

Schools and Youth National Competition Rules 2025/26 (Version 1)

Rule No.	Change Proposed in SYNCR 25/26 Version 1	Explanation
3.2	<p>SYNCR 3: FIXTURES</p> <p>Proposed new SYNCR 3.2:</p> <p>Matches shall be played on the date and at the time notified. By exception, and where both teams agree, either team may make a written application to the Competition Secretary for a Match to be played at an alternative time or on an alternative date (including evenings and weekdays). Applications shall be made no later than 7 days prior to the scheduled kick-off time and must be accompanied by evidence as to the consent of both teams. Written permission/confirmation must be obtained from the Competitions Secretary. Consideration will be given to timeous applications providing it involves no detrimental impact to the conclusion of the competition schedule. Where, in the reasonable view of the Competition Committee, such concerns exist, the Competition Committee may refuse an application.</p>	<p>Replacement of existing rule 3.2 to mirror adult NCRs and provide clarification with regards to the need for timeous submission of fixture rescheduling requests.</p>
4.3	<p>SYNCR 4: THE PLAYERS</p> <p>Proposed new SYNCR 4.3:</p> <p>Other than with the written permission of the Competitions Committee, each player is restricted to participate with one club, and one school, in the competitions that are governed by the Schools and Youth National Competition Rules (as listed in Appendix 2). For the avoidance of doubt a player cannot participate for a club and a school within the same competition.</p>	<p>Replacement of existing rule 4.3 to provide clarification considering the introduction of the Open Competition.</p>

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4.5	<p>In school competitions a school may seek the Competitions Committee’s permission to field a Player who is not enrolled with that school i.e. is enrolled at another school or has left school but still complies with the age grade criteria. Such permission shall ordinarily only be granted where participation for the school concerned provides the only realistic competitive playing option for the Player. Schools must not attempt to utilise this rule in an effort to gain competitive advantage. With the exception of players that are new to the game applications must be submitted by 1st September in the prescribed form. and the Players seeking dispensation must not participate for the school until permission has been granted and the Player has been properly registered.</p>	<p>To encourage an understanding that players remaining at the same club/school for the whole National Competition phase (1st half of season) provides better stability for all squads.</p> <p>Note: Further changes to this rule are being considered through the schools and youth competitions review that is ongoing. Any additional proposed revisions shall be included in SYNCR 2025/26 Version 2.</p>
5.7 & 5.12 5.17	<p>SYNCR 5: THE TEAMS</p> <p>Number of Starting Players</p> <p>In U18/1st XV and U16 ‘A’ Matches if either Team does not have a suitably experienced front row to start the match the referee shall order uncontested scrums and the Match shall proceed as a Development Match.</p> <p>Replacements / Substitutes</p> <p>The maximum number of rolling substitutions a Team may use in any Match shall be 12.</p>	<p>Clarification to avoid misinterpretation.</p> <p>If a match starts with a contested scrum it does not become a Development Match if the referee then orders uncontested scrums.</p> <p>Removal of a rule that isn’t required.</p> <p>Utilising >12 substitutions is expected to be highly unusual and competitive gain perceived to be negligible or non-existent. Furthermore, in practice the number of substitutions is rarely monitored.</p>

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8.1	<p>SYNCR 8: METHOD FOR DECIDING ON PLACINGS AND IN TIED KNOCK-OUT MATCHES</p> <p>Conference Points tables shall be produced in respect of each Conference, U18 (1st XV), U16A or U15A League or Pool/Group. Teams shall be awarded a placing in the table based on the number of Competition Points received. The aggregate match points and tries scored (for and against) shall not be disclosed in the Conference Points table.</p> <p>Play-Off and Knock-Out Matches</p> <p>8.4 If the scores at full-time are equal in any play-off or knock-out Match:</p> <p>8.4.1 Competition Finals: The trophy shall be shared.</p> <p>8.4.2 Earlier Rounds: The following criteria (in the order given) shall be used to decide the winner:</p> <p>8.4.2.1 the team scoring more tries;</p> <p>8.4.2.2 the team scoring more conversions;</p> <p>8.4.2.3 the team scoring more drop goals;</p> <p>8.4.2.4 the team receiving fewer red cards;</p> <p>8.4.2.5 the team receiving fewer yellow cards;</p> <p>8.4.2.6 the team was able to start the match with 15 players;</p> <p>8.4.2.7 in the event that none of the above is able to separate the Teams, the away Team shall be declared the winner or, where the Match is played at a neutral venue, a coin shall be tossed.</p>	<p>Simplification.</p> <p>Adaption to accommodate all competitions allowing removal of additional competition specific regulations.</p> <p>Should the additional clause be called into effect – however uncommon this may be – it would enhance the prospect of a full sided fixture in the next round.</p> <p>Although the rules contain a degree of flexibility with regards to minimum player numbers all teams admitted to a National Cup competition are expected to have a big enough squad to play all fixtures with a full team.</p>
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5.1 - 5.3	<p>REGIONAL LEAGUE REGULATIONS</p> <p>REGULATION 5: THE PLAYERS</p> <p>5.1 If a Team is unable to start a match with 15 players, a player (or players) can be borrowed from another club (or clubs) that participate in a Regional League competition. For the avoidance of doubt the borrowed players do not need to be registered to that Team.</p> <p>5.2 If Regulation 5.1 is brought into effect, it must not impact the ability of the lending Club(s) to field at least 15 players in a match taking place on the same weekend.</p> <p>5.3 Regulation 5.1 is not available to a Team in their final 3 League matches.</p>	<p>Introduction of new player eligibility rules to enhance opportunity of retaining as many full-sided fully competitive fixtures as possible within the Regional Leagues.</p>
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