



ENGLAND RUGBY MEN'S LEAGUES

LONDON & SE REGIONAL

ORGANISING COMMITTEE (ROC)



ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS 2026-2027

These Administrative Instructions accord to RFU Regulation 6.7 and shall apply to all clubs playing within leagues administered by the London & South East ROC.

1. Reporting of Match Results using Electronic Match Cards

Teams must be entered on EMC before kick-off time with Front Row players identified.

The Home Club is responsible for ensuring the final score and number of tries scored by each team is reported to the Results Service by 5.30pm either by telephone or completion of the EMC. If you are having problems sending your EMC, you must telephone 020 3951 7787. In any event EMC's must be completed and sent by Midday on the Tuesday following the Saturday match.

Failure to adhere to the above, including misinformation which requires subsequent amendment to a league table, will result in fines issued by the Results Service in accordance with Regulation 6, App. 4, Sanction Guidelines. This shall be £25 on the first occasion liable to increase and/or deduction of league points for further breaches or non-payment.

2. Non-playing of Matches on the Appointed Date

A club is required to play all of its fixtures on the dates appointed in accordance with the RFU/ROC Structured Season, or the rearrangement thereof. It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure the availability of a pitch at their normal home ground or, if that is unavailable, a suitable alternative venue agreed by their opposition in accordance with Regulation 6.22.

Where the League Secretary rules that the failure to play a match on the appointed date is unjustifiable and therefore in breach of RFU Regulation 6.45, the offending club shall be deducted Championship points in accordance with Regulations 6.46, 6.72 and the Sanction Guidelines (RFU Regulation 6, Appendix 3). The game shall not be replayed.

In general, the only justifiable postponement is that due to weather conditions. Except that the ROC reserves the right to allow a postponement caused by wholly exceptional circumstances totally beyond the control of the Club or its members or by virtue of local or National emergency.

Walkover Protocol. Applicable to Counties 1 and below ONLY

At Counties One and below, a team is required to fulfil a league match with the requisite number of eligible players as specific to that league in accordance with Regulation 6 and the Laws of the Game. In all matches a team must commence with a suitably trained and experienced front row and contested scrums.

If a team has insufficient players to fulfil this requirement, they will be liable to a 5-point deduction for an unjustifiable failure to fulfil the fixture. However, they will be able to avoid the deduction of points if they offer to play a friendly with a minimum of 10 players. This option will be available to a team a maximum of three times during the season.

The non-offending team **MUST** accept the offer to play a friendly in which event they will be awarded a 5-point walkover. Should the non-offending team decline to play the friendly they will not be awarded any league points.

Terms for the 'friendly' match, which shall be played at the time and venue of the scheduled League match, should be as agreed between the two teams which shall not be unreasonably withheld. These may be broadly in line with 'Game On' principles save that the result will not be recorded other than as a 5-point walkover to the non-offending team.

In the event that the appointed referee withdraws from the friendly fixture then it will be the responsibility of the offending team to supply a referee who must be in addition to the minimum of 10 players.

The offending team must inform the League Secretary and their opponents of their offer to play a friendly at the earliest opportunity and save for exceptional circumstances by no later than 20:00 on the Thursday prior to the match. The non-offending team prepared to play a friendly must respond by 12 noon Friday.

An Electronic Match Card cannot be used to record matches played under this arrangement. The details must be communicated to the Results Service via phone or text.

3. Postponed Matches

Supplementary to RFU Regulations 6.20 – 23 inclusive.

(a) Prior to the day of a match

No match shall be postponed, **for whatever reason**, without consultation and the consent of, the League Secretary or, if he is unavailable, a member of the ROC.

The Home Club shall inform both the League Secretary **AND** the visiting Club **IMMEDIATELY** when the first doubts about pitch fitness and/or pending inclement weather are raised and shall, at the same time, establish the intended travel arrangements and timings of the visitors.

The Match Official, or their representative, has primacy of decision as to whether a match should be played. The deciding Match Official must be independent of both clubs (unless otherwise agreed by the Regional Organising Committee) and the decision must be made in as timely a manner as possible with the travel considerations of the away team taken into account.

(b) **On the day of the match prior to away team travelling**

Where a Club wishes to postpone a match prior to the arrival of the opponents, they must consult and seek the permission of the League Secretary, or a ROC member, prior to cancellation of the match. If time permits the League Secretary may require a pitch inspection by the appointed match referee or other referee able to act on his behalf. The consultation must be made by and through the club's Nominated League Contact, who must notify the opposition immediately. Clubs should be aware of the time that the opposition will be leaving its home base when making ground inspections and make every endeavour to avoid unnecessary travel.

(c) **When both teams and the referee are present**

When both teams and the referee are present the decision shall:

- (i) Be made by the captains of the teams involved;
- (ii) Even if the captains agree for the match to proceed, the Referee is still entitled to decline to referee any match on safety grounds or other substantial issue;
- (iii) If one or both of the captains do not agree for the match to proceed, the match will not be played and the matter will be referred to the Organising Committee to decide upon what action shall be taken in accordance with RFU Regulations.

(d) **For all postponed matches**

- (i) Where a ground is pronounced unfit or is unavailable for play for any other reason, no other suitable local venue is available and the scheduled match is the first of the two games in the season between the clubs, the venue SHALL, where time allows, be exchanged (with the return fixture) if the opposition's pitch is fit and available to play. In these circumstances the scheduled home team shall remain the home team for the purposes of the Regulations and these Instructions.

Note: Where the game is in doubt in the days prior to the day of the match this arrangement to reverse venue should already be in place.

- (ii) The Home Club must take all possible steps to ensure the match is played on the second date. This must include the provision of a suitable alternative pitch and, for the avoidance of doubt, this will include the opponent's pitch if it is available. This will also apply to the return fixture even if that would mean both matches between the two clubs being played at the same venue.
- (iii) A match postponed because of weather or a match not played on the scheduled date for reasons acceptable to the ROC shall be played on the "Next Available Weekend" (NAW) unless the Organising Committee rules exceptionally otherwise in accordance with RFU Regulation 6.50.

For the 2026/2027 season, the weekends of 10th October, 26th December, 2nd January and 27th March shall not be deemed a 'NAW' unless both participating clubs agree. ALL other dates SHALL be a 'NAW'.

Separately and additionally, any postponement or abandonment **ON THE DAY OF THE MATCH** must be notified to the Results Service by the club(s) in accordance with Instruction 1 above.

A match postponed or cancelled and notified to the League Secretary **PRIOR TO THE DAY OF THE MATCH** will not be subject to Instruction 1 above. The League Secretary will ensure the Results Service has been made aware.

4. ‘Next Available Weekend’ (NAW) Protocol

Matches rearranged in accordance with RFU Regulation 26.50 and Admin Instruction 3(iii) above will be scheduled as follows:

- (a) As soon as it is known that both clubs are available, i.e., not involved in a previously rescheduled league match, the rescheduled date will be **CONFIRMED**. This date will not be changed save in accordance with sub-paragraph (d) below.
- (b) If the availability of one or both clubs cannot be confirmed but remains possible, then the match will be scheduled as **PROVISIONAL** for that ‘NAW’.
- (c) If two or more matches become available at the same time for confirmation on the same ‘NAW’ then the longest outstanding original scheduled fixture will take precedence.
- (d) The committee may alter the above protocol if:
 - (i) it is apparent that an alternative sequence would conclude some or all outstanding matches earlier than might otherwise occur or;
 - (ii) in their opinion, it is beneficial to the competition, e.g., to prioritise end-of-season fixtures with a view to concluding promotion and relegation issues including play-offs.

5. Rulings, Decisions and Appeal Procedures

The League Secretary has delegated authority (Regulation 6.7), to make all primary decisions with regard to any Regulation and any of these Instructions in respect of all clubs within that league. This shall be in accordance with Regulations 6.85 to 6.87 having regard to the Sanction Guidelines (Regulation 6, Appendices 3 and 4).

The Club will then have 7 (seven) days from the date of receipt of the written notification to request a review by the ROC in accordance with Regulations 6.88 to 6.93. Such request must be in writing to the Regional Administrator stating the full grounds and accompanied by a payment of £50.00 via bank transfer to Lloyds Bank under the account named below.

London & SE Competitions Committee Sort code 30-98-36 Acc. No. 02197491,

Please quote your club name as reference. This payment will be returned if the request is successful.

Requests for a review not lodged within the 7 days will be adjudged ‘out of time’ and will not be heard.

A club has a further right of appeal to the RFU as specified in RFU Regulations 6.94 and 19.5.6.

6. Appointment of Referees

It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure the appointment of a referee for all matches including rearranged matches.

RFU Regulation 12.1.3 provides that it is the home Club’s responsibility to liaise with the appointed match official(s) directly to confirm they are aware of the arrangements and have the appropriate directions to the venue for the match. ‘Directly’ shall NOT be deemed to include messages left with a third party or automated answering services without a confirmed response from the match official(s).

Failure to adhere to this will be taken into account should a game be postponed because of the lack of a match official.

Where the appointed referee is delayed, fails to arrive or during the course of a match is injured or is otherwise unable to continue, the two captains shall use their best efforts to agree to a substitute referee so allowing the match to be completed.

7. i) Kick-off Time for Matches

Supplementary to RFU Regulations 6.41 – 44 inclusive.

In accordance with RFU Regulation 6.41 all matches shall kick-off between 2.00pm and 3.00pm. In the event of adverse weather conditions matches may kick-off between 1.00pm and 4.00pm on Artificial Pitches.

Clubs without floodlights must kick-off NO LATER THAN:

3.00pm	September until October 24th; (Clocks go back Sun. 25th October);
2.30pm	October 31st, November 7th and 14th;
2.00pm	November 21st and 28th, December & January;
2.30pm	February;
3.00pm	March, April;

Where the two clubs mutually agree on a kick-off time outside these times, they shall do so in conjunction with the League Secretary – as the representative of the “Committee” and in accordance with RFU Regulation 6.42.

Although the ROC has always ruled that clubs involved in offshore matches are expected to be sympathetic to the flight requirements of the visitors, that ruling does not alter the status and requirements of RFU Regulations 6.41 to 6.44 in any way.

ii) Floodlights

The RFU have removed the requirement for clubs with floodlights to provide lux certificates. Clubs are now required to perform their own risk assessments. Details are given in the documents below.

RFU guide to floodlighting:

<https://rfu.widen.net/s/mcrrbmwpkp/rfuguidetofloodlighting>

Risk assessment guide:

<https://rfu.widen.net/s/fmvwbp8xfh/rfu-floodlighting-risk-assessment-guide-180823>

8. New Club Entries

A club wishing to enter the Competition in the following season shall signify this fact in writing to the Divisional Administrator by 1st April of the current season and to the Chairman and/or Secretary of the relevant Constituent Body Competitions Sub-Committee. That Sub-Committee shall consider the application and make recommendation to the Organising Committee.

In addition; the Club must satisfy all entry requirements laid down from time to time by the Organising Committee not later than 30th April in the current season.

For entry in the 2027-28 season these requirements shall include;

- (a) being able to display the ability to sustain a full League Programme of fixtures on the appointed dates; and
- (b) holding the rights to play on a suitable ground throughout the currency of a League season, without interruption.

9. Ground and Match Management

Supplementary to RFU Regulations 6.24 – 34 inclusive.

i) Technical Areas and Permitted Personnel

Clubs MUST familiarise themselves and comply with RFU Regulations 6.26 to 6.30 which include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that (with the exception of coaching and medical staff, replacements and water carriers) all other persons are kept at a reasonable distance from the playing area by permanent or temporary barriers;
- Coaching and medical staff, replacements and water carriers are expected to remain in the Technical Areas when not undertaking their duties. There shall be no more than four water carriers per team (including medical staff and replacements).

Sanction Guidelines (RFU Regulation 6, Appendix 3) enable the ROC to impose such penalty as deemed appropriate including the deduction of 5 or more league points for failure to comply with these requirements (including report by the referee).

ii) Touch Judges

- In the absence of appointed touch judges in accordance with RFU Regulation 12.1.1(g) each Club shall provide a competent touch judge who should not be a replacement. In an emergency and with the consent of the Referee, a replacement may act as a touch judge.

10. Lower XV Team Selection

Player Movement Between Adult Male XVs

a) Purpose

This Instruction is intended to preserve the fairness, integrity and competitive balance of RFU Men's League Competitions by ensuring that player movement between Adult Male XVs within the same Club is undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner.

All Clubs shall comply with RFU Regulation 6 and these National Administration Instructions.

b) Definitions

For the purposes of this Instruction:

Higher XV means any Adult Male XV of the same Club competing at a higher level of the RFU Men's League structure than the XV for which the player is selected.

Lower XV means any Adult Male XV of the same Club competing at a lower level of the RFU Men's League structure.

Electronic Match Card (EMC) means the official RFU Electronic Match Card submitted for a league fixture.

Front Row Player means a player who is suitably trained and experienced to play at prop or hooker in accordance with RFU Regulations and the World Rugby Laws of the Game.

Higher XV Player means any player who satisfies either of the following criteria:

- a. Has been named in the Higher XV matchday squad (starting XV or replacements) on four or more of that team's previous seven league Electronic Match Cards; or
- b. Has been named in the matchday squad (starting XV or replacements) for 50% or more of the team's total of scheduled league fixtures during the current season.

c) Eligibility

A Lower XV shall not include more than three (3) Higher XV Players in any league fixture save for exceptions as agreed by the Competition League Secretary in accordance with section d) below.

d) Exceptions

The Competition League Secretary may, at their sole discretion, approve the selection of more than three (3) Higher XV Players for a Lower XV where they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

In determining whether such exceptional circumstances exist, the Competition League Secretary may (but shall not be obliged to) have regard to some or all of the following considerations in their sole discretion:

- a. The Higher XV Player is returning from injury, illness, suspension, approved absence or another exceptional circumstance; and/or
- b. or the Higher XV Player is a suitably trained and experienced Front Row Player whose selection is necessary to ensure the fixture can be played safely and in accordance with RFU Regulation 6.

Where approval is sought on the grounds of front row cover, the Club shall limit the selection to the minimum number of Front Row Players reasonably required to satisfy the front row requirements of the fixture.

The Club shall notify the Competition League Secretary as soon as reasonably practicable (and in any event, prior to the relevant fixture) of any request made under this Section and, where requested, provide evidence supporting the circumstances giving rise to the request.

Any approval granted under this Section shall apply only to the specific fixture for which it is given unless otherwise confirmed in writing by the Competition Organiser.

e) Teams selected on merit

A Club with more than one team competing in the Men's Leagues must always adhere to the principle of selection on merit for each of its sides

Where a Club has fixtures for its Higher XV on the same day or weekend as their Lower XV and can demonstrate that all selections have been made on merit, the League Secretary may,

at their sole discretion, disapply the restrictions in section d) in respect of any Lower XV playing on that same day or weekend.

However, where the League Secretary has a reasonable belief that selection has not been based on merit, they may investigate any suspected breach of this Instruction and may request player appearance records, availability information, injury status, and any other relevant information from the club. Where the League Secretary is satisfied that a breach has occurred, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 7 of this Instruction.

f) Club Responsibilities

Clubs shall not select, move or withhold players between XVs in a manner that has the purpose or effect of obtaining an unfair competitive advantage or which otherwise undermines the integrity of the Competition.

The Competition League Secretary may request such information as is reasonably required to determine compliance with this Instruction, including previous Electronic Match Cards and any other relevant evidence.

g) Breaches and Sanctions

Where the Competition League Secretary determines that a Club has failed to comply with this Instruction, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulations and the applicable Competition Rules.

Should a breach be found by a League Secretary then the entry point for sanction will be either the reversal of the match result or a deduction of 5 league points, depending on the result of the match.

The League secretary may also consider mitigating circumstances and this could result in a suspension of any points deduction, a warning or any other proportionate sanction.

The normal right of review by the Regional Organising Committee (ROC) will apply (see item 5 above).

11. Loan Players Counties 1 & below

It is emphasised the following only applies to CBs with Lower XVs participating in the leagues. Teams will be able to Loan players from THREE Levels above. This is a variation from TWO levels as specified in Regulation 14.45 which will continue to apply in Counties Leagues where Lower XVs do not participate.