



Guidance to Clubs and Age Grade Coaches

THE HALF GAME RULE

For the 2019-20 season Regulation 15 will incorporate the "Half Game rule", the wording of which reads as follows:

15.12 Half Game Rule

15.12.1 Other than set out in Regulation 15.12.2, all clubs, teams, schools and colleges must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least half of the *Available Playing Time*. This requirement is mandatory across the entire age grade game and in respect of all contact and non-contact age grade matches, including 7 a-side matches and festivals/tournament matches.

15.12.2 In respect of the U18 Academy Competition only, all clubs must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least 20% of the *Available Playing Time*.

15.12.3 '*Available Playing Time*' means the total amount of playing time available to a team on any particular day. Where a team is participating in multiple matches in one day, the total available playing time will be the total number of minutes across all matches played by the team on that day; and in all cases (a) **includes** playing time spent off the pitch due to a temporary injury or yellow card and (b) **excludes** playing time that would have been available had a match not be abandoned or shortened due to bona fide reasons or in accordance with Regulation 15.11.3.

15.12.4 Regulation 15.12.1 **will not apply** in the event that a player is permanently removed from the match:

- (a) due to an injury incurred during the match;
- (b) as a result of a bona fide risk of injury; or
- (c) as a result of a red card or in the event of the referee requesting that a player be permanently removed from the match.

Clubs need to consider;

- ✓ The RFU consider this Regulation a major catalyst to change in the age grade game and expect the outcome to be a change of approach in the way age grade rugby is managed, away from winning matches towards child –centred development. Rugby Union is a late development sport and every child should be given an equal opportunity to develop their skill even though some will develop at different speeds and to different levels.
- ✓ An FAQ is available on the RFU website along with downloadable posters. <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/half-game>
- ✓ The seriousness with which the RFU take this Regulation is reflected in the Disciplinary Sanctions (shown below) to be applied in the event of a breach.
- ✓ The above Regulation applies to ALL matches – competition and friendlies.

- ✓ You will need to keep a record of player rotation to evidence that you have kept to the regulation. We recommend that the club utilise a common team sheet for all Age Grade teams which records the entire playing squad at that age, their availability or selection for the game and the approximate game time played, including any reason under 15.12.4 for not complying. This team sheet will be separate from any match card required for competitions and should be kept for a minimum of one calendar year. The Age Grade Squad Registration Sheet has a section you can use as a Game Tracker; alternatively, a separate Half Game Tracker sheet is available to download from the Youth page on the County Website.
- ✓ In KCRFU competitions you cannot leave players out of a squad in order to play a “stronger” team e.g. if you have a registered squad of 28 but turn up with 18 on match day when the competition rules permit a squad of 22, an explanation will need to be provided.
- ✓ However, KCRFU fully accepts that coaches must have discretion in their selection policies, though such policies must be clear to all club members and common across all age grades. So, for example, if your club policy says that you must attend x training sessions to be considered for competition selection and you apply this consistently then it may be reasonable not to select a player who does not attend training. Similarly, if a player has played a big school match on Saturday it is acceptable (and even encouraged) to agree with the player that he plays “x” minutes, which may be less than half of the Available Game Time, in order to ensure the player does not overplay and to minimise the risk of injury. The key here is an open discussion with the player about his best interests.
- ✓ KCRFU will only consider complaints regarding the Half Game Rule through appropriate club channels. It is therefore important that parents know how to raise concerns within your club both about your club and opposition teams. Notwithstanding, we absolutely discourage parents and/or spectators from “policing” opposition teams as they will not be in a position of knowledge.
- ✓ Where a team has concerns during a match, mention should be made on the COMMENTS section of the MATCH CARD. Thereafter a citation report will need to be filed with the County’s Age Grade Disciplinary Officer. The citing must come from a responsible person within the club, such as the Youth Chair, in accordance with Regulation 19 Appendix 6.



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HALF GAME RULE SANCTIONS TABLE

CBAGDS = Kent Age Grade Disciplinary Secretary NAGDS = National Age Grade Disciplinary Secretary
 *game = Available Playing Time according to the specific circumstances and maximum playing times.

These breaches accumulate from **the entire Age Grade** in a club and not per team.

Classification of Breach	Description of Classification	Sanction
Warning	The first instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal warning issued to the Club and Coach/ person responsible for the team. • Requirement to keep accurate records for all future Age-grade matches. • Warning recorded by the CBAGDS.
Low Level Breach	The second instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal warning issued to the Club and Coach/ person responsible for the team. • Points deducted from the Age-Grade league (possibly suspended) • Suspension of the coach/ person responsible for the team. (possibly suspended) • Warning recorded by the CBAGDS. • NAGDS notified. • All teams within the club should be reminded of the regulation
Mid Level Breach	The third instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of the Coach/ person responsible for the team. • Points deducted from the Age-Grade league • Points deducted from the Adult 1st Team (possibly suspended) • RFU Age Grade Rugby Manager Notified
Top End Breach	The fourth instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game* Or Evidence that coaches/ person responsible have deliberately colluded to prevent players playing half a game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of the coach/ person responsible for the team. • Points deducted from the Adult 1st Team equating to 4 wins. • RFU Discipline Department notified
Cup competition Breach	At least 1 player does not play at least a half of a match* in a knockout cup competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the team won the match, team removed from the Cup competition for the current season. • If the team lost the match, sanction guidelines aggravated by at least 1 level. • Age Grade Rugby Manager Notified