

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

The ethos of the League is to create fun and welcoming environments, where girls can play Rugby League in a friendly setting, whilst also providing appropriate development and competition needs for all players.

1. **APPLICABLE OPERATIONAL RULES**

1.1 The “**Girls’ Rugby League**” (GRL) sits within tier five of the RFL competition structure. All teams participating in the (GRL) are bound by the [RFL Operational Rules](#) for Tiers Four, Five and Six (Operational Rules).

2. **MEMBERSHIP**

2.1 Membership of the GRL is open to all clubs playing Rugby League who are capable of meeting any Annual Entry Criteria as specified by the RFL. This can be found on the RFL website. Membership to the GRL can be reviewed at any time, if clubs have a poor disciplinary record or they fall below any of the Annual Entry Criteria.

2.2 Applications from clubs must be submitted in writing to the Competition Officer by the end of December of each year (precise date will be set each year). Membership shall be granted to a club for one season only and all clubs must reapply for membership each year.

2.2.1 New clubs may be admitted to the League at a later date; however, they would join the development league and play friendlies.

2.3 The annual affiliation for membership of the league shall be £30 per team. This should be paid by 30th April.

2.4 Each Club will be required to ensure that the Volunteers listed below are qualified, as specified by the RFL, and registered on GameDay:

- Coaches (Level 2 licenced coach)
- Club Welfare Officer
- First Aiders
- Game Day Manager
- Club Secretary
- Club Chair

3. **START AND END DATE OF THE COMPETITION**

3.1 The RFL shall determine the commencement date of its competition and the date upon which it shall cease. These dates will fit between the 1st March and 31st October in any year.

3.2 All league fixtures need to be played before the 23rd of August, two weeks prior to the playoff stages across all age groups.

3.3 Any outstanding games at this time will be awarded by the management once they have considered all facts around the original and any subsequent postponements in accordance with the rules in section 6.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

4. PLAYER REGISTRATIONS

4.1 All players should annually register to the club using the RFL GameDay system. The League will circulate a link to the registration portal to the clubs to commence the registration process. During this process, a Player must become an Our League Active member.

4.2 A maximum of 25 players can register per team in the GRL. The minimum number of players that must be registered for a team to be involved in formal competitions are outlined below:

- Under 13's, Under 14's & Under 18's – Minimum of 15 players must be registered
- Under 15's & Under 16's – Minimum of 17 players must be registered
- Under 11's, Under 12's & Development Leagues - Clubs with less than 15 players registered can still participate.

Scheduled fixtures may be refused if a team has fewer than 15 players registered. However, teams with fewer than 15 players can still participate in the development league.

4.3 Where clubs run 2 teams at one age group in a structured league, clubs must have a minimum of 30 players and can register a maximum of 50. These teams can move up to 5 players between the two teams during the season subject to the discretion of the management.

4.4 Players are eligible to play for a team based on their date of birth. This aligns with the age range policy outlined in the Operational Rules, which allows players to compete for their true age group as well as one age group above.

4.4.1 However, they can only play for one team within a structured division during a season. In other words a player must choose whether to play for their true age team or age above and cannot play for both.

4.4.2 Clubs can request an internal transfer at any point during the season if they believe the player's playing offer has changed. This request along with justification must be sent to competitions@rfl.co.uk. Please note that requests will not be approved after half of the league season has been played. Any club found guilty of not abiding by the 1-team rule will be at risk of having league fixtures refused.

4.5 **Dispensations:** A club can complete a dispensation request form on behalf of a player that they feel needs to play outside their 2-year banding. Evidence must be provided to support the application, this can include a letter from the school, or medical professional as well as a personal statement (or statement from a parent). Dispensation will only be given one season at a time. A card will be issued for the team they are playing with – the opposition does not have the right to question why dispensation has been given. The decision of the dispensation panel is final.

4.6 Merged teams will not be permitted into the structured divisions. Any teams who have to merge with a local club can play games in the development leagues until such time they can play games as a standalone team. A maximum of two teams can merge in a development league.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

4.7 The RFL may introduce, from time to time, new registration processes.

4.8 **WSL Under 19s Programme:**

WSL clubs will hold the primary registration of the player. Players will be, where possible, dual registered with the Community Club they have played (unless they don't have a team for that player to be part of U18/Open Age). WSL clubs will be responsible for managing the player workload appropriately.

4.9 **Transfers**

4.9.1 Teams may apply to transfer up to three Players only per Season. The RFL may relax this rule, at their discretion, as deemed appropriate to meet the needs of the Competition. Please note, the decision of the Competition Officer is final. There will be no appeals process once a decision has been made.

4.9.2 It is the responsibility of the Club the player is moving to, to initiate the transfer. The parent/guardian has final sign off of the transfer. The process must be completed in full, including parent/guardian sign off, before a player plays. The Competition Officer will communicate further details on the process.

4.9.3 Clubs must wait for transfers to be approved before permitting players to attend training sessions with them. Prior to transfer approval, players are not insured to be training with a new club.

4.9.4 The deadline for transferring of players shall be the **31st of August**.

5. **STRUCTURE OF COMPETITION**

5.1 The RFL, in conjunction with the Management Group, will determine the structure of the Girls League including its format and size, any play-off structure and matters relating to relegation.

5.2 The League will run the following age groups in 2025: Under-11, Under-12, Under-13, Under-14, Under-15, Under-16, Under-17, Under-18.

5.3 The Competition Officer will, following consultation with the Girls Management Group, allocate teams to a playing division.

5.4 Teams not having the designated 15 players registered when divisions are allocated, will be offered alternative fixtures via the development divisions.

5.5 The League will operate to a top four play-off format for the Under-14, Under-15 and Under-16 age groups in the Premier Divisions only, where this is deemed, by the Management Committee, to be appropriate.

5.6 Only players who have played 2 or more League fixtures, for their respective team are eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the Competition.

5.7 Teams who have forfeited two or more games over the course of the season shall not be eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the competition. In this event, the next qualifying team will be entered into the play-off stages.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

5.8 League Tables

- 5.8.1 The League competition tables shall be compiled by the RFL. There will be no league table displayed for the Under-11's and Under-12's age group.
- 5.8.2 The positions shall be determined by the number of completed matches with points being awarded as follows: two points for each Match won; and one point for each Match drawn.
- 5.8.3 The Club with the highest number of points shall be at the top of the league table and the Club with the lowest shall be at the bottom.
- 5.8.4 Where Clubs have an equal number of points, their relative positions shall be determined by the head-to-head record in League matches only. Where their head-to-head record is even, then the aggregate score of all head-to-head league fixtures will decide the team on top. If the positions are still equal, positions will be determined by the toss of a coin which shall be carried out at such time and place as the RFL shall direct and those Clubs concerned shall be entitled to witness the toss.
- 5.8.5 The notional score in forfeited games shall be 24-0 and a points' deduction of 1 point. 24 - 0 forfeited games should only be used as a last resort, every effort should be made to get games played. The Girls League's primary aim is to give as many girls as possible the chance to play and develop. Awarding 24 – 0's does not do this.
- 5.8.6 If a club withdraws from the League having failed to complete 50% of its scheduled games, then the club's record shall be expunged. If a club completes 50% or more of its scheduled games, the points will be awarded to the opponents.
- 5.8.7 If a club is expelled or suspended, its record will be expunged, irrespective of how many games that club has played.
- 5.8.8 Any club found guilty of match official abuse will face sanctions including the possibility of a points deduction.

6. FIXTURES

- 6.1 The RFL Competition Officer will notify teams of their fixtures.
- 6.2 All games shall, unless there is mutual agreement between competing clubs to the contrary, be organised and staged on Saturday morning with a kick off time scheduled for 11.00 a.m.
- 6.3 Clubs have the ability on Gameday to amend the kick off time, if agreed between both teams. All amendments to kick off times must be made by 12pm on a Wednesday to allow time for Match Officials to confirm arrangements.
- 6.4 Any club wishing to rearrange a fixture must consult their opponents, agree a new date and complete a fixture amendment form. The completed fixture amendment form must be forwarded to the Competition Officer for their approval. If clubs cannot agree a new date within 14 days of the original fixture, then the Competition Officer will issue a new date for the fixture.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

- 6.5 24 – 0 will be awarded as a last resort at the end of the season, every effort should be made to re-arrange games, either on backlog weeks or mid-week evenings.
- 6.6 Where programmed into the fixture programme, backlog dates should not be considered as a free weekend. Teams should be prepared to be allocated fixtures on these days.
- 6.7 Any club desiring to arrange a friendly must seek permission from the Competition Officer before a fixture is agreed. No friendly fixtures shall be arranged on a League fixture date without prior approval of the Competition Officer. Failure to notify the Competition Officer will result in the fixture not being sanctioned.
- 6.8 Clubs must accept fixtures given at seven days' notice by the Competition Officer.
- 6.9 Any club failing to play a fixture on a scheduled date will be made to play the reverse fixture, if it has not already been played or forfeited, on their opponents' ground. Clubs failing to fulfil fixtures will be fined £30 and deducted competition points.
- 6.10 Any Club failing to fulfil a fixture must pay reasonable expenses to the non-offending Club, as determined by the GRL Management Group. This may include the referee's full fee and expenses, including contribution towards any coach cost involved. For the avoidance of doubt, if a game is called off within 48 hours of the scheduled fixture, then this rule will come into force.
- 6.11 Any Club which fails to notify their opponents of its inability to raise a team 60 minutes before the scheduled kick-off, shall also be liable to pay any expenses, up to a maximum of £40, which their opponents may incur, including kit washing, or medical costs such as strapping.
- 6.12 In the case of a home club failing to fulfil a fixture, a visiting club that has travelled, may claim up to 50% of transport costs.
- 6.13 Any club with more than one team at home, in any competition, must provide an alternative pitch in case of a clash of fixtures.
- 6.14 **Postponements due to weather**
- 6.14.1 If the home club suspects that its ground may be unfit for play due to adverse weather or other causes, it must immediately contact a Match Official from the RFL-approved list to conduct a ground inspection.

If the Match Official deems the ground unfit for play and determines that it is unlikely to become playable before the scheduled kick-off, this decision must be communicated immediately to:

- The visiting club,
- The appointed Match Official, and
- The Competition Officer.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

Failure to follow this procedure may result in the home club being found guilty of Misconduct. In addition to any sanctions, the home club will be responsible for reimbursing reasonable travel expenses incurred by any Match Official or club that was not notified in accordance with this rule.

6.14.2 All postponements must be notified to the Competition Officer within 1 hour of the decision being made competitions@rfl.co.uk

6.14.3 Where a Match does not take place because the away Club fails to turn up on the day, then in addition to such Club being found guilty of misconduct, it shall also be liable to pay £50 compensation towards refreshment costs.

6.15 Cup Rules

6.15.1 Normal competition rules apply.

6.15.2 Cup entry is optional clubs must apply via the Competition Officer, once applications are open.

6.15.3 In accordance with Operational Rule B3:2:2 Cup Ties will take precedence over League Matches.

6.15.4 A player can only play for one team in the cup competition.

6.15.5 If a knock out game finishes level then golden point extra time should be played (in 10 minute periods until the first score).

6.15.6 Where the cup is played in a group format, then any games that finish level after normal time will be declared a draw and each team shall receive one point on the league table.

6.15.7 The draw for each round of all cup competitions shall be on the basis that the first named club shall be the home club and the second named club shall be the away club.

6.15.8 Where the cup is run on a group basis then forfeited games will be given as 48– 0 and the team forfeiting the game will be fined £50.

6.15.9 Only players who have played 1 or more League or Cup fixtures for their respective team are eligible to participate in the play-off stages of the competition.

6.15.10 Home advantage for semi-finals is given to the first team drawn. That club must provide a full-size pitch, physical barrier and are responsible for organising the match officials. Should the club be unable to meet this criteria, then the Management Committee will locate a suitable venue.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

- 6.15.11 Once dates have been confirmed for cup finals, those dates shall not be changed. Unless there are circumstances outside the control of the League or otherwise decided by the Management Group for the good of the game.
- 6.15.12 Where the cup is played in a group format, if after the group stages teams have an equal number of points their relative positions shall be determined by points difference. If the positions are still equal, positions will be determined by the toss of a coin which shall be conducted at such time and places as the RFL direct and those clubs concerned shall be entitled to witness the coin toss.
- 6.15.13 The League Management shall appoint the referees and confirm kick off times for finals.
- 6.15.14 The League will provide trophies or medals for league winners and cup finalists.
- 6.15.15 All Cups must be returned to the RFL one month before the finals of the following season. It is the responsibility of the clubs to return these in a clean and good condition. The clubs will be liable for any costs where this is not the case.

7 MATCH DAY OPERATIONS

- 7.1 In the event that your Club and age groups are all drawn on the same day and in conflict with the default kick off time, then the highest age group will take priority and Clubs are encouraged to stagger the kick off times accordingly. These kick off times and days may be varied if both clubs agree. In the event that both clubs do not agree, then the Competition Officer shall determine the day and kick off time.
- 7.2 To maintain the continuity of the playing programme, the Competition Officer shall be empowered, if necessary, to bring forward to an earlier fixture date scheduled for later in the season.
- 7.3 **Contacting Opponents and Kit Obligations**
- 7.3.1 In accordance with the Operational Rules, it is the responsibility of the home Club, during the week preceding a game, to contact both its opponents and the relevant Match Officials regarding team colours and ground directions.
- 7.3.2 In the event there is a clash of colours, the away team must wear an alternative strip.
- 7.4 **Team Sizes**
- 7.4.1 Teams at Under-14 and above should play 13 a side. If a team cannot field 13 players, both sides should reduce numbers accordingly to a minimum of 11 a side. The pitch size should also be reduced to reflect this. Teams must travel with a minimum of 13 players in structured leagues. Development fixtures can go ahead with less players, provided both teams agree.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

7.4.2 Teams can play everybody in their squad on a match day, however it is up to the coaches to manage this. Coaches should try and ensure everybody gets at least half a game.

7.5 Match Length and ball size

Under-11s – 20 minutes e/w size 3 ball

Under-12s – 20 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-13s – 25 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-14s – 25 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-15s – 30 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-16s – 30 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-17s - 35 minutes e/w size 4 ball

Under-18s - 35 minutes e/w size 4 ball

7.6 Technical Areas

7.6.1 All non-playing personnel and interchanges must remain in the designated technical area throughout the Match. They are not permitted to station themselves around the field, other than when managing a player, who has been removed from play, or when time management principles have been implemented (other than tracking physios) and are subject at all times to the control of the Match Officials.

7.6.2 There should be no more than 5 non-playing members of staff in the technical area; all of these must wear an 'high viz' vest so they can be identifiable.

3 x Coaches

1 x Game Day Manager

1 x First Aider

7.7 Medical Requirements

7.7.1 It is the requirement of each Home Club to ensure that a First Aider is in attendance at each game. The first aider should make themselves known to the Match Official before the start of any Match and shall remain for a minimum of 15 minutes after the end of the Game and shall speak directly with a designated Official from both Clubs, if necessary, to ensure that the correct reporting paperwork is completed. In the event that there is no first aider then the Match Official will not permit a game to take place.

7.7.2 First aiders should be listed on the team sheet and are required to register on the GameDay system as a volunteer.

7.7.3 In the event a player sustains an injury to the head or displays signs or symptoms of concussion, the Match Official will stop the game and ask for the first aider to attend to them. If the first aider suspects concussion the player **MUST** be removed from the field of play and remain off the field of play. If the player refuses to follow the first aider's advice, then the Match Officials can hold up play until the player follows the instruction of the first aider. Advice for managing concussion can be found [HERE](#). The RFL is supportive of and follows the SRA concussion guidance – please read through the guidance in full [HERE](#) and ensure they are applied to matches and training at all times.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

7.8 Reporting Injuries and Concussion

- 7.8.1 In the event there is a serious injury or concussion at a Match this must be reported using the GameDay system. Reports are added in the post-game section which is the same area as where results are added. It is imperative that any head injuries are reported on the system as this information has to be provided to the insurers.

7.9 Post Match Arrangements

- 7.9.1 The home club shall be responsible for supplying all the competing players, club officials and appointed Match Officials with a suitable post-match meal. The visiting club is obligated to accept such hospitality.

7.10 Paperless Team Sheets and Reporting Results

- 7.10.1 Teams will be required to enter their team sheet on Gameday no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled KO time, this should include shirt numbers and positions. Failure to do so will result in an £20 administration fine. Any changes after that point must be reported to the Match Official on the day.

- 7.10.2 Each club is responsible for ensuring their points scoring information, is updated within the player stats area on GameDay, within 48 hours following the completion of the game. Details of the player of the match from both the participating clubs must also be included. Failure to do so will result in an £20 administration fine.

- 7.10.3 The home club, in consultation with the Match Official and designated officer from the opposition, must agree the result immediately on completion of the game and enter the result on to GameDay within 60 minutes. Failure to comply will result in a £20 administration fine.

- 7.10.4 For all U11's games the score must be entered as 0 – 0.

7.11 Abandonment of Games

- 7.11.1 If a game is abandoned with more than three-quarters of the playing time elapsed, the result shall stand unless otherwise determined by the RFL. If less than three-quarters of the playing time has elapsed the RFL (via the League Management), at its sole discretion, may order the game to be re-played.

7.12 Communications with the RFL

- 7.12.1 Clubs should not use social media (WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) to contact the RFL Competition Manager and Competition Officer to expect a decision/answer to a question. Throughout the week they can be contacted on their RFL email addresses and on a Saturday morning the RFL Competitions email address may respond.

7.13 If a game does not have an appointed Match Official

- 7.13.1 If a game does not have an appointed Match Official, then the game can still go ahead should both teams agree. The game should then be officiated by a coach. The away coach should be offered this in the first instance. Clubs may decide to split a half each.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

7.13.2 However, should the game feature any discipline issues then these must still be reported to the RFL, so these cases can be looked at if necessary.

7.14 Playing Rules

7.14.1 The playing rules for each age group each season will be confirmed by the RFL W&G Player Development Group made up of player development professionals. This group will ensure the rules are progressive and age appropriate.

8 DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSIONS AND FINES

8.1 A GRL discipline panel is in place to deal with all discipline matters in accordance with section D of the Operational Rules. The disciplinary panel shall have the full power to expel, suspend and/or fine any club, player, official or other person, subject to the Operational Rules, found guilty of misconduct and/or breach of these rules and/or breach of the Operational Rules and to order them to meet any costs incurred.

8.2 A written report by a Match Official on the misconduct of any club, player or official must be sent via email to the Competition Officer with a copy to the offending club for receipt inside 48 hours from the conclusion of the game.

8.3 Reports of brawling – defined as three or more players involved – should, via email, be sent by the Match Official, within 48 hours of a game's conclusion, to the Competition Officer. Separate copies of the report must be lodged by the Match Official with the clubs concerned.

8.4 Any club which does not receive from the Match Official within 48 hours a report outlining a dismissal or brawl having occurred should contact the Competition Officer immediately. The failure of a club to receive a written report will not prevent action being dealt by the relevant discipline committee.

8.5 A reported club, player, official or any other person may, to defend an allegation of misconduct, send a letter for receipt by the Competition Officer within seven days of the date of the match. The club or such persons may in their own defence request a personal appearance and/or bring witnesses and/or submit written mitigation, to the hearing, if they notify the Competition Officer within seven days of the alleged offence and send a deposit of £20.00 which must be paid to the RFL by bank transfer. The deposit shall be refunded after the hearing, provided that the appellant or their designated representative attends in person and they are found not guilty.

8.6 Unedited DVD evidence shall be an accepted method through which to defend or confirm the alleged actions that have been reported to the committee by a Match Official.

8.7 Should a case of alleged assault by a player, club official or spectator be lodged it will be reported to the Competition Officer by a Match Official. The Match Official will then be instructed to make himself available to the disciplinary committee, for the purposes of interview, due notice of which shall be given in writing. A Match Official shall in such circumstances be entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses.

8.8 The Competition Officer will notify relevant Club of any sanctions imposed by a Discipline panel. It is the responsibility of the Club to check junk/spam inboxes for the

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

sanctions and to chase up with the Competition Officer if they have not heard the findings of the panel within 48 hours of the hearing

8.9 A suspension will commence with immediate effect and a suspended player is prohibited from participating in any Rugby League game until the following conditions are met:

- Any imposed fines are fully paid as per rule 8.11.
- The suspension is served in full.
- The Notification of Games Served Form is completed, submitted to, and approved by the Competition Officer.

Failure to comply with this rule will result in a minimum fine of £100 for the player or club. Additionally, the offending player may face further suspension and will remain ineligible to play until all fines are paid.

If a club fields a suspended player and wins the game, any competition points gained will be automatically forfeited.

The GRL Management Group reserves the right to impose further sanctions if deemed appropriate. These may include suspending or expelling the offending club from the competition.

8.10 All organised competition games, (including SRL fixtures, and RFL representative games) provided that they were arranged before the player's offence, may be counted towards the list of suspended games. It will be down to the RFL's discretion on how many friendlies during the pre-season are included in the total of suspended games.

8.11 All fines, payable to the RFL must be settled within 28 days and must be forwarded to the Competition Officer. Failure to meet this obligation shall result in the fine being doubled automatically. If a further seven days elapse without receipt of payment, then the club's fixtures will be suspended.

9 APPEALS

9.1 All appeals against disciplinary sanctions imposed by the GRL are to be dealt with by an independent RFL appointed panel.

9.2 If a player wishes to appeal against a decision they shall not be permitted to play in any Match until their appeal has been heard.

9.3 Clubs wishing to appeal a decision must do so within 7 days of the decision being issued. The appeal must include:

- A £40.00 fee, payable to the "RFL"; and
- A written letter explaining the grounds for the appeal.

GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE - COMPETITION RULES 2025

Both the fee and the letter must be submitted to the Competition Officer within the specified time frame.

- 9.4 The only grounds for appeal are that the original Disciplinary Panel:
- i) came to a decision to which no reasonable body could have come; or
 - ii) failed to act fairly in a procedural sense; or
 - iii) the sanction imposed was so excessive or lenient as to be unreasonable.
- 9.5 The Notice of Appeal must include any fresh evidence the Appellant wishes to introduce. The Appellant must also provide reasons why this evidence is relevant, credible, and was unavailable at the original hearing. Fresh evidence will only be admitted with the permission of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel. Permission will generally only be granted if the evidence meets the outlined criteria and is submitted alongside the Notice of Appeal.
- 9.6 An appeal shall be heard by way of review and shall not be a de novo hearing.
- 9.7 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall have all the same powers as the Disciplinary Panel in relation to evidence, experts, witnesses and conduct of proceedings, as well as the power to:
- (a) dismiss the appeal.
 - (b) quash a sanction or finding.
 - (c) remit the matter for rehearing.
 - (d) substitute an alternative finding or sanction.
 - (e) reduce or increase the original sanction; or
 - (f) make such orders as it considers appropriate
- Fresh evidence may only be presented to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel with its permission
- 9.8 No member of the Discipline Panel is actively involved in a decision taken at the initial hearing other than the Competition Officer - who has no voting rights - shall be permitted to adjudicate on matters that will be the subject of appeal.
- 9.9 It is the responsibility of the club to check junk/spam inboxes for the sanctions and to chase up with the Competition administrator if they have not heard the findings of the panel within 48 hours of the hearing.