

Women's Premiership and National Leagues

League and Competition Rules 2017/2018

1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these L&C Rules, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (i) **Club** means a rugby club represented by a team participating in any Union Competition
- (ii) **Competition** means any rugby union Competition administered by the Union
- (iii) **Dual Registered Player** means a Non Premiership Club Player who is dual registered with a Premiership Club and listed in a Premiership Squad
- (iv) **Effective Registration** means the Player has been registered by the Player's Club online in the Union's database for the relevant Season
- (v) **L&C Rules** means these Women's Rugby League and Competition Rules 2017/2018
- (vi) **League** means the domestic XV's rugby Competitions administered by the Union
- (vii) **League Competition** means a Competition within the League
- (viii) **LFCP** means the League Fixture Control Panel, which is authorised to make determinations on issues arising under the L&C Rules. The LFCP will consist of up to seven members of the rugby community appointed by the Union each Season to represent a cross section of Clubs. The Union will nominate one of these members to perform the role of League Commissioner. Currently the LFCP members are:

Men's and Women's Premiership and Premiership A

Peter Else (Chair)

Don Rider

Paddy Donovan

Men's and Women's National Leagues

John Bruce (Chair)

Fred Au

Wu Yuet-ming

Paul Deayton

- (ix) **Match** means a rugby union Match administered by the Union

- (x) **National League** shall mean any Competition within the League below the Premiership League
- (xi) **National Player** is a player that has since 1 August 2017 either represented Hong Kong in rugby as a member of the senior Hong Kong 15's or 7's team [*or has been selected to represent Hong Kong in the final named squad for the senior Hong Kong 15's or 7's teams*]. This does not include a player who has only represented Hong Kong as a HKRU national age grade representative at U20 or below.
- (xii) **Non Premiership Club** means any Club that is not a Premiership Club
- (xiii) **Premiership Club** means USRC Tigers, Valley RFC, Gai Wu, City RFC, Kowloon RFC, SCAA CWB, HKFC and Tai Po
- (xiv) **Premiership Squad** means the squad of 28 Players that each Premiership Club has registered with the Union and listed as its Premiership Squad
- (xv) **Premiership League** means the highest League Competition within the League
- (xvi) **Player Transfer Form** means a form the Player must sign and have counter signed by the Player's current Club chairman or Club coaching officer and new Club chairman or Club coaching officer
- (xvii) **Player** means a Player playing a Match administered by the Union
- (xviii) **Season** means the League season, which typically runs from September to March
- (xix) **Union** means the Hong Kong Rugby Union

2. COMPETITIONS

2.1 The Union controls and is responsible for the administration of the Competitions.

2.2 Save for any exception set out in the rules and regulations of any particular Competition, the L&C Rules shall apply to all Clubs and all Competitions during the Season with effect from 1 September.

2.3 The entry procedures, format, divisions, sequence, timing and duration of the Competitions shall be determined by the Union.

3. EFFECTIVE REGISTRATION

3.1 A Player shall hold Effective Registration with the Union once they have been registered by a Club online in the Union's database for the relevant Season. The only evidence admissible of a Player's Effective Registration with a Club on any particular date is the computerised listing held by the Union.

3.2 Dual Registration No Player may hold Effective Registration with more than one Club at any time unless approved by the LFCP, with the exception of a Dual Registered Player. A Premiership Club may dual register up to 6 Players from a Non Premiership Club with approval from the HKRU Womens Performance Manager. A Dual Registered Player is eligible to be selected for either or both Clubs for which the Player is registered on any given Match day and may play in the Premiership division throughout the Season without limitation. Dual Registered Players must be registered as such with the Union by 1 December 2017.

3.3 Player Transfer A Player who wishes to transfer Clubs may do so between 1 April and 1 December by completing and submitting to the Union a Player Transfer Form signed by all relevant parties. If the current Club refuses to sign the Player Transfer Form for any reason it will be treated as a registration dispute and will be referred to the LFCP for resolution. In the event of a registration dispute, the Player may not transfer to or play for the new Club unless and until permitted by the LFCP. A Player may not transfer Clubs after 1 December for the remainder of the relevant Season, irrespective of whether the Clubs concerned are in agreement.

3.4 New Players (currently not registered to any other Club) may be registered with a Club between 31 October 2017 and 31 January 2018.

3.5 No Club may field a Player for a team in any Competition Match who:

3.5.1 Does not hold Effective Registration with that Club (save and except for Dual Registered Players)

3.5.2 Is currently under suspension under the L&C Rules or the Laws of the Game.

4. LOSS OF EFFECTIVE REGISTRATION

4.1 A Player will cease to have Effective Registration with a Club:

4.1.1 Upon having Effective Registration with another Club (save and except for Dual Registered Players); or

4.1.2 Upon having Effective Registration cancelled or suspended by the LFCP for any reason; or

4.1.3 Where Effective Registration is invalidated pursuant to Rule 5 below;

4.1.4 Where and from the date upon which a union, with whom a Player is currently registered and to whom a Club had applied for consent to register a Player (who had been granted Effective Registration pending a response from that union), advises that any consent or clearance is refused or withdrawn or delayed.

5. FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION

5.1 If a Club or Player supplies incorrect or misleading information to the Union on the online Player registration system the Effective Registration will be void. A financial penalty may also be imposed as the LFCP considers appropriate.

6. SQUAD REGISTRATION

6.1 Premiership Squad Registration Each Premiership Club Team must register a squad list of **28** Players with the Union as its Premiership Squad one week before the first Premiership fixture of the Season (*with the exception of SCAA CWB, which has been granted dispensation for the 2017/18 Season to registered a squad list of 25 Players*):

6.1.1 The Premiership Clubs that finished first, second, third and fourth in the Premiership division in the preceding Season must name 15 players that will not be able to play down in National League 1 or 2 (except as permitted in rule 7 below). The Premiership Clubs that finish fifth, sixth and seventh in the Premiership division in the preceding Season and Tai Po must name 12 players that will not be able to play down in National League 1 or 2 (except as permitted in rule 7 below). These must be the Premiership team's top 15 performing players (or 12 as the case may be) (the "**Performance List**").

6.1.2 Each Premiership Club must identify and register a minimum of 5 front row players within its Premiership Squad. It is the team's responsibility to ensure that all front row players and potential front row replacements are suitably trained.

6.2 Womens National League 1 Registration Each Club must register a squad list of **25** players whom it lists as its National League 1 Team with the Union one week before the first National League 1 fixture of the season:

6.2.1 Each Premiership Clubs with a team in National League 1 and in National League 2 must list 12 players within the National League 1 squad that can only play National League 1 or Premiership.

6.2.2 Each Non-Premiership Club with a team in National League 1 and National League 2 must list 12 players within the National League 1 squad that can only play National League 1.

6.2.3 The lists of Players referred to in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 above shall be referred to as the “**NL1 Performance List**”.

6.2.4 Each National League 1 team must identify and register a minimum of 4 front row players within their total squad number of 25 players. It is the team’s responsibility to ensure that all front row players and potential front row replacements are suitably trained.

6.3 Womens National League 2 Registration Each Womens National League 2 Team must register a squad list of **25** players with the Union one week before the first National League 2 fixture of the season:

6.3.1 Each National League 2 team must identify and register a minimum of 3 front row players within their total squad number of 25 players. It is the team’s responsibility to ensure that all front row players and potential front row replacements are suitably trained.

7. PLAYERS DROPPING DOWN AND PLAYING IN LOWER LEAGUES

7.1 Premiership Squad Players

7.1.1 A maximum of 4 Players, including up to 3 Players from a Premiership Club’s Performance List, including National Players, may drop down into and play in National League 1. These players may change from week to week.

7.1.2 Where a Premiership Club does not have a team in National League 1, a maximum of 4 Players from the Premiership Squad may drop down into and play in National League 2 provided that the Players are not named on the Premiership Club’s Performance List .These players may be changed from week to week.

7.1.3 Premiership Clubs that have a team in both National League 1 and National League 2 may not drop Players from their Premiership Squad down to play National League 2.

7.1.4 Should a Premiership Club breach Rules 7.1.1 to 7.1.3, any forfeiture of League Competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the Club team that played the Premiership Squad Player only. No additional forfeiture of League Competition points may be imposed in relation to the Premiership team.

7.2 National League 1 Squad Players

7.2.1 A maximum of 4 Players from a Club's National League 1 Squad may drop down into and play in National League 2 provided that the Players are not National Players. These players may change from week to week.

**If a Club needs to name more than 4 players to play for another team, then they are able to apply for dispensation from the [LFCP/HKRU Womens Rugby Development Manager]*

7.2.2 A Player that is on a Club's NL1 Performance List may not drop down into and play in National League 2.

7.2.3 Should a Club breach Rules 7.2.1 or 7.2.2, any forfeiture of League Competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the Club team that played the National League 1 Player only. No additional forfeiture of League Competition points may be imposed in relation to the Club Premiership or National League 1 team (as the case may be).

8. PLAYER PERMIT SYSTEM

8.1 National League 1 and National League 2 teams that are short of players for their games are permitted to play up to 4 players from another Club provided the process set out in 8.2 and 8.3 below is followed.

8.2 Both Clubs must agree upon the player permit and the HKRU must be notified with details of the permitted players in a reasonable time prior to the fixture. Permit requests must be approved and acknowledged by the head of women's development before the game.

8.3 No National Players may play for another Club as a permitted player.

8.4 Should a Club breach Rule 8, any forfeiture of League Competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the Club team that played the player only. No additional forfeiture of League Competition points may be imposed in relation to the Club with whom the relevant Player is registered.

9. DUAL REGISTRATIONS

9.1 A Premiership Club may register up to a maximum of 6 Players registered with Non Premiership Clubs with prior agreement of the Player and her Club. These Players must be registered by name with the Union and be clearly identified as "Dual Registered Players" with the Premiership Club. A Dual Registered Player may only play in the Premiership division for the Premiership Club with whom she is registered.

9.2 Should a Premiership Club play a Player in breach of Rule 9, any forfeiture of League Competition points imposed by the LFCP in relation to the breach will apply to the Club team that played the Dual Registered Player only. No additional forfeiture of League Competition points may be imposed in relation to the Premiership team.

10. TEAM MANAGEMENT, REPLACEMENTS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

10.1 Women's Premiership

10.1.1 Premiership teams will follow World Rugby Law 3: Number of Players – The Team, save as amended in these Rules. Women's Premiership games will be 80 minutes long (2 x 40 minute halves)

10.1.2 Premiership match day squads may consist of a maximum of 22 or 23 players, which must contain at least 5 front row players (or 6 front row players in the case of a 23 player squad). Premiership teams will be allowed a maximum of 7 or 8 replacements during the game. A team may substitute up to two or three front row players and up to five other Players.

10.1.3 Substitutions may only be made when the ball is dead and with the permission of the referee. If a player is substituted, that player may only return to play when replacing an injured front row player in accordance with World Rugby Law 3.5, a player with a blood injury in accordance with World Rugby Law 3.11 or a player who has been injured as a result of foul play (as verified by the referee).

10.1.4. Premiership match day 23 must contain at least six front row players and there must be sufficient front row Players to play at hooker, tight-head prop and loose-head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement is required in each front row position, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. If a team wishes to field 5 front row players, the match day squad will be limited to 22 Players in line with World Rugby rules, which is a minimum requirement for a Premiership fixture.

10.2 National League 1

10.2.1 National League 1 games will be 70 minutes long (2 x 35 minute halves)

10.2.2 National League 1 match day squads may consist of a maximum of 23 players, which must contain at least 5 front row players. It is the team's responsibility to ensure that all front row players and potential front row replacements are suitably trained.

10.2.3 National League 1 teams are permitted to play 'rolling substitutions' with unlimited interchanges. Substitutions may only take place when the ball is dead and with the referee's permission.

10.2.4 A National League 1 team that has a full match day squad but is unable to safely form a contestable scrum at the start of the match may choose to play the match with uncontested scrums, however the team that cannot safely form a fully contestable scrum will be reduced to 14 players throughout the duration of the game.

10.3 National League 2

10.3.1 National League 2 games will be 70 minutes long (2 x 35 minute halves).

10.3.2 National League 2 match day squads of 25 players – this must contain 3 front row players.

10.3.3 National League 2 teams are permitted to play 'rolling substitutions' with unlimited interchanges. Substitutions may only take place when the ball is dead and with the referee's permission.

10.3.4 In the event of a National League 2 team being unable to safely form a contestable scrum at the start of the match, the referee will order the game to be played with uncontested scrums. The game will continue without either team having to drop a player. Uncontested scrums as a result of sending off, temporary suspension or injury must be played with eight players per side.

11. GAME DAY ADMINISTRATION

11.1 All teams that play are required to submit a completed team sheet of its match day squad to the Women's Rugby Officer by midday prior to match day. Teams are required to identify and mark on the teamsheets their trained front row players.

11.1.1 Premiership and National League 1 match day squads should name a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 23 players.

11.1.2 National League 2 match day squads should name a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 25 players.

11.1.3 All teams are required to submit a team results sheet on the Monday following a Saturday match. If the match is played on day other than a Saturday, then on the first working day following. Results sheets must clearly show the names of all players that participated, along with point's scorers and the recipients of any yellow and/or red cards.

12. POSTPONEMENT OF MATCHES

12.1 Subject to Rules 12.2 and 12.3, a Club must fulfil its Competition fixture obligations in respect of any Match on the date and at the time appointed for such fixture.

12.2 A Match may be rearranged where the referee decides a Match should not be played or should be abandoned after less than sixty minutes have been played because of weather conditions or for any other reason. The referee's decision as to whether a Match should be played or abandoned shall be final. If a Match is abandoned after 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 unless otherwise directed by the LFCP if the abandonment arose in part due to a breach of World Rugby Law 10 or the HKRU Code of Conduct.

12.3 Subject to the approval of the Union, a Match may be rearranged where both teams agree a Match should be postponed to a later date.

12.4 In the event that a Match is to be rearranged in accordance with Rule 12.2 and 12.3, the fixture will be re-scheduled for a designated "make-up" weekend. In the event one or both of the teams are already scheduled to play on all available "make-up" weekends, then the game will be rescheduled at a time, date and venue either as both teams shall agree, or in the absence of agreement as determined by the Union in its absolute discretion.

13. FAILURE TO HONOUR FIXTURES

13.1 Where the LFCP is of the view that a Club has unjustifiably failed to fulfil its Competition fixture obligations, the Club shall be treated as having forfeited each remaining Match in the relevant Competition in accordance with L&C Rule 17 and may be deducted up to a further four League Competition points and receive a monetary fine, as the LFCP considers appropriate.

14. EFFECT OF FORFEITURE OF 3 OR MORE MATCHES

14.1 Any team which forfeits 3 or more Matches in the same Competition shall, in addition to any other penalty, be liable to disqualification from that Competition, to be decided at the absolute discretion of the LFCP.

15. GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

15. 1 First Aid or Physio Requirement

15.1.1 Clubs should ensure that they have sufficient First Aiders or Physio and equipment present at each fixture. Neither the Union nor any Referee is obliged to provide or be responsible for First Aid.

15.1.2 Where a First Aider or Physio is present, the Referee should do no more than allow an injured Player to leave the field to receive treatment or allow the First Aider or Physio onto the field to administer treatment. The First Aider or Physio may come onto the field to administer treatment without notice when required.

15.1.3 Where no First Aider or Physio is present, the Laws of the Game provide that the Referee shall decide whether the Player may be replaced due to injury. There is no obligation on a Referee to provide or to be responsible for First Aid.

15.2 Team uniforms and Players Personal Equipment:

15.2.1 In the event of a kit clash, it is the responsibility of the designated away team to wear an alternate kit. In the event of any dispute the Referee will be the arbitrator of whether or not a kit clash exists.

15.3 All Players must wear a mouth guard during HKRU sanctioned fixtures.

16. LEAGUE COMPETITION AND POINTS

16.1 Premiership will play one round robin to decide which competition they will be placed into Premiership (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th) or Premiership Development (5th, 6th, 7th, 8th). During the split teams will play a further 2 round robins. For the Premiership the team that is placed first after all league matches are concluded will be declared the league winners. Premiership Development will contest the Challenge trophy every weekend.

16.2 National League 1 and 2 will play 2 league round robin the team that is placed first after all league matches are concluded will be declared the league winners.

16.3 Points will be awarded for League Competition Matches as follows:

4 League Competition points for a win

2 League Competition points for a draw

1 League Competition point for a loss by 7 Match points or less

1 League Competition point for scoring 4 tries or more

No points will be awarded for a bye or for a loss by more than 7 Match points

16.4 Where one or more teams have equal League Competition Points at any stage of the Season, the position of each team in the relevant League Competition at that stage shall be determined firstly by the number of wins achieved and then on the basis of match points differential. A Club with a larger number of wins shall be placed higher than a Club with the same number of League Competition points but fewer wins.

If teams have equal League Competition points and an equal number of wins then a team with a larger difference between match points "for" and match points "against" shall be placed higher in the relevant League Competition than a team with a smaller difference between match points "for" and match points "against".

Should two teams have the same number of League Competition points and the same match points difference, the team having scored more match points "for" shall be placed higher in the relevant League Competition than the team having the lesser number of match points "for".

If the above does not establish different League Competition positions then the team in the higher position shall be the team that has achieved the higher aggregate match points scored by it in th

17. MATCH FORFEITURES

17.1 In the event that a team forfeits a League Competition Match:

(i) 5 League Competition points will be awarded to the team that receives the forfeiture

(ii) 1 League Competition point will be deducted from the team that forfeits the Match

(iii) The team receiving the forfeiture will receive 20 Match points for and nil Match points against

(iv) The team forfeiting the Match will receive nil Match points for and 20 Match points against.

18. GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

18.1 For Premiership and National League 2 all 8 teams will play quarter finals to contest the Premiership Grand Final Winner and the National League 2 Grand Final Winner.

Quarter Final 1: 1st Vs 8th

Quarter Final 2: 2nd Vs 7th

Quarter Final 3: 3rd Vs 6th

Quarter Final 4: 4th Vs 5th

Semi Final 1: Winner QF 1 Vs Winner QF 4

Semi Final 2: Winner QF 2 Vs Winner QF 3

Final: Winner of Semi Final 1 Vs Winner of Semi Final 2

The higher ranked teams will enjoy home advantage where feasible and the Final will take place at King's Park.

18.2 For National League 1 the 1st placed team will receive a bye into the semi finals with remaining 6 teams playing Quarter Finals.

Quarter Final 1: 2nd Vs 7th

Quarter Final 2: 3rd Vs 6th

Quarter Final 3: 4th Vs 5th

Semi Final 1: 1st Vs Winner QF 3

Semi Final 2: Winner QF 1 Vs Winner QF 2

Final: Winner SF 1 Vs Winner SF 2

The higher ranked teams will enjoy home advantage where feasible and the Final will take place at King's Park.

19. DRAWN MATCHES

19.1 If there is a draw in any knockout competition:

19.1.1 Following an interval of five minutes, extra time of 10 minutes each way (with an interval of 5 minutes) shall be played. The first period of extra time shall start with a kick off from the team that started the match and the second period shall start with a kick off from the team that received the kick off. "Golden Points" will apply the first team to score any points wins, and the game finishes.

19.1.2 If after extra time there is still a draw then the team having scored the most tries during the Match will be declared the winner. If the Match is still drawn then the team that scored the first try will be declared the winner. If no tries were scored then the team with the higher positive points difference played between the two teams in the League shall be declared the winner. If the teams have the same differential, then the winner will be decided by way of a coin toss between captains.

20. REFEREES

20.1 A Referee shall be appointed for each Match by the HKRU Referee Manager

21. UNDER-AGE PLAYERS

21.1 No team may select or play in any adult Competition any Player under the age of 18 unless the following application process has been complied with: (and no Player aged under 17 or a front row Player aged under 18 in any circumstances):

21.1.1 The applicant Player has applied to the Union in writing using the application form provided by the Union and including with that application:

(a) Endorsement from the chairman of the Club where the Player wishes to play adult rugby;

(b) A letter from the applicant Player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) supporting the application;

(c) Reference from current coach or coach of the adult rugby team for whom the applicant wishes to play; the form can be downloaded at the "Domestic Rugby - League Forms - Underage Players" section of Union website.

21.1.2 The application and recommendation should be submitted to the Union's Womens Rugby Development Manager who will inform the Union's Youth Committee of all applications. The Union reserves the right to make the final decision as to whether to allow the applicant to play adult rugby.

22. INTERPRETATION AND BREACH OF L&C RULES

22.1 The LFCP shall have absolute discretion on the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules, including determination of any breach of the L&C Rules, or any matter not provided for in the L&C Rules (including rectifying any administrative error) and shall give directions or make rulings as appropriate. The LFCP's decision shall be final and binding.

22.2 Any dispute or request for a determination relating to the interpretation or application of the L&C Rules shall be referred to the LFCP. Applications should be submitted in writing to the General Manager of Rugby Operations or his/her nominee addressed to the LFCP along with all supporting documentation. Where a determination is sought in advance of a particular fixture being played, the application must be submitted to the LFCP at least 72 hours before the relevant fixture. The LFCP's decision shall be final and binding.

22.3 Where there has been any omission or error in the L&C Rules the LFCP will have power to correct such error or omission in the manner they see fit.

22.4 Should a Premiership or Non-Premiership Club breach any of the L&C Rules, in addition to any express forfeiture provisions set out above, the relevant Club team that breached the L&C Rules may be deducted up to a further four League Competition points and/or the Club may receive a monetary fine, as the LFCP considers appropriate.