

Rules of the Challenge Cup Competitions

1. The Competitions

The following Competitions are under the jurisdiction of Northumberland Rugby Football Union:

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Challenge Cup hereinafter called the Senior Cup.

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Challenge Plate hereinafter called the Plate.

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Number 2 Challenge Cup hereinafter called No.2.

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Junior Challenge Cup hereinafter called No.3.

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Junior Challenge Shield hereinafter called No.4.

The Northumberland County Rugby Football Number 5 Junior Challenge Bowl hereinafter called No.5.

- 1.1 The above competitions are open to all member Clubs with teams in Northumberland. The Northumberland Competitions Committee will, after due consideration of each team's performance in the various leagues, cup competitions, and friendly games of the previous season, will initially place a team in a Challenge Cup Competition of an appropriate standard.

2. Management of the Competitions

- 2.1 All games shall be played in accordance with the "Laws of the game of Rugby Football" and the Rules and Regulations of the Rugby Football Union.

- 2.2 The Competitions will be managed by the Northumberland Competitions Committee, hereinafter called the Committee, which shall have control over the cup competitions and shall conduct the business connected therewith. This shall include the power to disqualify or otherwise take such actions as it considers appropriate against any Club or player found to be in breach of these Rules.

- 2.3 The Committee shall have the power to alter or add to the Rules of the Competitions subject to ratification by the Governance Committee.

- 2.4 All questions of qualification of competitors and interpretation of Rules shall be referred to the Competitions Committee through the County Administrator. See Rule 10.1.

- 2.5 Any matters needing to be addressed urgently may be dealt with by the Chairman of the Competitions Committee and if the matter is likely to be contentious, with two other members. If the Chairman has a potential conflict of interest, the matter shall be dealt with by an appointed deputy who is not conflicted.

- 2.6 Any complaint or protest about the failure of any Club to observe the Rules of the competitions, or the spirit of the game in the interpretation of these Rules, must be submitted in writing to the Committee within seven days of the alleged breach. This requirement does not preclude the right of the Committee to investigate and take action upon any alleged breach or misinterpretation of the Rules which comes to its attention.

- 2.7 Clubs wishing to enter any Competition must complete the relevant entry form and return it to the County office before the date specified on the form. The draws for all rounds will be made by the Competitions Committee.

- 2.8 The first drawn Club in the case of Club First teams shall have the option of playing on its own or its opponents' ground unless some other ground be mutually agreed upon.

The final ties shall be played on a ground determined by the Committee and shall be played for the benefit of the Northumberland Rugby Union.

The gate receipts for the Senior Cup to be divided equally between the two Clubs after deducting the expenses of the referee, the touch judges, the fourth official and the reasonable ground and advertising expenses of the match.

3. Qualification of Players to Play in Challenge Cup Competitions

- 3.1 All competing teams shall consist of players (and replacement players) who are bona fide playing members

of the Club represented by such teams.

- 3.2 For this purpose a bona fide playing member of a Club is one who has been duly elected in accordance with Club rules and has paid their subscription for the current season and has been a member of the club for at least 30 days preceding the tie.
- 3.3 No player shall play for more than one Northumberland Club in any of the Northumberland Challenge Competitions in any one season unless they have played more games for the new club at the date of the cup tie.
- 3.4 If during the course of the current season a player has joined the Club from outside Northumberland and he wishes to represent in the Competitions from another club, he must have had prior permission from the Secretary of his previous Club, and he must have paid his subscription to his previous Club. These formalities must have been completed and he must have been a bona fide playing member of his new Club for at least 30 days preceding the tie in any team in any of the Challenge Competitions.
- 3.5 No player shall play for more than one of his Club's teams in the Northumberland Challenge Competitions in any one season except as provided for in Rule 3.6 below.
- 3.6 In selecting cup sides, clubs are encouraged to do so in the spirit of the game. Whether or not cup tied, senior players should not be included in lower teams. Once a player has represented his Club in one of the competitions, he may not subsequently play for a team in a lower competition in the same season unless he is:
- 3.6.1 A regular member of the lower team
- Or
- 3.6.2 Was specifically called upon to fill a temporary vacancy in the higher team caused by the illness, injury or other unavoidable absence of a qualified higher team player.
Appearance for Club 1st XV's in August would be considered acceptable.
- and
- 3.6.3 The player has been approved by the opposing Club and that is confirmed to the County Administrator in writing (e-mail) at least 24 hours before the match takes place. If no such agreement can be achieved referral is possible to the Competitions Committee.

If clearance has been obtained for a player, it must be sought for each round of the Competition.

It should be noted that players who are named on the match day card, but who do not play, are not cup tied. Players must be identified on the match card as non playing when submitted to the County Office

- 3.7 A player shall not, if he has played in three Senior County Championship matches in total the previous three seasons, be eligible to play in any Challenge Competition other than that entered by his Club's first team or second team unless the Committee otherwise agrees. Application for approval must be submitted to the Competitions Committee not less than seven days before the date of the cup-tie for which the availability of the player is required.

For any other competition, there would need to be a two year period of time lapse.

- 3.8 If the Committee finds a club in breach of any part of these rules, that Club shall be disqualified from the competitions in which the breach has occurred and / or any other appropriate punishment that is deemed appropriate by the Committee.

4. Team Composition and Replacements

- 4.1 In all rounds of the competitions three replacements or substitutes are permitted. By mutual agreement between the teams prior to the commencement of the game, the number of replacements or substitutes may be increased to a maximum of six whence the number agreed shall be notified to the referee and the fourth official.

Rolling substitutes should be allowed in the County Cup Competitions (Senior Cup and Plate, Cups 2-5). For all Cups, 10 player interchanges will be allowed regardless of the number of agreed replacements. The

Team Managers or 4th officials, if available, must take responsibility and agree that the maximum number of changes have not been exceeded.

- 4.2 Each team must have at least four players in their nominated match squad, all at least eighteen years of age (unless they are a player falling within [RFU Regulation 15.7.1](#)) who are suitably trained and experienced to be capable of playing in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion (whether due to injury or consequent to a player(s) being temporarily suspended or ordered off) that a front row player is required to be replaced, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.

Should the situation arise, for whatever reason, that when required to do so, a team is incapable of providing a first replacement or other player as detailed above capable of playing in the front row of the scrum, then, the Referee having confirmed this fact with the Captain of the team, shall order the match to be completed with uncontested scrums. One member of the offending team must then leave the field.

4.3. **Cups 4 and 5**

To encourage matches to be played, teams competing in the No.4 or No.5 Cups can play with less than 15. Matches should be played with even numbers (15 v 15, 14 v 14, down to 12 v 12 in the No5 Cup) but if this is not possible, there can only be one extra player on the opposition side (15 v 14, 14 v 13, 13 v 12).

The match should start with contested scrums.

If no suitable replacement is available to play in the front row then games can go to uncontested scrums, with one member of the offending team leaving the field, and the final result will stand.

If one side cannot provide a full front row and the game has to start with uncontested scrums, the offending side will suffer a 14 point deficit.

If both teams are unable to start with contested scrums, the match can be played with wholly uncontested scrums and result will stand.

At the point of uncontested scrums with the lack of lifting front row, uncontested lineouts can commence with both teams agreement.

- 4.4 If two teams from the same club are scheduled to play on the same day and one game has to be called off, the more senior fixture **must** be honoured.

- 4.5 In all rounds of the Competitions, each team must fill in a match card listing the players and replacements names. The match cards will be given to the referee prior to the commencement of the game and then held by the fourth official during the game. After the game, the cards must be signed by the referee and the home club must send them to the County office within three days of the match. Only official County designated cards must be used. Match cards will be checked when received. If match cards are not received within 72 hours, action will be taken and this may mean expulsion from the competition.

It should be noted that players who are named on the match day card, but who do not play on the day, are not cup tied. These players must be identified on the match card when submitted to the County Office. Failure to identify these players would mean would be considered cup tied.

5. Match Officials

- 5.1 The Referees Society shall in each tie appoint a Referee, and when desirable and possible, Assistant Referees. In all cases where the Society does not appoint Assistant Referees, competent Touch Judges shall be appointed by the competing Clubs. Appointed Referees must not be members of either Club.

- 5.2 The home club must appoint a fourth official for each match save for the finals when the fourth official will be appointed by the Referees Society.

- 5.3 The kick off for Cup Ties played in November, December, January and February will be no later than 2pm.

- 5.4 If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon a match for any reason other than weather conditions, if before 60 minutes, the match will be re-played, and if after, the result stands. The referee shall provide the Committee with a note of the circumstances for his decision.

6. The Ground – Suitability and Fitness

- 6.1 Every Club on whose ground a tie is to be played must provide a clear playing space of not less than 85 metres from goal to goal and 55 metres from touch line to touch line, but in the Plate and Competitions Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5, the size may be only 85 metres by 50 metres. Grounds must be provided with a suitable margin round the touch line.
- 6.2 Any objection under this rule must be lodged with the Competitions Committee prior to the date of the match.
- 6.3 The club shall provide a marked technical area for the game and provide a barrier to ensure that all persons other than permitted personnel are kept at a reasonable distance from the playing area. Clubs not able to comply would not be able to host a final.
- 6.4 Permitted Personnel include coaching staff, who must confine themselves to the technical areas other than when a player is about to replace a player on the pitch or for the periods of half-time, and no more than four water carriers per team (including medical staff and replacement players) who are permitted within the pitch side or perimeter fencing or other barrier but must remain within the 'technical areas' when not specifically carrying out their duties. Water carriers may only be permitted onto the playing area for the purposes of taking water to the players at such times as shall be approved by the Referee. Any player temporarily suspended when playing must remain in the 'technical area' or leave the playing enclosure and be clearly and readily identifiable to the Fourth Official. Clubs are asked to ensure that technical areas are clearly marked out.
- 6.5 The various rounds of the Competitions are to be played on the dates stipulated unless mutually agreed by both clubs and a result is possible before the date of the next round. In the event of the grounds of the home Club being unfit for play the tie shall be played on the ground of the away team on the stipulated date unless another acceptable ground or date can be identified in advance.

In the event of a change of venue as stated above, the first drawn team shall still be deemed the home side.

- 6.6 In the event of the ground being rendered unfit by weather, the home side shall notify the visiting side at the earliest reasonable time and arrangements made to play the game at an alternative venue or time. Should the teams arrive at the ground and the two captains fail to agree the fitness of the ground, the referee shall decide the fitness or otherwise.
- 6.7 If the grounds of both Clubs are unfit, the tie shall be played at a mutually agreed date at least seven days before the scheduled date of the next round on the ground of the home Club or if unfit on the ground of the away Club. If the grounds of both Clubs are still unfit, the tie shall be played on an alternative ground or on an alternative date set by the Committee.

7. Postponed and Abandoned Matches

- 7.1 If weather conditions prevent a match being played or a match is abandoned because of such conditions with less than sixty minutes having been played, it shall be played before the date of the next round on a day to be agreed between the two clubs.
- 7.2 If a match is abandoned because of weather conditions when sixty or more minutes have been played, then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed the final score in the match. The Referees decisions as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played at the moment of abandonment shall be final.
- 7.3 If a match is abandoned for any other reason, the matter shall be determined by the Committee who may order the match to be replayed or allow the result to stand and impose such other sanctions as it deems appropriate.

8 Period of Play and Result

- 8.1 If, after 40 minutes of play each way the result is a draw, extra time of 10 minutes each way will be played. If the result is still a draw at the conclusion of extra time, the team that has scored most tries will go forward into the next round. If that does not produce a result, the team that has scored most conversions from tries shall go forward into the next round. If a result is still not forthcoming, the visiting team shall go forward into the next round, except in the case of a final tie when:
- 8.2 In all Competitions, the match shall be adjudged a draw, and the trophy shall be shared.

9 **The Trophies**

- 9.1 The President and the Hon. Secretary for the time being of the Northumberland Rugby Union shall be for all intent and purposes, the legal owners of all trophies in trust for the Union, and shall only hand them over to the winning Club on receiving from them security for safe return when required at any time after nine months.
- 9.2 Clubs holding the trophies shall be responsible for the cost of repair for any damage incurred whilst in their possession. Any such repairs that are required will be commissioned by the Committee.
- 9.3 Clubs holding trophies must return them one month in advance of the following Season Final in order for them to be engraved.

10. **The Committee**

- 10.1 For the purposes of these Rules, the address of the Competitions Committee shall be the County Office.
- 10.2 All grievances and appeals must be addressed to the Chairman of the Competitions Committee in writing. More general queries regarding fixtures should be addressed to the County Administrator.
- 10.3 The Committee will make the arrangements for playing the finals.

11. **Complaints, disputes and reviews**

- 11.1 Complaints, disputes and requests for review should, in the first instance, be made by clubs to the Competitions Committee via the County Office to the Chairman. Such complaints, disputes and review matters shall initially to be heard by a sub-committee of three with a Chairman appointed from the Competitions Committee. On rare occasions, the Chairman may be able to make a decision subject to ratification at the next meeting and thereafter recorded.
- 11.2 The Competitions Committee can, of its own volition, set up a review when information has come to hand which could indicate that there may have been a breach of the rules of a particular competition.
- 11.3 All grievances concerning the playing or non-playing of fixtures and the playing of ineligible players must be notified to the administrator within 48 hours of the game taking place. A formal request for an investigation into allegations must be submitted within 7 days.
- 11.4 In dealing with any of the matters in this regard, no Committee member who is a member of the clubs involved may participate in the investigative process.
- 11.5 Once investigations have been undertaken, the County Administrator will present the facts to the Competitions Committee or a sub group thereof who will consider the matter, and clubs concerned will be informed of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

12. **Right of Appeal**

- 12.1 If a club does not agree with the decision or wishes to present mitigating circumstances, the Northumberland Rugby Union Hon Secretary will form an appeals panel. The club must appeal and set out the grounds for the appeal, within 48 hours of the decision being announced. This may be in writing (or electronically) or if the appellant club so wishes, it shall hear the matter orally in accordance with the established procedures as set out in Appendix A. The results of any appeal will be produced in writing setting out the reasons for the decision.
- 12.2 A club/player always has the further right of appeal to the RFU.

Appendix A

Procedure for hearing oral Cup Competition appeals, complaints and reviews

1. The Panel

The panel shall normally consist of three members including a Chairman. Wherever possible, it shall include persons who have in depth knowledge of competitions rules and regulations and have an understanding of good legal practice. No person who has previously been involved in the matter and no person with a vested interest in the outcome shall be a member of the panel. They may however participate as an advocate or as a witness.

A secretary should be appointed to set out the facts and record any findings.

The proceedings will be carried out in line with the principles and procedures set out in the Rules of the Rugby Football Union (Disciplinary Procedures). Observers may be present subject to the approval of the panel.

2. Introduction.

The Chairman shall introduce the panel and appellant club representatives and explain procedure. At this juncture, the chairman must ask if the appellant has any objection to any member of the panel.

3. Process

The secretary will set out a statement of the events and facts leading to appeal, including, as appropriate, the original alleged breach(s) of regulations citing the specific regulation(s) together with any other relevant facts and detail.

Any documentary evidence relating to the matter shall then be presented.

One club official or appointed advocate shall set out the grounds for appeal. He may be accompanied by one other member of his club. On completion of his/her submission, he/she may be questioned by any member of the panel. Witnesses of fact may then give evidence on the club behalf in support of the appeal. Each witness may be cross examined on the evidence by the parties and any member of the panel.

The club official or appointed advocate shall be invited to sum up.

4. Deliberation and Findings

Panel deliberates on the issues in the absence of the club official or appointed advocate, and any observers.

The findings and judgments of the panel to be delivered. This may be reserved to take advice from the RFU or given orally at the time but must be set out in writing thereafter.

Procedure for hearing written Cup competition appeals, complaints and reviews

The Panel shall be constituted as set out above and the written evidence and submissions considered.

The Panel having deliberated on the issues shall deliver their findings as in 4 above.

Rules of the Colts County Cup and Plate Competitions

1. Management of the Competitions

- 1.1 All games shall be played in accordance with the "Laws of the game of Rugby Football" and the Rules and Regulations of the Rugby Football Union.
- 1.2 The Competitions will be managed by the Chair of Colts as a member of the Northumberland Competitions Committee, hereinafter called the Committee, which shall have control over the Cup Competitions and shall conduct the business connected therewith. This shall include the power to disqualify or otherwise take such actions as it considers appropriate against any Club or player found to be in breach of these Rules.
- 1.3 The Committee shall have the power to alter or add to the Rules of the Competitions subject to ratification by the Governance Committee.
- 1.4 All questions of qualification of competitors and interpretation of Rules shall be referred to the Competitions Committee through the County Administrator. See Rule 10.1 – reference Rules of the Challenge Cup Competitions.
- 1.5 Any matters needed to be addressed urgently may be dealt with by a sub committee of the Competitions Committee consisting of at least three members.
- 1.6 Any complaint or protest about the failure of any Club to observe the Rules of the competitions, or the spirit of the game in the interpretation of these Rules, must be submitted in writing to the Committee via the Chair of Colts Committee within seven days of the alleged breach. This requirement does not preclude the right of the Committee to investigate and take action upon any alleged breach or misinterpretation of the Rules which comes to its attention.

2. Description

The Colts County Cup is a knock out competition. There will be a 1st Round, Quarter Final, Semi Final and Final.

Teams that get knocked out of the 1st Round and Quarter Final of the Cup will automatically go into the Plate. The draw for the Plate will be carried out at the County Office the day after the Cup Quarter Finals.

3. The Draw

The 1st Round must have been played by the date specified when the draws are made.

The Cup Quarter Final must have been played by the date specified.

The Plate Quarter Final must have been played by the date specified.

The Cup and Plate Semi Finals must have been played by the date specified.

The Cup and Plate Final will be played on a specified date (normally a date in April) subject to pitch availability at the selected venue.

Every effort must be made to fulfill each Cup / Plate fixture as early as possible before, and certainly by, the specified date to avoid late weather cancellations.

To facilitate this there is flexibility in the Cup / Plate dates in that if either team can play prior to the dates above, be it midweek or otherwise with the agreement of the opposing team, they can go ahead with this course of action but in any event, each round MUST be played by the above dates.

Home Club can stipulate that the match be played on the day that they would usually play on ie, a Saturday League team can arrange the fixture for the Saturday rather than the Sunday, but they must give the away team at least a months' notice if they intend to do this and in any event the home team must contact the away team a minimum of two weeks before the agreed date of the game.

Any issues should be directed in the first instance to the Chair of Colts

4. Match Officials

The County Administrator and the Referees Society will be notified of the competition dates in advance to enable them to allocate referees. It is up to the home club to contact and confirm their allocated referee prior to the day of the fixture. A referee from either of the clubs playing must not be used for Cup / Plate matches.

5. Players

All players must be either under 17 or under 18 to qualify to play in the Under 18 County Cup or Plate and

be registered with their club at least 20 days prior to the tie.

No player shall play for more than one club / team in the County Cup / Plate.

If during the course of the current season a player has joined the club from outside Northumberland and they wish him to play in any of the Challenge Competitions they must have been a bona-fida playing member of the new club for at least 20 days preceeding the tie. If there is any doubt about eligibility, the Chair of Colts Committee should be contacted at least seven days before the date of the match.

No England Academy (EAP) players may play in the Competition.

An Under 17 player is a player who is aged 16 years old on 1st day of September in the playing year.

An Under 18 player is a player who is aged 17 years old on 1st day of September in the playing year.

6. Match Day Cards

In all rounds of the Competitions, each team must fill in a match card listing the players and replacements names. The match cards will be given to the referee prior to the commencement of the game.

After the game, the cards must be signed by the referee and the home club must send them to the County office within three days of the match. Only official County designated cards must be used.

Match cards will be checked when received.

If match cards are not received within 72 hours, action will be taken and this may mean expulsion from the competition.

Any issues in relation to player eligibility must be brought to the attention of the County Administrator and Chair of Colts Committee in advance of the game.

There is no limit to squad sizes for Colts Cup / Plate matches, however 7 replacements must be named on the match day card. Teams can roll the 7 replacements on and off as many times as they wish but only the named 7 replacements may be used.

7. Team Composition and Replacements

If on any occasion a front row player requires to be replaced and his team cannot (for any reason, including injury, temporary blood injury, temporary exclusion following a yellow card, or permanent exclusion following a red card) provide a replacement, or another suitably trained and experienced player from the nominated squad, to enable the match to continue safely with contested scrums, the Referee, having made enquiry of and confirmed this fact with the manager of the team (or such person nominated by the Club as responsible for the team), the match shall continue with uncontested scrums. The team concerned shall not be entitled to replace the player whose departure caused the uncontested scrums and the final result will stand. On return to the field of play of the front row player who had been temporarily excluded or injured, the match shall continue with contested scrums.

If a match commences with uncontested scrums then the team that does not have sufficiently trained front row players will play with one player less. If subsequently that team can provide enough experienced front row players to allow for contested scrums then they may return to a full complement of players.

8 Period of play and Result

Matches will be 35 minutes each way as per under 19 law variations.

In the event of a draw, the following will apply:

The winner will be the team who has scored the most tries.

If still equal, the winner will be the team who has score the most converted tries.

If still equal, the winner will be the team who has scored the most drop goals.

In the event that the scores are still tied, the away team will be deemed the winner.

In the Final, if the game is tied at the end of normal time, the trophy / plate will be shared by both teams.

9. Complaints, disputes and reviews

- 9.1 Complaints, disputes and requests for review should, in the first instance, be made by clubs to the Competitions Committee via the County Office to the Colts Chairman. Such complaints, disputes and review matters shall initially to be heard by a sub-committee of three with a Chairman appointed from the Competitions Committee. On rare occasions, the Chairman may be able to make a decision subject to ratification at the next meeting and thereafter recorded.
- 9.2 The Competitions Committee can, of its own volition, set up a review when information has come to hand which could indicate that there may have been a breach of the rules of a particular competition.
- 9.3 All grievances concerning the playing or non-playing of fixtures and the playing of ineligible players must be notified to the administrator within 48 hours of the game taking place. A formal request for an investigation into allegations must be submitted within 7 days.
- 9.4 In dealing with any of the matters in this regard, no Committee member who is a member of the clubs involved may participate in the investigative process.
- 9.5 Once investigations have been undertaken, the County Administrator will present the facts to the Competitions Committee or a sub group thereof who will consider the matter, and clubs concerned will be informed of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

10. Right of Appeal

- 10.1 If a club does not agree with the decision or wishes to present mitigating circumstances, the Northumberland Rugby Union Hon Secretary will form an appeals panel. The club must appeal and set out the grounds for the appeal, within 48 hours of the decision being announced. This may be in writing (or electronically) or if the appellant club so wishes, it shall hear the matter orally in accordance with the established procedures as set out in Appendix A. The results of any appeal will be produced in writing setting out the reasons for the decision.
 - 10.2 A club/player always has the further right of appeal to the RFU.
-

Appendix A

Procedure for hearing oral Cup Competition appeals, complaints and reviews

1. The Panel

The panel shall normally consist of three members including a Chairman. Wherever possible, it shall include persons who have in depth knowledge of competitions rules and regulations and have an understanding of good legal practice. No person who has previously been involved in the matter and no person with a vested interest in the outcome shall be a member of the panel. They may however participate as an advocate or as a witness.

A secretary should be appointed to set out the facts and record any findings.

The proceedings will be carried out in line with the principles and procedures set out in the Rules of the Rugby Football Union (Disciplinary Procedures). Observers may be present subject to the approval of the panel.

2. Introduction.

The Chairman shall introduce the panel and appellant club representatives and explain procedure. At this juncture, the chairman must ask if the appellant has any objection to any member of the panel.

3. Process

The secretary will set out a statement of the events and facts leading to appeal, including, as appropriate, the original alleged breach(s) of regulations citing the specific regulation(s) together with any other relevant facts and detail.

Any documentary evidence relating to the matter shall then be presented.

One club official or appointed advocate shall set out the grounds for appeal. He may be accompanied by one other member of his club. On completion of his/her submission, he/she may be questioned by any member of the panel. Witnesses of fact may then give evidence on the club behalf in support of the appeal. Each witness may be cross examined on the evidence by the parties and any member of the panel.

The club official or appointed advocate shall be invited to sum up.

4. Deliberation and Findings

Panel deliberates on the issues in the absence of the club official or appointed advocate, and any observers.

The findings and judgments of the panel to be delivered. This may be reserved to take advice from the RFU or given orally at the time but must be set out in writing thereafter.

Procedure for hearing written Cup competition appeals, complaints and reviews

The Panel shall be constituted as set out above and the written evidence and submissions considered.

The Panel having deliberated on the issues shall deliver their findings as in 4 above.

CANDY League Rules

1. All games shall be played in accordance with the "Laws of the Game of Rugby Football" and the rules and regulations of the Rugby Football Union.
2. Clubs participating must pay a £30 bond to the league.
3. There will be up to four leagues. Division One, Division Two North, Division Two South and Division Three South. Entrants to the league and their playing strengths will determine the number in each Division.
4. Points for matches are awarded as follows: four league points for a win, two points for a draw. In addition bonus points will be awarded to teams on the following basis:
 - Teams will receive 1 bonus point for every try scored – up to a maximum of 5
 - Teams will receive a losing bonus point for being within 10 points of the winning team
 - Losing teams will receive 1 point for playing the match
5. If a team calls off the game before Friday they will lose 1 point. If a team calls off on Friday or Saturday then they will lose 3 points.
6. Try bonus points will only be awarded within one week of the match being played. If a team fails to provide the number by the following weekend then NO try bonus points will be awarded for the game. It is the responsibility of every team to send in their number of tries scored.
7. If a game is called off for weather, it shall be deemed a draw and the teams awarded 2 points each. If the 'away' team have a pitch suitable for play then attempt to get the game switched. Please try to replay games if an alternative date is available.
8. If, at the end of the season any Clubs have the same number of league points, the league positions shall be determined by the higher number of wins. If the teams have the same number of wins then the league position will be decided by the difference between match points 'for' and 'against'. Should two Clubs have the same number of league points and an equal number of wins and the same match points difference, the Club having scored more match points 'for' shall be placed higher in the league. If this still does not establish the positions then the Clubs involved shall be ranked according to the number of matches won, excluding the first League match of the season. If necessary, this process shall be extended to exclude the second match, third match and so on until the final positions are established.
9. Kick off times are to be arranged by participating clubs.
10. Any bona fide member of a club shall be eligible to play in league matches. A player who has played for the 1st XV is eligible to play for the 2nd XV the following week and thereafter, providing that his 1st XV have a game on that same weekend. No club shall be allowed to play any member or members of another club in order to strengthen their own team for league matches. The exception to this rule may apply to front row players only, who with the permission of the opposition club, may be brought in when that club has insufficient such players, to allow a game to go ahead. In the case of any particular hardship arising from this Rule, application may be made to the League Secretary.
11. Up to six replacements are allowed in any game, one (preferably two) of those replacements must be capable of playing in the front row. Rolling substitutions are allowed in all games. If you have more than 6 replacements, please confirm with the opposition.
12. Before a game commences if there is a shortage of front row players, the game starts with uncontested scrums (and uncontested lineouts if necessary.) Normal rules will apply. If any team is seen to be exploiting this rule action can be taken to deduct points.
13. The appointment of the referees will be made by the home club through their local Referees Society.
14. Any team unable to fulfil a fixture for any reason other than the weather forfeits the game, except under exceptional circumstances and agreed by the committee. Exceptional requests must be submitted to the League Secretary at least 30 days in advance.
15. If you have at least 10 players you must travel and the game will be played with equal numbers. ie, 12 v 12, 13 v 13 or 14 v 14. These smaller sided games will be played as normal competitive games and can be shortened

in length with both clubs agreement.

16. If both teams agree, players can be given to the opposition to make it back up to 15 v 15 or the rest of the players will be rolling substitutions.
17. **Both teams** will be responsible for reporting the results, including number of tries scored, to the League Secretary and must be received by Monday morning following the game. It can be done by text, telephone, twitter or e-mail.
18. In the event that the Committee become aware that a member club has materially misled or deceived them to gain an advantage the Committee reserves the right to impose such disciplinary action as it deems fit including expulsion from the league. All complaints received by the League Secretary re conduct of other teams/clubs must be in writing and received within 10 days of the incident/s occurring. Such complaints must be accompanied by documentary evidence including any referee's report and written statements from officers of the complainant club. On receipt of the complaint the League Secretary shall forward details of the complaint to the club the subject of the complaint, who shall respond within seven days. The Committee shall then issue their findings within 10 days. If the club is dissatisfied with the decision of the Committee they may then appeal against such decision.
19. Should a team wish to appeal against a decision of the Committee notice of the appeal must be forwarded to the League Secretary within 7 days of the Committee decision. The matter will then be considered by a panel appointed by the Northumberland Competitions Committee. (See County Leagues and Merit Table Rules, Appendix A)

Note 1. All results and tables will be posted on the league website. Results will also be posted on twitter when received, @CandyLeague.

Clubs must take their own copy for publication on notice boards from the website.
("http://www.candyleague.co.uk/").

Note 2. The contact details for the League Secretary are Craig Johnston (07525 614337, 01434 607696) or jcraigj@sky.com or @CandyLeague

County Leagues and Merit Table Rules, with reminders

1. The Northumberland Rugby Union Leagues shall comprise structured competitions involving eligible sides in membership of Northumberland Rugby Union and such other invited sides as may have obtained approval from their constituent body and been accepted by the Northumberland Rugby Football Union Competitions Committee.

The Merit Table is for teams that may not play regular rugby but can record any matches played in a season. Merit Table winners will receive a trophy.

2. The County Leagues hereinafter called the Leagues and Merit Table will be managed by the Northumberland Competitions Committee hereinafter called the committee.

The Northumberland Management Board have introduced a £30 subscription bond for teams participating in the Aln and Blyth Leagues.

3. The committee shall have full administrative control over the leagues and merit and shall conduct the business connected therewith. The committee shall also have the following powers:

- i. To accept or refuse entries to the leagues and to remove a team from a league;
- ii. To accept the resignation of any side from the league;
- iii. To appoint a sub-committee to deal with emergency matters and league disciplinary matters;
- iv. To accept sponsorship for the leagues and to name the respective leagues as appropriate;
- v. To co-opt any person to the committee or sub-committee thereof for any period or particular purpose. Persons so co-opted shall not have voting rights;

4. **Club Communication**

An annual meeting of the clubs participating in the leagues shall be held at the end of the playing season and take the form of a presentations night. It has become tradition to present league winners with their trophies on this occasion and representatives from winning teams are invited to attend.

Depending on circumstances, a club meeting or questionnaire will provide clubs with the opportunity to feedback on the organisation and any issues with the leagues.

- 4.1 Results must be submitted within 7 days of the match played.

Both teams are required to submit the results for matches played.

The Merit Table will adopt the same points scoring system as the Aln and Blyth leagues

The Aln, Blyth and Merit League Tables will appear on the Northumberland County Website <http://northumberlandrugbyunion.com/clubs/county-leagues>

All matches will be recorded on the GMS system but will be simplified and shown with scores for a win/lose/draw. The correct league tables showing the various bonus points (try bonus and losing), points for cancelled matches (PFCM), double headers and any front row flexibilities (rule 6.6.2) will be displayed on the NRU website.

5. **Alteration of Rules**

The Committee shall have the power to alter or add to the County League Rules subject to ratification by the Governance Committee.

6. **Rules of the Competitions**

- 6.1 The Competition shall be played on a home and away basis. Points will be awarded in accordance with a schedule approved from time to time by the Committee. All questions on the interpretation of the rules shall be referred to the Competitions Committee through the County Administrator.

6.2 League Structure and Eligibility

The leagues structure will be based on club junior sides. Eligibility for entry will initially be determined by the Committee and thereafter by placing in the league table at the end of the season. The team winning each league will be awarded a trophy and other prizes as determined by the committee. Promotion and relegation will take place between the leagues to be decided from time to time by the committee on the basis of league position and performance.

6.3 Registration of Clubs

Clubs shall register in writing their intention to play in the leagues as requested prior to the new season.

6.4 Eligibility of Players

Eligibility shall be confined to bona fide paid up members of the clubs concerned. The player must be "regularly available" for the team and normally play at the teams' level.

All questions on qualification of players shall be referred to the Competitions Committee through the County Administrator

6.5 Referees and Assistant Referees

Games shall be refereed by neutral referees appointed by Referee Societies. Each club shall provide a Touch Judge for every game except where Assistant Referees are appointed by the Referee Societies.

6.6 Playing, Re-arranging and Cancellation of Games

6.6.1 Playing

All games will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Rugby Football Union and the Rules and Regulations of the Rugby Football Union. Games can be played on any day of the week. If during the game, the referee is unable to continue and the game has not reached 60 minutes of playing time and no suitable replacement found, the game shall be replayed.

6.6.2 Front Row Shortages

There is provision within the rules for matches to be played with uncontested scrums from the start
In the case of one side being short of front row players before the game, then the match should be allowed to be played wholly with uncontested scrums.

To prevent teams abusing this dispensation, the team lacking one or more props may not qualify for any more than a total of 2 league points for a win.

Losing Bonus Points and Try Bonus Points still apply as normal.

6.6.3 Match Cancellations

Where the first scheduled game between two teams is cancelled for any reason other than adverse weather, a cup match or an unfit pitch, the league points will be awarded to the non-offending club unless the Competitions Committee rules otherwise.

If the cancellation was by the visiting team then the return fixture will be played at the ground of the non-offending club.

Points for Cancelled Matches – Please try and re-arrange the match that has been called off, but if you are unable to re-arrange or agree on a double header, you can claim the points for the match. Points need to be claimed within two weeks of the game being cancelled.

If you do claim the points for a cancelled match, you cannot invoke rule 6.6.3 (above) – you forfeit the right to switch the return fixture to the home of the non-offending team.

Once you have set a date to re play a match, you cannot claim the points unless the re-arranged fixture is then also cancelled.

6.6.4 Shortage of players

It is within the ethos of the leagues that matches should be played even if sides are short of a full complement of players and that the exchange/loan of players to allow a match to take place is far more preferable than a cancellation.

6.7 Scoring and Bonus Points

The scoring system shall be in accordance with the schedule which may be revised by the committee from time to time.

6.8 Double Header Games

From time to time, with weather or cup cancellations, the committee will make a decision on clubs playing a "double header".

When a game is cancelled for reasons of adverse weather, cup competition or an unfit pitch, the committee encourages clubs to rearrange the game. If this is not possible, any second fixture between the sides may be played for double league points if the clubs agree (Double Header Match). The League Administrator must be informed as soon as possible of this decision, and before the game takes place, otherwise the fixture will be scored as for one game, not two.

- 6.8.1 Once the committee has agreed the double header, the agreement between fixture secretaries and the committee is final.
- 6.8.2 Double headers offer the doubling of all points (including bonus points).
- 6.8.5 Should the double header game be cancelled, the non-offending side on the day of the fixture will be awarded full points.

7.0 Replacements

In all leagues – a mutually agreed number (rolling substitutions allowed).

8.0 Failure to Fulfill Fixtures

The committee may seek to remove a team from the league if there is a persistent problem. In the event of a team being removed from the league, all points relating to games with that team will be deleted.

9.0 Condition of Ground

In the event of the ground being rendered unfit by weather, the home side shall notify the visiting side at the earliest reasonable time and arrangements made to play the game at an alternative venue or time. Should the teams arrive at the ground and the two captains fail to agree the fitness of the ground, the referee shall decide the fitness or otherwise.

10.0 Complaints, disputes and reviews

- 10.1 Complaints and requests for review should, in the first instance, be made by clubs to the Competitions committee via the County Office.
- 10.2 The Competitions Committee can, of its own volition, set up a review when information has come to hand which could indicate that there may have been a breach of the rules of a particular competition.
- 10.3 All grievances concerning the playing or non-playing of fixtures and the playing of ineligible players must be notified to the administrator within 48 hours of the game taking place (or not). A formal request for an investigation into allegations must be submitted within 7 days.
- 10.4 In dealing with any of the matters in this regard, no person who is a member of the clubs involved may participate in the investigative process save only to be a witness as and when appropriate. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, the matter shall be dealt with by an appropriate deputy.
- 10.5 Once investigations have been undertaken, the County Administrator will present the facts to the Competitions Committee or a sub group thereof who will consider the matter, and clubs concerned will be informed of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

11. Right of Appeal

- 11.1 If a club does not agree with the decision or wishes to present mitigating circumstances, it may appeal to the Competitions Committee setting out the grounds for the appeal, within 48 hours of the decision being announced. If a decision is so appealed, the Chairman of the Competitions Committee shall inform the Hon Secretary who will then convene an Appeals Panel. This may be in writing (or electronically) or if the appellants club so wishes, it shall hear the matter orally in accordance with the established procedures as set out in Appendix A. The results of any appeal will be produced in writing setting out the reasons for the

decision.

11.2 A club/player always has the further right of appeal to the RFU.

12.0 **Administration**

Match results can be submitted via the CANDY, County & Merit League results WhatsApp, be phoned in or e-mailed, to Claire Sharpe who is the Leagues Administrator (claire.sharpe@northumberlandrfu.co.uk) **by both sides** before noon on the Monday following the game or noon the next day if it is played other than a Saturday or Sunday. (See Rule 4.1)

The committee reserves the right to penalise persistent offenders for late submission of results.

County Leagues Scoring System

Win	4 points
Draw	2 points
Lost	1 point
Bonus Point – tries	1 point for every try up to a maximum of five
Bonus Point – losing by 10 points or less	1 point

Notes for Participating Teams

Shortage of Players

Please try and honour the fixture.

When teams play short please ensure that you play with equal numbers.

The opposition are encouraged to lend players to the team that are short.

As teams may not be playing with a full complement, if both sides agree, the time played can be reduced to two halves of 30 minutes or the size of the pitch may be reduced.

Common sense should be used to adapt the game to the number of players available.

Uncontested Scrums

Matches can still be played with uncontested scrums from the start

There are still league points to be won even if you don't have a front row.

Please refer to rule 6.6.2 – don't cancel the match – play it even if you are short of players.

Adapt the numbers so if necessary, you are playing 12 v 12, 13 v 13 etc but please make sure there is never more than a one-person advantage if you are playing short – keep the numbers as even as possible.

Results

Please do not submit multiple results from multiple weekends in on one mail as this makes the administration of the leagues very difficult and also masks the true league positions.

Please send results in as matches are played.

Please do not forget to note the number of tries scored – try bonus points.

(A number of teams have missed out on these points previously as tries scored were not sent in alongside results.)

Points for Cancelled Matches **MUST** be claimed within two weeks of the date of the match. **Points for Cancelled Matches will not be awarded if claimed outside of the two week window.**

Points for Cancelled Matches (PFCM) can now be claimed at any time (previously you could not claim before Christmas).

Appendix A

Procedure for hearing oral League and Merit Table Competition appeals, complaints and reviews

1. The Panel

The panel shall normally consist of three members including a Chairman. Wherever possible, it shall include persons who have in depth knowledge of competitions rules and regulations and have an understanding of good legal practice. No person who has previously been involved in the matter and no person with a vested interest in the outcome shall be a member of the panel. They may however participate as an advocate or as a witness.

A secretary should be appointed to set out the facts and record any findings.

The proceedings will be carried out in line with the principles and procedures set out in the Rules of the Rugby Football Union (Disciplinary Procedures). Observers may be present subject to the approval of the panel.

2. Introduction.

The Chairman shall introduce the panel and appellant club representatives and explain procedure. At this juncture, the chairman must ask if the appellant has any objection to any member of the panel.

3. Process

The secretary will set out a statement of the events and facts leading to appeal, including, as appropriate, the original alleged breach(s) of regulations citing the specific regulation(s) together with any other relevant facts and detail.

Any documentary evidence relating to the matter shall then be presented.

One club official or appointed advocate shall set out the grounds for appeal. He may be accompanied by one other member of his club. On completion of his/her submission, he/she may be questioned by any member of the panel. Witnesses of fact may then give evidence on the club behalf in support of the appeal. Each witness may be cross examined on the evidence by the parties and any member of the panel.

The club official or appointed advocate shall be invited to sum up.

4. Deliberation and Findings

Panel deliberates on the issues in the absence of the club official or appointed advocate, and any observers.

The findings and judgments of the panel to be delivered. This may be reserved to take advice from the RFU or given orally at the time but must be set out in writing thereafter.

Procedure for hearing written League and Merit Table competition appeals, complaints and reviews

The Panel shall be constituted as set out above and the written evidence and submissions considered.

The Panel having deliberated on the issues shall deliver their findings as in 4 above.