

KENT RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

YOUTH COMPETITION RULES 2023-2024



General

This competition will be played **and must be completed in the period September 2023 to April 2024.** These rules apply to all age groups where variations exist these are identified within the relevant rules

1. Eligibility

- 1.1. The Competition is open to all clubs that are in full membership of the Kent County RFU and shall be played under the Rules of the Rugby Football Union.
- 1.2. Only Clubs who have completed their current Safeguarding Audit are eligible
- 1.3. Teams entering the Colts Competition are required to have made a written undertaking regarding the playing of 17 year olds in Adult Rugby in accordance with Regulation 15.

2. Competition Management

- 2.1. The management of this competition shall be vested in the County Youth sub-committee which shall appoint Competition Managers who shall be responsible for organising the competition and shall have full powers to deal with all disputes and transgressions.
- 2.2. In the event of an appeal against a decision of the Competition Manager the appeal shall be referred to the Game Development committee. The GDC will have access to all relevant correspondence and any further information which the clubs concerned and the Competition Manager may wish to submit.
- 2.3. The decision of the Game Development Committee shall be final.
- 2.4. The power to disqualify a Club from the competition remains with the County Youth sub-committee but may be subject to appeal to the Game Development committee as set out in 2.2 and 2.3 above
- 2.5. No exception to Rules 1 and 2 will be allowed and exceptions to the other Rules will not normally be allowed.

3. Entry applications

- 3.1. Applications to enter the competition must be made to the Competition Manager in the form and in the format supplied by the Manager and not later than the date specified.
- 3.2. The applicant shall state the name, telephone number and email of the person to be responsible for future communications. These details will be circulated to the other clubs participating in the competition.
- 3.3. Entries received after the specified date will not be considered under any circumstances.
- 3.4. There shall be an entrance fee agreed by the Youth sub-committee which shall be paid on application. Applications without the correct entrance fee will not be accepted.

4. Squad sizes

- 4.1. For clubs entering one team all eligible players may be registered for that squad.
- 4.2. For clubs entering two teams: The 1st squad is limited to on field players plus the number of substitute players noted in the table below, (a number of players may also be registered for the 2nd squad if required as noted in the table below.) These dual registered players will not include players of DPP or County standard or above. The 2nd squad would contain all remaining players. 2nd Squad players may play in the 1st squad without restriction.

Age Group	On field players	Substitutes	Total Squad size per team	Max number of 1 st Squad players registered for 2 nd Squad
U12	12	6	18	6
U13	13	6	19	6
U14	15	7	22	7
U15	15	7	22	7
U16	15	7	22	12
Colts	15	7	22	12

- 4.3. Clubs with two sides may not play players in both sides on the same day.
- 4.4. All players are required to be affiliated to their clubs in order to be eligible to play
- 4.5. Clubs with two sides should respect the spirit of the competition. Clubs may not rotate players between the two sides in ways which undermine the spirit of the competition. It is generally expected that clubs entering 2 teams will allocate players in such a way as to have teams of a **similar strength unless otherwise agreed**. Teams that are reported not to have done so will be subject to investigation under the provisions of Rule 13 below.

4.6. The Match Day squad shall be limited to a maximum as noted in the table above

4.7. Half Game rule will apply to all games

5. Player eligibility

5.1. All players must be Under 18 years of age on the 1st September at the start of the season in which they play in the Competition [i.e. September 2021] and must be registered and affiliated to their club on GMS according to the procedures agreed by the RFU and be playing in their chronological age group unless permitted otherwise according to the provisions of RFU Regulation 15.

5.2. Players playing down an age group will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances as defined under RFU Regulation 15.4 and confirmed in writing by Kent Rugby.

5.3. Players playing up an age group are permitted in accordance with RFU Regulation 15 and confirmed in writing by Kent Rugby. No player may play in or against a team which contains players 2 years older or younger than them (i.e U16 playing up into Colts may only play with and against U17 players)

5.4. It is recognised that combining teams is allowable under Regulation 15 providing it is confirmed in writing by Kent Rugby. In this instance the team will be entered into the younger age competition and play the younger age grade rules as required by RFU Regulation 15. Clubs should familiarise themselves with the requirements of Regulation 15 and abide by them at all times.

5.5. All players must be genuine players for their Club and to be eligible must be a fully paid up member of the club with regular attendance and not included especially for the competition.

5.6. No player may play for more than one team in the competition in any one season.

6. All players will be required to be registered for the competition on GMS. These names will be held on GMS as eligible players and will form the basis of the squad to pick from when using electronic match cards and online results.

7. Match Day Arrangements.

Waterfall Competitions (U12 – U14)

7.1. The Home Side will be responsible for contacting its opponent and for arranging the time, venue and the Referee.

7.2. Each team will play the others in the group once.

7.3. In the event that the fixtures cannot be played due to weather conditions teams should advise the competition manager as soon as possible and between them determine a new date to complete the fixture.

7.4. Each team should have the required number of qualified first aiders as determined by the RFU.

7.5. Each team should provide a competent Touch Judge for all fixtures.

7.6. Kick Off times are recorded for administration purposes as 11.30 but teams should agree a mutually convenient time should this not suit.

League Competitions (U15 – Colts)

7.7. The Home Side will be responsible for contacting its opponent and for arranging the time, venue and the Referee.

7.8. In the event that the pitch of the designated home side is not available for whatever reason and the away side can host the fixture it shall be played at the away side which will then be responsible for all the arrangements for the fixture.

7.9. For competition and referee administration purposes all matches in this league will kick off at **11.30am** unless permission has been granted by the Competition Manager for a change in Kick Off time.

7.10. The Competition Manager will normally grant requests for changes to the Kick Off time provided that:

- (i) The opposition has been contacted and agree to the change.
- (ii) The Competition Manager receives the request at least 72 hours prior to the match being played.
- (iii) The Club undertakes to contact and inform the appointed referee in good time.
- (iv) Changes in Kick Off times will not normally be allowed within 72 hours of the match.
- (v) Any club failing to comply with this rule is liable for action to be taken under Rule 2.

7.5 The club referee liaison officer is responsible for the appointment of a **qualified** referee for each home fixture where appropriate. (*See notes on the appointment of referees*)

7.6 It is expected where possible Referees for each Colts game should be appointed by either the Kent or London Society of Rugby Football Union Referees as appropriate for the club.

7.7 If it does not prove possible to appoint a Society referee then, with the agreement of the opposition, a referee who holds the RFU 15-a-side referee certificate may be appointed provided that such a person has been DBS checked and is not a member of the clubs playing.

7.8 In all other circumstances the referee should independent of the age group playing and preferably not a member of either club

7.9 Each side shall supply a competent Touch Judge.

- 7.10 All games will be played on the dates agreed by the County Youth sub-committee and specified by the Competition Manager unless agreed in advance.
- 7.11 The Clubs concerned shall immediately notify the competition manager by email of any postponement or abandonment of matches and the reason therefore. The competition manager will then decide on the most appropriate course of action.
- 7.12 Due to the tight schedule generally fixtures may only be postponed due to adverse weather. If a fixture is postponed and the postponement is approved by the County organiser a new date must be mutually agreed as soon as possible to ensure the competition gets back on track. In the event of one side not being able to honour the fixture on the postponed date then the match will be forfeit and treated as a 'walkover'. (see 9.4, 11.12 and 12.9 below)
- 7.13 In the event that fixtures cannot be played due to a lack of availability in either team and rearrangement is not possible within the competition window the fixture will be decided by the Competition Manager in consultation with both clubs and the Youth Chair

8. Results

- 8.1. Each team manager will prepare the electronic match card and team sheet identifying where required (U13 upwards) front row players prior to the game. Managers will be responsible for completing this prior to the game and the home side will be responsible for entering the final score on GMS for the away team to verify.
- 8.2. It will be the responsibility of the each Team manager to complete the Electronic Match Card on GMS.
- 8.2.1. The Match Card will contain the full team list for each team identifying trained front row players; it will be completed before the start of the game and will be provided to the referee. It will included each players RFU Number as noted on GMS.
- 8.2.2. The Match Card will clearly identify any players playing up or down in accordance with RFU regulation 15.
- 8.2.3. Failure to ensure proper and timely completion (within 48 hours of the game) of the Electronic Match Card may at the discretion of the competition manager result in 2 points being deducted from the team.

9. Match Rules

- 9.1. Each match will played in accordance with the Age Grade regulations and rules of play for the Age group concerned
- 9.2. Matches must be brought to an end if:
- 9.2.1. At Under 12s to Under 13s the try difference rises to more than six; or

- 9.2.2. at Under 14s to Colts the points difference is more than 50 points.
- 9.3. At the point the match is brought to an end the remaining playing time may be used to facilitate a training match between the teams mixing players as appropriate.
- 9.4. If a team is unable to fulfil a fixture (other than for reasons detailed above) the opposition will be awarded a 'Walkover'.
- 9.5. All fixtures will be subject to the provisions of Game On Principles and it is expected that should Game On variations be required these will be agreed to by the opposing team as far as possible in advance. Failure to agree to Game On principles should be reported to the Youth Chair as soon as possible and points deductions may be levied against the offending team.
- 9.6. Any team unable to field a minimum of 10 players will be deemed unable to fulfil the fixture. Any team not able to start the game meeting this requirement should play the game but will be deemed to have lost with the opposition awarded a win. The losing team will be entitled to a losing point.

10. Half Game Rule

- 10.1. All teams, 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.
- 10.2. 'Available Playing Time' means the total amount of time allocated to a particular match (or matches) by RFU Regulations, any competition specific regulations or by the coaches of the playing teams (in circumstances where those coaches have agreed to play a shortened match).

Any stoppages that may occur during a match are not to be taken into account when calculating the Available Playing Time.

For example, where a match is 70 minutes long, the Available Playing Time is 70 minutes and each player must receive a minimum of 35 minutes playing time under the Half Game Rule.

- 10.3. Rule 10.2 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.

11. Competition format Waterfall Competition (U12 – U14)

- 11.1. The Competition Manager will be responsible for the order of games and designating home and away fixtures.
- 11.2. Groups will be either 4 or 5 teams and each team will play their opposition once.

- 11.3. The composition of each league will be determined by a seeding committee consisting of, the Chairman of the Youth sub-committee and the Competition Manager, who will act as secretary to the Committee.
- 11.4. The basic criteria for seeding will be the relative results of matches played in the previous season, historic club strength, geographical factors and the seeding committee may take into account other factors which it considers relevant.
- 11.5. Clubs will have the opportunity to comment on the seedings for a short window prior to the groups being finalised.
- 11.6. Once finalised there shall be no appeal against the decisions of the seeding committee
- 11.7. The Competition will consist of 2 league rounds and is designed to promote competitive games between closely matched teams:
- 11.8. Round 1- In each group teams will play each team from the same group once
- 11.9. Round 2 – The groups will be restated with the top 2 teams in each group going to a league up and the bottom 2 going to the league below.
- 11.10. There will be no Trophies awarded and the final positions will inform the following years Waterfall or league draws.
- 11.11. Points in Rounds 1 & 2
 - 11.11.1. The winning team in each match will receive 4 points.
 - 11.11.2. Both teams will be awarded 2 points for a draw
 - 11.11.3. The losing team will be awarded 1 point and a further 1 point if the losing margin is 10 points or fewer.
 - 11.11.4. One bonus point will be awarded to a team scoring 4 tries or more
- 11.12. If a team is unable to fulfil a fixture the opposition will be awarded a 'Walkover' and receive points and a notional score of 30 points to 0 and a try bonus (see also rule 11.16 below).
- 11.13. When calculating points difference in the league tables the Competition Manager will allocate a maximum of plus, or minus, 50 points even if the actual difference was greater than 50 points.
- 11.14. Following the completion of all league matches, if teams are tied on points then points difference will be used to break the tie and should that be a draw the number of tries scored by each team.
- 11.15. If Rule 11.13 fails to break any ties then the result of the match between the two teams will prevail (if played) and should that be a draw the Competition Manager will evaluate red and yellow cards as a means to break the tie. The final resolution would be the toss of a coin.
- 11.16. The Competition Manager reserves the right, in consultation with the Chair of the Youth sub-committee and other members of the Committee, as appropriate,

to review the outcomes of results at the league fixtures with particular reference to the impact of 'Walkover' results.

12. Competition format League Competition (U15 – Colts)

- 12.1. The Competition Manager will be responsible for the order of games and designating home and away fixtures.
- 12.2. The competition will take the format of a straight league format.
- 12.3. The composition of each league will be determined by a seeding committee consisting of, the Chairman of the Youth sub-committee and a Competition Manager, who will act as secretary to the Committee.
- 12.4. The basic criteria for seeding will be the relative results of matches played in the previous season, historic club strength, geographical factors and the seeding committee may take into account other factors which it considers relevant.
- 12.5. Clubs will have the opportunity to comment on the seedings for a short window prior to the groups being finalised
- 12.6. Once finalised there shall be no appeal against the decisions of the seeding committee
- 12.7. Each team will play the others in League once.
- 12.8. Points awarded
 - 12.8.1. The winning team in each match will receive 4 points
 - 12.8.2. Both teams will be awarded 2 points for a draw
 - 12.8.3. The losing team will be awarded 1 point and a further 1 point if the losing margin is 10 points or fewer.
 - 12.8.4. One bonus point will be awarded to a team scoring 4 tries or more
- 12.9. If a team is unable to fulfil a fixture the opposition will be awarded a 'Walkover' and receive points and a notional score of 30 points to 0 and a try bonus (see also rule 12.13 below).

When calculating points difference in the league tables the Competition Manager will allocate a maximum of plus, or minus, 50 points even if the actual difference was greater than 50 points.
- 12.10. Following the completion of all league matches, if teams are tied on points then points difference will be used to break the tie and should that be a draw the number of tries scored by each team.
- 12.11. If Rule 12.12 fails to break any ties then the result of the match between the two teams will prevail (if played) and should that be a draw the Competition Manager will evaluate red and yellow cards as a means to break the tie. The final resolution would be the toss of a coin.

12.12. The Competition Manager reserves the right, in consultation with the Chair of the Youth sub-committee and other members of the Committee, as appropriate, to review the outcomes of results at the league fixtures with particular reference to the impact of 'Walkover' results.

12.13. The top 2 Teams in the top league for each age group will be awarded Winners and Runners Up trophies

13. Behaviour likely to bring the game into disrepute

13.1. All clubs participating in the competition have a duty to ensure that players, coaches and supporters understand that 'behaviour likely to bring the game into disrepute' (RFU Regulation 5.12) will not be tolerated.

13.2. For the avoidance of doubt 'behaviour likely to bring the game into disrepute' shall mean 'any conduct, behaviour, statements and/or practices on or off the playing enclosure during or in connection with a Match or otherwise, that is unsporting and/or cheating and/or insulting and/or unruly and/or ill-disciplined and/or that brings or has the potential to bring the Game and/or its appointed personnel or Match Officials into disrepute'.
Edited from World Rugby.

13.3. Cases of such behaviour should be noted on the match card (Rule 8 above) and signed by the referee.

13.4. All cases will be reported by the Competition Manager to the County Youth Disciplinary Secretary who will initiate an immediate enquiry in accordance with RFU regulations. The Secretary will oversee any disciplinary process in conjunction with the clubs and the County Disciplinary Committee.

13.5. If a club and /or an individual or individuals is/are found guilty of behaviour which brings the game into disrepute then, the sanctions outlined below may be administered by a disciplinary panel in accordance with the RFU regulations.

13.6. The sanction may include:

13.6.1. a caution and warning as to future conduct;

13.6.2. a fine;

13.6.3. a suspension for a specified number of Matches (including all on-field activities) or period of time;

13.6.4. expulsion from the remainder of the competition

13.6.5. suspension from involvement in officiating, coaching and/or administration of the Game;

13.6.6. the deduction or cancellation of points

13.6.7. the cancellation of a Match result;

13.6.8. the forfeiture of a Match;

13.6.9. any combination of the above or such other sanction as may be appropriate

13.6.10. Points deductions from the Clubs Senior Team in the highest league in which they play.

- 13.7. Regardless of whether any instance of such behaviour is being investigated under the RFU disciplinary process, the Competition Manager, in conjunction with the County Youth Disciplinary Secretary and Chair of the Youth Sub Committee may consider the circumstances of any report. If the behaviour is considered prejudicial to the reputation, good conduct or spirit of the competition, the Competition Manager reserves the right to impose upon the team of the offending club a points deduction, cancellation or forfeiture of a match result, suspension, or exclusion of the team from the competition. They may also impose any other restriction or condition to any further games played by the team or club in that competition, as is deemed reasonable to prevent or minimise any reoccurrence of the poor behaviour.

May 2023