



IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION
(ULSTER BRANCH)

REGULATIONS FOR YOUTH RUGBY
2017 – 2018

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;
 - “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) the venue of matches.
- (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 15 level (Girls) – two 30-minute halves (plus time lost);
 - Under 16 level (Boys) – 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 at U14 (Boys), U15 (Girls), U16 (Boys), U18 (Boys), and U18 (Girls) levels.
- (e) A player who receives a yellow card:
 - (i) at U14 (Boys), U15 (Girls) and U16 (Boys) levels, shall be temporarily suspended for 5 minutes; and
 - (ii) at U18 (Boys) and U18 (Girls) levels, 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) League fixtures will normally be played on a home and away basis.
- (c) The team accumulating the most points in the League season shall be the Section League winners at that particular age level.
- (d) 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;
- (e) In the event of two teams still being tied, a play-off, at a neutral venue, will decide the winner.
- (f) 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.
- (g) 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 meter 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.
- (h) 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.
- (i) 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) Immediately following the end of a match the home club shall notify the Youth Secretary of the result by text, on-line or by phone.
- (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 31 October 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 boy 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) he is not playing, or is not likely to play for the school on a regular basis;
 - (ii) by 1 December in that year, the club obtains the prior permission (or agreement) of the school in the form of the Appendix hereto (“the request form”);
 - (iii) the player is registered with the club pursuant to (a) and (b) above; and
 - (iv) the club submits the original request form to the YCC, and the YCC approves the player playing rugby for the club.
- (d) For the avoidance of doubt, a request 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 teams, at U14, U16 and U18 age levels and, in the case of girls teams, at U15 & 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 1999 and 30 June 2001 inclusive will be eligible to play at U18 level;
 - (ii) A boy player born between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2003 inclusive will be eligible to play at U16 level;
 - (iii) A girl player born between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2002 inclusive will be eligible to play at U16 level;
 - (iv) A girl player born between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2005 inclusive will be eligible to play at U15 level;
 - (v) A boy player born between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2005 inclusive will be eligible to play at U14 level.
- (c) A boy 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:
 - (i) a boy player is deemed capable of playing Youth Rugby at a level above which he is eligible to play, as set out under the provisions of (b) and (c) above; or
 - (ii) a girl player eligible to play at U16 level, as set out under the provisions of (b) above, is deemed capable of playing Youth Rugby at U18 level; such player’s club may, with the written consent of the player’s parents and coach, apply to the YCC 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) Subject to (b) below, where a club is represented by two teams at the same age level a player, who has played in aggregate three or more League games for one of those teams, shall become disqualified from playing in the League for the other.
- (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 girls teams only**;
 - (ii) **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;
 - (iii) **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 constitute a team, and both teams shall take the field with the same number of players; and
- (bb) the scrums are equally matched at all times.
- (iv) Where a 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. In such circumstances the team with the larger complement of players shall receive 3 points and the other team shall receive 1 point. Where the fixture is played pursuant to this provision the team with the smaller complement 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.
- (v) For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of (ii) and (iv) above shall not apply to **Boys** teams playing in a League play-off or in the Cup competition.
- (c) Where, during the course of a League game, uncontested scrums are ordered because no suitably trained front row cover is available, the game will continue for League points 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) A player may play for only one team in the Cup competition.
- (b) Save as provided in (c) below, in any season a player must have played 3 or more League games for a club to be eligible to play in the Cup competition that season.
- (c) A club may apply to the YCC on behalf of a player who has not played 3 or more League games for the club, and:
 - (i) has not completed his registration with the club until after 31 October 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. **PROTESTS OR APPEALS**

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), U15 (Girls), U16 (Boys), 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 (Tier 1) and East (Tier 2). The girls League shall be composed of the U15 (Girls) Section and U18 (Girls) Section.
- (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 North v Runner-up of East (Tier 1)
 2. Winner of South v Runner-up of East (Tier 2)
 3. Winner of East (Tier 1) v Runner-up of North
 4. Winner of East (Tier 2) 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 U15 Girls Cup
Ulster U15 Girls Plate

- (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



Request for a Schools Player to Play for a Club

To be signed before the 1st December and returned to IRFU (Ulster Branch) 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) release him to play rugby for _____ (Club) in the Ulster Branch Youth League and Cup Competitions.

I _____ Principal of the above school have read the Explanatory Note overleaf, and the checklist completed by the Master in Charge of Rugby. I confirm that _____ does not received regular rugby at school, and I approve the above request.

Signature: _____ (Parent/Guardian)
Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Principal)
Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Youth Convenor)
Date: _____

Date received at Branch office: _____ 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.

It is, however, recognised that there may be some players attending a school that participates in the Schools of Ireland Scheme who are not playing, or are not likely to play, for their school on a regular basis. In such circumstances, and as an exception to the general principle, a school may consent to their release to play rugby for their club (instead of the school) in the terms of this Request Form. The completed Form should be returned by the club to the Youth Competitions Committee (“the YCC”), for the approval of the YCC to the player playing rugby for the club.

It should be clearly understood that this procedure is 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. It should also be understood that the Request Form is valid for one season only, and if, the following season, the school is again satisfied a player is not playing, or likely to play, regularly for the school, a fresh Request Form should be completed.

To assist in determining what constitutes “regular” rugby the Master in Charge of Rugby is asked to consider, and complete, the checklist below. A player is deemed to be receiving regular rugby, and therefore ineligible to play for a club, if the answer to all the questions is “Yes”. If there are any queries about this procedure in respect of a particular player please contact the Youth Committee Chairman (Paul Hart (M) 07764 277870), or the Youth Secretary (Towy Neale (M) 07948 831419), to discuss.

CHECKLIST

Does your school provide rugby as a regular school activity for pupils? Yes/No

Does your school have organised teams for the age group of the player in question? Yes/No

Does your school have matches arranged with other schools for this age group? Yes/No

Does the player in question form part of the playing squad which fulfils these matches? Yes/No

When these matches are played, is the player likely to be selected? Yes/No

Signature: _____ (Master i/c Rugby)

Date: _____

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.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Youth Section of a Rugby Club

3. 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.*

4. **During the Match**

- (a) Players are expected to play 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.*

5. **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.*

6. **Results of Matches**

The home club is responsible for notifying the Branch of the results of matches. This important assignment should be delegated to one particular member of the club on a permanent basis.

7. **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.

8. **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

9. **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.*
- (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.*

10. **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.

11. **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.

12. **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.

13. **“Scratch” Teams**

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

14. **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.

15. **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.

- If a suitably trained front row player is not available, then the referee must order uncontested scrums.*
- 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).
- 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.

16. 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 15 (Girls)	UNDER 16 (Boys)	UNDER 18 (Girls)	UNDER 18 (Boys)
+Ball size	4	4	5	4	5
Max. time per half	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
Min. time allowed for half-time	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
Yellow cards	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
Red cards	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
Time per yellow card	5 min	5 min	5 min	7 min	7 min
Injury time	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Extra time	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed
Lifting in line-outs	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participating in line-outs	No variation to Laws	All forwards must be involved in lineout	No variation to Laws	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
Squeeze ball	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed

17. 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.*