.
- (e) Any club failing to fulfil a Cup fixture may, at the discretion of the YCC, be debarred from entering the Cup competition the following season.

## **5. DURATION OF GAMES**

- (a) The duration of games shall be as follows:
  - Under 14 level (Boys) – two 25-minute halves (plus time lost);
  - Under 14 level (Girls) – two 25-minute halves (plus time lost);
  - Under 16 level (Boys) – two 30-minute halves (plus time lost);
  - Under 16 level (Girls) – two 30-minute halves (plus time lost);
  - Under 18 level (Boys) – two 35-minute halves (plus time lost);
  - Under 18 level (Girls) – two 35-minute halves (plus time lost).
- (b) No extra time shall be played in any game.

## **6. REFEREES**

- (a) The USRFR shall (whenever possible) appoint referees for all League and Cup matches.
- (b) In relation to Law 6 of the Laws of the Game, if a referee has not been duly appointed then it is the responsibility of the home club to appoint a referee, and such referee shall be a USRFR referee, or an affiliate referee from either of the clubs participating in the match. Where the home club fails to appoint a referee as hereinbefore provided and the fixture cannot be played, it shall be deemed to have failed to fulfill the fixture and, if a League fixture, the provisions of Regulation 8(a) shall apply.
- (c) Each team shall provide a touch judge, who must not be a replacement or substitute.
- (d) Yellow and red cards are applicable for boys and girls at U14, U16 and U18 levels.
- (e) A boy or girl player who receives a yellow card: -
  - (i) at U14, and U16 levels, shall be temporarily suspended for 5 minutes; and
  - (ii) at U18 level, shall be temporarily suspended for 7 minutes.

## **7. ENTRY TO COMPETITIONS**

- (a) The competitions set out in Section 2 hereof (“the Youth Competitions”) shall be competed for annually by such clubs, other than affiliated schools and Colleges of Education, as the Youth Committee shall determine.
- (b) Subject to (a) above, the following provisions shall apply:
  - (i) Each club shall inform the Youth Secretary of the number of teams it is proposing to enter in the Youth Competitions;
  - (ii) The YCC shall determine the format of the League, and the seeding of the Cup draw, for each season;
  - (iii) Subject to the discretion of the Youth Committee, a boys team completing less than half of its League fixtures will not be eligible to compete in the Cup competition.

## 8. COMPETITION PROVISIONS

- (a) The team winning a League match shall be awarded 3 points. In the case of a drawn League match each team shall receive 2 points. 1 point shall be awarded to a losing team fulfilling a fixture. Any team failing to fulfil a League fixture shall have 1 point deducted from its League points scored, and their opponents shall receive 3 points. If, any season, a club is not represented at a particular age level, all fixtures arranged for that club at that level shall be awarded to the opposition.
- (b) Save as provided in (c) below, where there is a margin of 40 or more points between the teams at any time during a League or Cup fixture the following provisions shall apply: -
- (i) the referee shall end the match early and the fixture shall be awarded to the team that is leading at the time;
  - (ii) the team that is losing at the time shall not be subject to the deduction of 1 point under the provisions of (a) above; and
  - (iii) the teams may play out, as a friendly, any playing time unplayed as a result of the early ending of the match, provided that:-
    - (aa) the forwards from both teams are deployed as necessary between them to ensure that the scrums are equally matched at all times; and
    - (bb) such other deployments are made between the teams to ensure that both teams are otherwise as equally matched as possible.
- (c) Where there is a margin of 40 or more points between the teams at any time during a League, or Cup, final but the referee, after consultation with the Youth Co-ordinator appointed by the YCC to attend the final, nevertheless deems the match to be competitive the match shall continue until full-time or such earlier time as the referee shall deem the match to be no longer competitive.
- (d) League fixtures will normally be played on a home and away basis.
- (e) The team accumulating the most points in the League season shall be the Section League winners at that particular age level.
- (f) If, at the end of the League season, two or more teams have the same number of League points, the winner shall be determined by applying the following criteria in the order set out below: -
- (i) the most League points won in the fixtures between teams;
  - (ii) the difference in points scored for and against in the League fixtures between those teams;
  - (iii) the difference in points scored for and against in all League fixtures in the season.
- (g) In the event of two teams still being tied, a play-off, at a neutral venue, will decide the winner.
- (h) If, at the end of full-time in the play-off, the scores shall be tied, then the winner shall be determined by applying the following criteria in the order set out below:
- (i) The most tries scored in the game;
  - (ii) The first try scored in the game;
  - (iii) The first score in the game.
- (i) If, at the end of full-time in the play-off, neither team has scored, then the winner shall be determined through a penalty shoot-out as follows: -
- (i) Each team will nominate five players from the players on the pitch at the final whistle;
  - (ii) Each player will kick from the centre of the 22 metre line;

- (iii) If, after their five nominated players have kicked, the teams remain deadlocked, the shoot-out will continue, on a sudden death basis, with the remaining players on the pitch at the end of full-time;
  - (iv) If any of the remaining players who were on the pitch at the end of full-time, are incapable, through injury, of participating in the shoot-out, both teams will compete with the same reduced numbers;
  - (v) If the penalty shoot-out does not produce a winner, the winner shall be the team receiving fewer red cards in the play-off;
  - (vi) If the application of (v) above does not produce a winner, the winner will be decided by the toss of a coin.
- (j) In the event of a draw in any game in a round of the cup, plate or bowl, other than the final, the winner will be decided in accordance with the provisions of (g) above.
  - (k) In the event of a draw after full-time in the final of the cup, plate or bowl, the trophy will be shared.

## **9. TEAMSHEETS AND REGISTRATION CARDS**

- (a) Before the start of a match each team shall:
  - (i) provide both the referee, and the opposing team, with a teamsheet, signed by the coach or manager, containing the full names of its players, their registration numbers and the number of their playing position, and indicating which players are the front row cover; and
  - (ii) produce registration cards in respect of each of its players for inspection by:
    - (aa) the coach or manager of the opposing team;
    - (bb) the Youth Convener of the club which that team represents; and
    - (cc) the YCC in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 3(d) above.
- (b) Where a team fails: -
  - (i) to provide a teamsheet in accordance with the provisions of (a)(i) above, it shall forfeit the fixture; or
  - (ii) to produce a registration card in respect of a player in accordance with the provisions of (a)(ii) above, such player shall be deemed to be unregistered and ineligible to play.
- (c) The referee shall retain the information provided under (a)(i) above and forward it to the Branch if requested.
- (d) Each club shall, not later than the Wednesday of the week following every scheduled fixture, submit on-line to the Branch in respect of each such fixture an electronic teamsheet, which shall include the names and registration numbers of its players, and such teamsheet shall be submitted whether such fixture is played, postponed or cancelled.
- (e) Any club, not otherwise subject to sanction under the provisions of (b)(i) above, which fails to return such teamsheet in accordance with the provisions of (d) above shall: -
  - (i) in the case of a League game, result in the team being deducted 1 point; and
  - (ii) in the case of a Cup game, result in the team being eliminated from the Cup competition, and the game may, at the discretion of the YCC, be awarded to the opposing team.

## **10. MATCH RESULTS AND REPORTS**

- (a) The home club shall, by 12.00 noon on the Monday following a match, notify the Branch of the result by e-mail to [youthresults@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:youthresults@ulsterrugby.com).

- (b) In the event of any matter of importance affecting a match, including red and yellow cards and 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.

## **11. REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS**

- (a) A player shall not be eligible to play for a club unless he is registered with that club in accordance with Regulation 6 of the IRFU Regulations and complies with the appropriate age threshold as set out in Regulation 12 below.
- (b) A player whose transfer has not been registered with a club, pursuant to (a) above, by **30 November** in any year, will not be eligible to play for that club in the Youth Competitions, provided however that the YCC may in exceptional circumstances agree to waive this provision.
- (c) A **player** attending a school that participates in the Schools of Ireland Scheme shall not be eligible to play for a club in any year unless: -
  - (i) by **30 November** in that year, the club obtains the prior permission (or agreement) of the school in the form of Appendix A hereto (“the **request/nomination** form”);
  - (ii) the player is registered with the club pursuant to (a) and (b) above; and
  - (iii) the club submits the original **request/nomination** form to the YCC, and the YCC approves the player playing rugby for the club.
- (d) For the avoidance of doubt, a **request/nomination** form obtained pursuant to (c) above remains valid for that season only.

## **12. AGE THRESHOLD**

- (a) The Youth Competitions shall be organized, in the case of boys **and girls** teams, at U14, U16 and U18 age levels.
- (b) The age threshold for the Youth Competitions shall be the age of the player on 1 July of the season in which the competition is played, thus: -
  - (i) A boy **or girl** player born between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2003 inclusive will be eligible to play at U18 level;
  - (ii) A boy **or girl** player born between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2005 inclusive will be eligible to play at U16 level;
  - (iii) A boy **or girl** player born between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2007 inclusive will be eligible to play at U14 level.
- (c) A boy **or girl** player eligible to play at: -
  - (i) U14 level, is also eligible to play at U15 level;
  - (ii) U16 level, is also eligible to play at U17 level;
  - (iii) U18 level, is also eligible to play at U19 level.
- (d) **Where a boy or girl player is deemed capable of playing Youth Rugby at a level above which he/she is eligible to play, as set out under the provisions of (b) and (c) above,** such player’s club may, with the written consent of the player’s parents or guardians, the Club Welfare Officer, and the Club Youth Co-ordinator, apply to the Youth Secretary, in the form and subject to the provisions of Appendix B hereto, for approval to play at the higher level and, if approved, such player shall, subject to the provisions of (e) below, play at that level for the remainder of the season.
- (e) A player who is approved to play at a higher level pursuant to the provisions of (d)

above, and who is part of the Player Elite Programme, may, where their club does not have a game at the higher level, be reinstated to play at the lower level in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 14(b) below.

### **13. TIME GAP BETWEEN MATCHES**

- (a) A player may not play at two different age levels within a 48-hour period.
- (b) A player may not play in more than two games at the same age level within a 48-hour period, and in one of those games the player may not play for more than one half.
- (c) The 48-hour period referred to in (a) and (b) above shall be deemed to commence when the player takes the field for the first time.

### **14. REINSTATEMENTS**

- (a) Where a club is represented by two teams in the League at the same age level the club shall, at the commencement of the League, nominate a panel of 15 players for each team. A player in one panel shall, subject to (b) below, be disqualified from playing in the League for the other. A player not nominated for either team at the commencement of the League may move between both teams without requirement for reinstatement under the provisions of (b) below.
- (b) The YCC shall have the power to reinstate a player who: -
  - (i) has become disqualified by virtue of the provisions of (a) above, or
  - (ii) falls within the provisions of Regulation 12(e) above provided that application is made in writing to the Branch on the form provided for this purpose, and such form is received by the Branch by 10.00 am three working days before the match in which the player seeks to play.
- (c) A player who is eligible to play both at U18 level and, on attaining the age of 18, at adult level, does not require to be reinstated between adult and U18 levels.

### **15. 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:

- (a) in the case of a League match, will have three points deducted from its League total to date and may, at the discretion of the YCC, be excluded from the League for the remainder of the season; and
- (b) in the case of a Cup match, will be debarred from the Cup competition that season.

### **16. NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND REPLACEMENT AND SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS**

- (a) A team must comply with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game in respect of the nomination and replacement/substitution of players.
- (b) Subject to (a) above, the following provisions shall apply: -



- (i) All teams may nominate up to 22 players of whom up to 7 may play as substitutes or replacements, provided however that rolling substitutions shall be permitted for: -
  - (aa) girls teams in all fixtures, and
  - (bb) boys teams in the finals of League and Cup competitions only.
- (ii) (aa) A boys team may play League games with fewer than 15, but not less than 12, players, provided however that the scrums are equally matched at all times.  
 (bb) Where, during the course of a League game, a boys team is reduced to the minimum of 12 players but, notwithstanding the provisions of (aa) above, is unable to continue, the opposing team shall be awarded the fixture and receive 3 points, and the team in default shall receive 1 point.
- (iii) Where a boys team in a League fixture has less than the minimum permitted players pursuant to the provisions of (ii) above, the fixture may be played as a friendly, provided that the forwards from both teams are deployed as necessary between them to ensure that scrums are equally matched at all times.
- (iv) A girls team may play League games with fewer than 15, but not less than 10 players, provided however that: -
  - (aa) the team with the smaller complement shall determine the number of players that shall take the field, and both teams shall take the field with the same number of players;
  - (bb) the scrums are equally matched at all times;
  - (cc) a team with players available over and above the number of players taking the field shall be permitted to substitute its remaining players during the game; and
  - (dd) where a team loses a player to injury and no substitute is available the other team shall withdraw a player to the intent that both teams continue to play with equal numbers.
- (v) Where a girls team in a League fixture has less than the minimum permitted players set out in (iv) above, the fixture may be played as a friendly, subject to provisos (aa) to (dd) therein.
- (vi) In the circumstances set out in (iii) and (v) above: -
  - (aa) where one team has the permitted number of players that team shall receive 3 points, and the team with less than the minimum permitted players shall receive 1 point;
  - (bb) where both teams have less than the minimum permitted players both teams shall receive 1 point; and
  - (cc) a team with less than the minimum permitted players shall be deemed to have fulfilled the fixture and shall not be subject to a deduction of 1 point under the provisions of Regulation 8(a) above.
- (vii) For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) above shall not apply to teams playing in a League play-off or in the Cup competition.
- (c) Where, during the course of a League or Cup game, uncontested scrums are ordered because no suitably trained front row cover is available, the result of the game will stand as if uncontested scrums had not been ordered.
- (d) Where a team does not have suitably trained front row players at the start of a game, such that contested scrums cannot take place: -
  - (i) in the case of a League game, the opposing team shall receive 3 points, and the team in default shall receive 1 point;
  - (ii) in the case of a Cup game, the team in default shall forfeit the fixture.

## **17. CUP TIED PLAYERS**

- (a) Where a club is represented by two teams in the Cup competition at the same age level the club shall, at the commencement of the Cup competition nominate a panel of 15 players for each team, and a player nominated for one panel shall not be eligible to play in the Cup competition for the other.
- (b) Save as provided in (c) below, a player not nominated for either team at the commencement of the Cup competition may **only** play for one or other team in the Cup competition provided he has played 3 or more League games for the club in that season.
- (c) A club may apply to the YCC on behalf of a player who has not been nominated for either team at the commencement of the Cup competition and who has not played 3 or more League games for the club in that season, and:
  - (i) has not completed his registration with the club until after **30 November** in any year, or
  - (ii) is returning to the game from long term injury, and the YCC may, in exceptional circumstances, agree to waive the provisions of (b) above, provided however that such application may not be made after the date set for the second round of the Cup.

## **18. CLOSED DATES**

A weekend set aside for the Regional Development Squads is designated a closed date on which no League or Cup matches shall be played, provided however that two clubs may apply to the Youth Committee for permission to play a League or Cup match on the Saturday of such a weekend between two teams which have no players involved in the Regional Development Squads.

## **19. STARTING TIME OF MATCHES**

- (a) Kick-off times for matches whether League, Cup or friendly shall, in the case of boys matches, be 11.00 and, in the case of girls matches, be 13.00, unless agreed otherwise with the mutual consent of both clubs, and approved by the Youth Co-ordinators, pursuant to the provisions of (b) below.
- (b) Application to vary a kick-off time must be made in writing, or by e-mail, to the Youth Co-ordinators 10 days before the match, provided however that where such application is in respect of a Cup match with a scheduled date less than 10 days ahead, such application shall be made 5 days before the match, and the Youth Co-ordinators will determine the kick-off time in accordance with the Matrix.

## **20. RE-ARRANGEMENT OF MATCHES**

- (a) When the date and time of any match has been arranged by the YCC in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 4(a) above, such date and time shall not be changed other than in the circumstances provided for in Regulation 4(b) above or Regulation 25 below, unless required by, or with the approval of, the YCC or the Youth Co-ordinators

pursuant to the provisions of these Regulations, and any club or clubs contravening this provision shall be deemed to have lost the match.

- (b) Where a club has two or more players committed to national or provincial representative duty within 48 hours prior to or following a scheduled League or Cup fixture, such club may seek the agreement of the opposing club, and the approval of the Youth Co-ordinators, to re-arrange such fixture on a date as near as possible to the scheduled date.
- (c) Where, pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 25 below, a ground is adjudged unfit for play, the home club shall advise the opposing club accordingly, and the opposing club shall have the option, where practicable, of hosting such fixture on the scheduled date.
- (d) Where the opposing club is unable to exercise, the option referred to at (c) above, the fixture shall be re-arranged at the original venue on a date as near as possible to the original date, provided however that if, pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 25 below, the ground is again adjudged unfit for play the home club shall concede home advantage to the opposing club.

## **21. NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF MATCHES**

- (a) Any club postponing or cancelling a match for any reason must immediately notify: -
  - (i) The Youth Representative of the opposing club;
  - (ii) The Branch in writing, or by email, and the Branch will notify the referee if the postponement or cancellation is more than 24 hours before kick-off;
  - (iii) The referee, if the postponement or cancellation is within 24 hours of kick-off;
  - (iv) The Youth Co-ordinators.
- (b) Any club failing to comply with the provisions of (a) above may, at the discretion of the YCC, be held liable to pay the travelling expenses of the visiting club and referee.
- (c) All postponed or cancelled League or Cup matches must be reported by both clubs on the electronic teamsheets submitted to the Branch pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 9(c) above.
- (d) In the case of a postponement, and where both clubs can agree a mutually acceptable date to play the match, they shall refer such date to the Youth Co-ordinators for approval, provided however that if: -
  - (i) there is no such referral within 96 hours of the scheduled kick-off of the postponed match, and
  - (ii) there is no indication on the electronic teamsheets that agreement cannot be reached on re-arrangement as provided in (f) below, the Youth Co-ordinators shall determine the date on which the match shall be played.
- (e) In the case of a cancellation, the club responsible for the cancellation shall confirm forfeiture of the match on the electronic teamsheet.
- (f) Where agreement cannot be reached on re-arrangement or forfeiture as provided respectively in (d) and (e) above, both clubs should indicate accordingly on the electronic teamsheets, and the matter will stand referred to the YCC for decision. The club responsible for the postponement or cancellation must immediately inform the YCC of the reasons why they failed to fulfil the fixture and why the YCC should not award the fixture to the opposing side.

## **22. ORDER OF CANCELLATION**

- (a) Matches in the Youth Competitions shall take precedence over any other Youth matches.
- (b) When, on any date, a club cannot fulfil a scheduled League or Cup fixture at a particular age level it shall proceed, notwithstanding, with its League or Cup fixtures scheduled at other age levels.

## **23. REFUSAL TO PLAY**

- (a) League and Cup matches must be completed by the date originally arranged by the YCC in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 4(a) above, or as subsequently rearranged with the approval of the Youth Co-ordinators.
- (b) In the event of a club failing to play off a match or replay on the stipulated date, it shall be adjudged to have lost the match unless the YCC considers there was a reasonable and proper cause for the refusal, and if the match is a Cup match it shall additionally be liable to a fine of £100.

## **24. COMMUNICATIONS, PROTESTS OR APPEALS**

- (a) Save as provided in (b) below: -
  - (i) any communication from a club to the Youth Co-ordinators under these Regulations regarding the postponement or re-arrangement of a fixture, a change to the starting-time or venue of a match, or match-day arrangements generally, shall be made by the coach or Youth Representative of the club; and
  - (ii) any other communication from a club under these Regulations shall be made to the Youth Secretary by the Youth Representative of the club.
- (b) A club wishing to make an official protest or appeal to the YCC in relation to a fixture must do so in writing on club note-paper signed by the Honorary Secretary, or a senior officer, of the club, to reach the Youth Secretary within 96 hours after the end of the match to which it relates.

## **25. 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 grounds-man in charge. Once a match starts the referee is the sole judge of the fitness of the ground.

## **26. TROPHY OWNERSHIP AND 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 the winning clubs at the final, or conclusion, of the competition 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.

## **27. DECISIONS OF THE YCC**

The Youth Committee, at its regular monthly meeting, shall be the final arbiter of any decision of the YCC which is disputed by a club, provided that where reference to a monthly meeting of the Youth Committee is impractical a club may appeal direct to the Competitions Management Committee (“the CMC”) in writing on club note-paper signed by the Honorary Secretary, or President, of the club, and addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Clubs Committee, and the CMC shall appoint a sub-committee (“the appeal committee”) consisting of no more than 5, and not less than 3, members of the CMC to hear the appeal. Any such appeal must be lodged within 96 hours of the club receiving official notification of the YCC decision, and must be accompanied by a sum of £250 which may, at the discretion of the appeal committee, be refunded in whole or in part.



## **SECTION 2 – YOUTH COMPETITIONS**

### **A- ULSTER YOUTH LEAGUE**

#### **28. THE “ULSTER CARPETS” ULSTER YOUTH LEAGUE**

- (a) The Ulster Youth League for the U14 (Boys), **U14** (Girls), U16 (Boys), **U16 (Girls)**, U18 (Boys) and U18 (Girls) age grade levels shall be called “the “Ulster Carpets” Ulster Youth League” (“the league”).
- (b) The boys League shall be composed of four Sections – North, South, East and Coast. The girls League shall be composed of the **U14, U16** and U18 Sections.
- (c) Two or more clubs may join together to field a team, subject to the approval of the Youth Committee at the time of application by such team for entry into the League. The team must not use a pseudonym, but a name which contains the registered club names of all the clubs combining for the competition.
- (d) The following provisions shall apply to the boys League: -
- (i) A club shall participate at each grade level in the Section in which it competes;
  - (ii) There shall be no promotion or relegation between the Sections;
  - (iii) The top two teams in each of the four Sections at each age grade level shall progress through to the League play-offs to decide the winner of the League for that age grade level. The pairings for the League play-offs shall be : -
    1. Winner of **South** v Runner-up of East
    2. Winner of **North** v Runner-up of Coast
    3. Winner of **Coast** v Runner-up of North
    4. Winner of **East** v Runner-up of SouthThe order of the above pairings shall determine the pairings for the semi-finals and final of the play-offs.

### **B-CUP**

#### **29. CUP COMPETITIONS**

- (a) The following cup competitions (herein collectively called “the Cup”) shall be competed for annually and shall, subject to the provisions of (b) below, be open to clubs participating in the League at the relevant age grade level:
- (i) Boys
    - Ulster U18 (Roland Barr) Cup
    - Ulster U18 (Mildred Holland) Plate
    - Ulster U18 Bowl
    - Ulster U16 (C.E Bowman) Cup

Ulster U16 Plate  
Ulster U16 Bowl  
Ulster U14 (R.B Fleming) Cup  
Ulster U14 Plate  
Ulster U14 Bowl

(ii) Girls

Ulster U18 Girls Cup  
Ulster U16 Girls Cup  
Ulster U14 Girls Cup

- (b) A club that does not enter the League, or withdraws from the League, shall not be eligible to compete in the Cup, provided however that the Youth Committee may, on application in writing to the Youth Secretary, agree in exceptional circumstances to waive this provision.

## **C – OTHER COMPETITIONS**

### **30. OTHER COMPETITIONS**

A club shall not organize any rugby competitions, other than the competitions referred to in A and B above, without the prior approval in writing of the Youth Committee.



## APPENDIX A

### Request/Nomination Form for a Schools Player to Play for a Club (Double Registration)

To be signed before the **30<sup>th</sup> November** and returned by the Club to the Youth Competitions Committee (**YCC**) on or before the first Wednesday in December of each year.

I \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_

IRFU. Registration No \_\_\_\_\_

do request that you as the Principal of \_\_\_\_\_ (School) **consider releasing the player** to play rugby for \_\_\_\_\_ (Club) in the Ulster Branch, Youth League and Cup Competitions. *Such a step would not preclude the player from continuing to play at School, as and when School fixtures are scheduled.*

I \_\_\_\_\_ Principal of the above school have read the **Explanatory Note and Framework Agreement** overleaf, and **confirmed with** the Master in Charge of Rugby that \_\_\_\_\_ (Player name) is unlikely to have the opportunity to play 16 – 20 school games over the course of the school year. Therefore, I am content to approve this request.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Youth Convenor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (**YCC**)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received at Branch office (see below). \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_



## **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

There are two quite separate “pathways” to the adult game. One is for players attending a school that participates in the Schools of Ireland Scheme (“Schools rugby”), and the other is for players not attending a school that participates in that Scheme (“Youth rugby”). As a general principle a player is not permitted to move from one pathway to the other and play Schools rugby and Youth rugby in the same season.

The above arrangement is designed to protect the interests of players in both pathways, including the interest of the club player who, for example, plays all season for his club and might otherwise be replaced in the later stages of the Youth Cup competition by a schools player becoming available because his school has been knocked out of their cup competition.

However under the terms of the Framework Agreement below, provision has been made for a School/Club partnership (“the partnership”) to ensure that all Age Grade players have the opportunity to play a minimum of 16 meaningful games of rugby in a season for either School, Club or a combination of both.

### **Framework Agreement between Schools and Clubs regarding Player Release**

For the purposes of this agreement the following definitions shall apply;

*Regular Rugby Team:* A ‘regular’ team is defined as a team scheduled to play 8 or more games prior to Christmas in the coming season, where 5 or more games are scheduled to be played on a Saturday.

*Occasional Rugby Team:* An ‘occasional’ team is a team defined as a team scheduled to play 7 or less games prior to Christmas in the coming season, or less than 5 games scheduled to be played on a Saturday.

The partnership will facilitate access to rugby for a player who does not play for a ‘regular rugby team’ at School. It is not the intention for this player to be ‘withdrawn’ from rugby in his School, and it would be expected that the student would continue to train and play in School where opportunity permits.

At the start of each season school players (with parental approval) can nominate their chosen club by completing the attached request/nomination form.

This form should be countersigned by the School Principal and ratified by the YCC. The YCC may deny the request if they feel that the release of the player may threaten the playing opportunity of those players who currently play at the nominated club.

Nomination forms should be completed no later than 30<sup>th</sup> of November and must be approved by the YCC in advance of the player appearing in a League/Cup fixture. Under exceptional circumstances, the YCC may accept a nomination form beyond this date, if a lack of playing opportunity can be demonstrated.

A player who does not complete a nomination form cannot play for a club

Players who wish to change their nominated club during any season, will be subject to the same process as any other player bound by the Youth Regulations.

Under this partnership, it would be expected that such a player would continue to engage in school rugby training and would make themselves available to turn out for an ‘occasional rugby team’ or where school games are under threat due to lack of numbers. Club & School should agree in advance, and monitor, the training and playing schedule of the player in question to ensure that all parties are aware of expectations. Central to this agreement is the welfare of the individual, to ensure they are not being over-loaded.

Schools have the right to recall the player at any time **eg to cover injury.**

Every attempt should be made to avoid a clash of fixtures, however, in such circumstances primacy should be given to the School, and the player would be expected to willingly participate.

A School should endeavour to give one week’s notice to the Club if the player is likely to be called upon to fulfil an additional fixture.

School players are only permitted to play for age appropriate Club teams as set out in these Regulations **e.g. year 8’s cannot play for under 14’s, Year 12’s must play under 16 rugby rather than U18.**

The Club should report any declared injuries to the School on the next school day following a match. Likewise, the School should inform the Club of any injuries prior to the Club's next scheduled training session.

**In the event of suspected concussion, there MUST be communication between Club and School at the earliest opportunity, to ensure the player is not exposed to further risk.**

The Club and School should hold regular reviews, to track the progress of the player and discuss any issues that have arisen.

Any disputes arising under this Agreement shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Age Grade Committee, with a right of appeal to the Branch Committee

At all times the welfare of the player is to be the paramount concern of the School and the Club

*This Agreement will be reviewed annually through the Branch Rugby Committee.*

## APPENDIX B



# IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

### Who should complete this form?

Age Grade players can play in two age categories. For example, the category a player is eligible for and one category up e.g. U15 playing at U16.

Any individual player identified to play 3 age categories e.g. U16 to U18 or U17 to U19, must provide the written consent of:

1. Parents/ Guardians
2. School Principal/Club Welfare Officer
3. Club Youth Coordinator/Games-master

Permission may be granted if there is not a negative impact on the club or school fielding a team at the players own age bracket. i.e. if an U16 plays up, the U16 teams' ability to field is not impacted.

First Name  Last Name

Address

Date of Birth  IRFU ID

Club/School

Home Phone (Parent/Guardian)

Mobile Phone (Parent/Guardian)

Email (Parent/Guardian)

Years Playing Experience (if applicable)

Please state club's/school's reason/s for seeking permission for above player to play in an older age category:

### Parent/Guardian Consent (please fill-in appropriate sections)

I  (parent/guardian) give consent for  (player)

to participate at the Older Age Category. I am aware of the IRFU Regulation Variations for age grade rugby. I am aware that my daughter/son may be playing with/against players 2+ years older. I note the scrum guidelines relating to front row players.

Signature: ..... Date:

Relationship to player:

## School Principal/ Club Welfare Officer Consent

(please fill-in appropriate sections)

I  (School Principal/ CWO) give consent for

(player) to participate at the Older Age Category. I am aware of the IRFU Regulation Variations for age grade rugby. I am aware that the mentioned player may be playing with/against players 2+ years older. I note the scrum guidelines relating to front row players.

Signature: ..... Date:

## Club Youth Coordinator/Games-master Consent

(please fill-in appropriate sections)

I  (Club Youth Co-ordinator/Games-master) give consent  
for  (player) to participate at the Older Age Category.

I am aware of the IRFU Regulation Variations for age grade rugby. I attest that the player is competent to play at that level. I note the scrum guidelines relating to front row players.

Signature: ..... Date:

### Scrum Guidelines

- Age-Grade players in the third-year age bracket (those who this form has been completed for) are not permitted to play in the front row of the scrum, i.e. any U16 player is not allowed to play in the front row with the U18 team. Exception to this may be considered if requested by the Branch Rugby Department as part of the player development pathway. I.e. he/she are playing on the Provincial team.

### Other

- The player is aware of regulations and variations for the game at that age.

**ONLY THOSE FORMS SENT TO THE BRANCH HONORARY SCHOOLS/ YOUTHS SECRETARY BY THE CLUB HONORARY SECRETARY OR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**PLAYERS ARE NOT CLEARED TO PLAY UNTIL THE HONORARY YOUTHS/SCHOOLS SECRETARY HAS CONSENTED IN WRITING TO THE REQUEST.**

### Data Protection Statement:

I understand that it is necessary for the Club to collect and record the player's personal data on this form ("Personal Data") for the contractual purpose of registering, updating and maintaining the player's membership with the Club. I understand that the player's Personal Data may be shared with Provincial Branches and the IRFU from time to time and that the Club, the Branch and the IRFU are all Data Controllers. I understand that the Player's Personal Data will be retained by the club for the duration of his/her membership and in line with the Club Retention Policy. I further understand that the player has a number of rights around the processing of his/her Personal Data, including the right to request in writing a copy of their Personal Data which the Club holds, amend any information which is incorrect and to apply to have their Personal Data erased. I can also confirm that I have been given the opportunity to consult further relevant information concerning the player's data protection rights at [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie). I am aware of all the player's Data Protection rights and have given my consent for the player's personal data to be processed by signing this form.

## PART 2

### INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

#### 1. Introduction

*This Part provides information and guidance for the benefit of clubs in relation to Youth Rugby. It is an addendum to, and not part of, the Regulations in Part 1 and, in the case of any inconsistency between the provisions of Part 2 and the Regulations, the Regulations shall prevail.*

#### 2. Safeguarding Policy

*The Irish Rugby Football Union Safeguarding Policy (“the Safeguarding Policy”) sets out the ethos of the game insofar as Youth Rugby is concerned. Clubs are reminded that they must sign up to the Safeguarding Policy and ensure that all persons involved with Youth Rugby are familiar with it.*

#### 3. Player Eligibility

*It is the responsibility of a club to ensure that a player is eligible to play in **compliance with the Regulations in every respect.***

#### Duties and Responsibilities of the Youth Section of a Rugby Club

#### 4. Pre-Match

- (a) Clubs should liaise with their opponents at least two days before match date to ensure that games are still on and teams are travelling.*
- (b) Where possible Youth Conveners should communicate any likely reduced numbers scenario to the opposition prior to the day of the game.*
- (c) Clubs should ensure that the ground is available, fit for play, and correctly marked and flagged for kick-off. The kick-off time is determined when the fixture arrangement is approved by the YCC at its May meeting and will take account of the distance travelled by the visiting team and the number of pitches available.*
- (d) Any change of venue should be confirmed with the Youth Co-ordinators, the opposition, and the referee at the earliest possible time. The time of kick-off cannot be altered without the prior agreement of the Youth Co-ordinators.*
- (e) Once a referee has been appointed to a game he can only be re-assigned, or replaced, in accordance with official procedures.*
- (f) Teams should arrive in good time, be properly equipped for the game in accordance with the provisions of Law 4 of the Laws of the Game and should have a touch-*

*judge. Two touch-judges must be appointed before the start of the match. Unless these have been appointed by the USRFR it is the responsibility of each team to provide a touch-judge.*

- (g) The opposition and referee should be met by an official of the home team and shown to the changing accommodation.*
- (h) Registration cards for all age groups are required to be available for checking prior to the start of the game. Any further queries by either coach will then be resolved at the end of the game.*
- (i) Photocopied registration cards can be exchanged, but originals are required for production as per the Regulations.*
- (j) Clubs should exchange teamsheets before the game and check registration cards, and each club should provide the referee with a teamsheet.*

## **5. During the Match**

- (a) Players and coaches must behave within the spirit of the game and must accept all decisions of the referee without dissent of any kind.*
- (b) Clubs should ensure that their coaches, parents and spectators respect the match officials, and the players of both sides, in accordance with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy.*
- (c) Coaches are reminded that they are not permitted to enter the playing area unless authorised by the referee in accordance with the provisions of Law 6 of the Laws of the Game.*

## **6. After the Match**

- (a) Club selectors are asked to take account of vicious or unfair play, whether detected by the referee or not, in selecting future teams.*
- (b) Clubs should encourage players and members to mix with the opposition after the match, and the home coach should ensure that the referee is thanked and is being looked after.*

## **7. Results of Matches**

*The home club is responsible for notifying the **Branch** of the results of matches **by email to [youthresults@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:youthresults@ulsterrugby.com) as per Regulation 10(a)**. This important assignment should be delegated to one particular member of the club on a permanent basis.*

## **8. Eligibility Checks**

*Whilst under the provisions of Regulation 3(d), the YCC may check the eligibility of players at any time, such checks will be made as a matter of course for the quarter-final, and subsequent, rounds of the Cup.*

## **9. Disciplinary Committee**

*The Disciplinary Committee set up, in accordance with the provisions of the IRFU Regulations, to hear disciplinary cases relating to sendings-off in Youth Rugby will normally consist of the Chairman of the Branch Disciplinary Committee and two members of the YCC.*

## **General Information**

## **10. Cup Draw**

- (a) (i) *Clubs participating in the boys Cup, shall be seeded into Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield. The seeding of a club will be established by their overall rating, as determined by averaging the rating of their teams at each grade level. The club drawn out first in each pairing shall have home advantage.*
- (a) (ii) *There is a separate draw for each of the three competitions in the girls Cup. The club drawn out first in each pairing shall have home advantage.*
- (b) *The order in which the pairings are drawn will determine the pairings for the subsequent rounds of the competition, but the venue of a fixture may be re-visited by the Youth Co-ordinators to ensure fairness in relation to travel. The Youth Co-ordinators will look at the home/away ratio in the preceding rounds, and if a fixture would produce a third away game for a team with the opposition having their third home game, the venue will be reversed. The venues for the subsequent fixture will remain as determined by the draw.*
- (c) *The intention is that the cup finals shall be played at the Kingspan Stadium, with the plate, bowl and shield finals at such venues as may be nominated by the Youth Co-ordinators.*
- (d) *Where a cup final is a draw, and the trophy shared, the team designated as the “away” team shall be presented with its medals first, and the team designated as the “home” team shall have possession of the trophy for the first 5 months before handing it over to the opposition for the next 5 months.*

## **11. “40 Point Margin” Rule**

- (a) *Under the provisions of Regulation 8(b) where there is a margin of 40 or more points between teams in a League or Cup fixture the referee shall end the match early.*
- (b) *Regulation 8(b) acknowledges that a “one-sided” game affords neither side the opportunity to develop their rugby skills and may give rise to safety concerns particularly where one team is playing with reduced numbers. It can also be a demotivating experience which may well discourage young players from remaining in the game.*
- (c) *Where, in such circumstances, a match is ended early, coaches and players are encouraged to play out the remaining time as a friendly in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 8(b) so that players may have the opportunity to develop their skills and enjoy their rugby.*

- (d) An exception to the “40 Point Margin” Rule is provided under Regulation 8(c) where, in the case of a League, or Cup, final, the match can continue provided the referee, after consultation with the Youth Co-ordinator, is satisfied that, notwithstanding the 40-point margin, the match is still competitive.

**12. Release of School Player to Club**

*Clubs are reminded that they should only approach a school, participating in the Schools of Ireland Scheme, for the release of a player under the provisions of Regulation 11(c) where such player is not receiving regular rugby at school. The provisions are intended to facilitate players who would otherwise largely be deprived of rugby at school, not to enable those playing regularly for their school to move between school and club when the school does not have a game.*

**13. Substances and Substance Abuse**

*Clubs are subject to the provisions relating to substances and substance abuse contained in the Safeguarding Policy, and the provisions of Regulation 8 of the IRFU Regulations in relation to anti-doping.*

**14. Matches against Teams from Other Unions**

*Clubs are subject to the provisions relating to matches against teams from other Unions contained in the Safeguarding Policy, and the provisions of Regulation 2 of the IRFU Regulations.*

**15. “Scratch” Teams**

*Clubs are subject to the provisions relating to “scratch” teams contained in Regulation 3 of the IRFU Regulations.*

**16. Movement of Individuals between Unions**

*It is not envisaged that this should be an issue with Youth Rugby but, if it should arise, the player involved is subject to the provisions contained in Regulation 4 of the IRFU Regulations.*

**17. Laws of the Game – Variations**

*The Laws of the Game, together with any variations to the Laws promulgated by the Irish Rugby Football Union, or by the Branch, apply to all age-grade rugby. There are a number of promulgated variations to the Laws specifically for age-grade rugby. These are mainly aimed at the safety of the players, and it is particularly important, therefore, that these variations are applied and enforced. The Youth Committee will provide*



*further information and clarification if requested to do so. Attention is drawn in particular to the “Standard set of variations appropriate to the Under 19 Game”, appended to the Laws of the Game. From time to time there can also be interpretations of the Laws promulgated by the Irish Rugby Football Union, and the Youth Committee will make every effort to disseminate these promulgations to clubs as they appear.*

*Whilst reference should always be made to the text of the actual provisions, the following is a brief synopsis of the variations appropriate to age-grade rugby:*

*Line-out - There is no lifting or supporting at Under 14 (Boys) level or U15 (Girls) level.*

*Conversions - At U14 (Boys) level and U15 (Girls) level, conversion kicks may be brought in to the 15M Line.*

*Scrum - At all times each team must have the same number of players in the scrum.*

- *Maximum in scrum – 8, Minimum – 5.*
- *Formation in full 8-man scrum – 3/4/1.*
- *Formation in 7-man scrum – 3/4 (no number 8).*
- *Formation in 6-man scrum – 3/2/1 (no flankers).*
- *Formation in 5-man scrum – 3/2 (front row and locks only).*
- *If a suitably trained front row player is not available, then the referee must order uncontested scrums.*
- *Scrum engagement – Crouch / Bind / Set.*
- *No intentional wheel allowed.*
- *No wheel of more than 45 degrees where wheel is unintentional.*
- *Maximum push is 1.5 metres.*
- *The ball must not be held at the base of the scrum.*
- *The number 8 can pick up the ball at all age levels.*

## 18. Provisions for Games at Various Age Levels

*The table below is an abstract of the differing provisions relevant to games at various age levels of Youth Rugby. It is intended simply for ease of reference and does not replace the actual provisions themselves. Reference should always be made to the full text of the actual provisions.*

PROVISIONS	UNDER 14 (Boys)	UNDER 14 (Girls)	UNDER 16 (Boys)	UNDER 16 (Girls)	UNDER 18 (Girls)	UNDER 18 (Boys)
+Ball size	4	4	5	5	4	5
Max. time per half	25 min	25 min	30 min	30 min	35 min	35 min
Max. time allowed to play per day/event	90 min	90 min	90 min	90 min	90 min	90 min
Min. time allowed for half-time	5 min	5 min	5 min	5 min	5 min	5 min
Pitch Size	Full Pitch	Full Pitch out to 5M lines	Full Pitch	Full Pitch	Full Pitch	Full Pitch
Yellow cards	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
Red cards	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
Time per yellow card	5 min	5 min	5 min	5 min	7 min	7 min
Injury time	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Extra time	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed
Lifting in line-outs	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participating in line-outs	No variation to Laws	All forwards must be involved in lineout	No variation to Laws	All forwards must be involved in lineout	No variation to Laws	No variation to Laws
Pushing in scrums	1.5m only	1.5m only	1.5m only	1.5m only	1.5m only	1.5m only
Squeeze ball	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed

## 19. Meetings of the Youth Committee

- (a) *The Youth Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May.*
- (b) *The YCC meets on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May, prior to the Youth Committee meeting.*