

National Competition Rules 2026/27 (Final Draft)

Document	Rule No.	New or revised rule in NCR 26/27	Explanation / Purpose
ALL	N/A	New Section - CONTENTS	This new section aims to improve improves the accessibility and usability of the regulations by allowing clubs, officials and administrators to quickly locate relevant rules without searching through the entire document. It also provides a clear structure to the regulations, the aim be to make them easier to navigate, maintain and update as the competitions evolve.
ALL	N/A	Drafting Review	The regulations have been reviewed and updated to modernise the language, improve consistency, and remove unnecessary, repetitive, or outdated text. This reflects a growing consensus among clubs, administrators and competition stakeholders that the regulations have become overly lengthy and complex over time, making them more difficult to navigate and apply. The objective of the review was therefore to make the rules clearer, more accessible, and easier to understand, while preserving their original intent, effect and integrity. As part of the consultation, feedback was received suggesting that the regulations be divided into up to three separate documents. This approach was developed and tested; however, feedback indicated that it increased complexity rather than reducing it. The separation of provisions across multiple documents created a significant number of cross-references, making it more difficult to locate and interpret related rules. The decision was therefore taken to retain a single set of Competition Regulations, while simplifying the drafting, structure and content to improve usability and accessibility. The revised document should not be viewed as the final stage of this process. Further feedback will be gathered over the course of the next 12 months as the regulations are used in practice, and additional opportunities to refine the structure, format and presentation of the rules will be considered as part of an ongoing programme of review and improvement.
ALL	N/A	New Document - Appeals	The appeals process has been moved to a standalone document to provide a single, consistent procedure applicable across all competition matters. This improves the clarity and accessibility of the Competition Regulations by separating competition administration from appeal governance and reduces the need to duplicate or update appeal provisions across multiple documents.
ALL	N/A	Section: Technical Zones/Sin Bins removed from NCRs and added to a separate document 'Scottish Rugby Match Day Protocols'	The Technical Zone and Sin Bin provisions have been removed from the Competition Regulations and incorporated into a separate operational protocol document. These provisions relate primarily to matchday administration and operational procedures rather than competition governance or eligibility matters. Separating these protocols improves the clarity and accessibility of the Competition Regulations by allowing them to focus on the administration of the competition itself, while ensuring that matchday operational requirements are contained within a dedicated document. This approach also allows Technical Zone and Sin Bin procedures to be reviewed,

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			updated and communicated independently without requiring amendments to the Competition Regulations each time operational practices change.
ALL	N/A	Remove 'Appendix 1 – Designated Adult Competitions and Key Dates'	This appendix has been removed as it largely duplicated information already contained elsewhere within the Competition Regulations. The designated competitions to which the Regulations apply are clearly identified on the cover sheet, making a separate appendix unnecessary. In addition, the only key date relevant to the National Competition Regulations is the Player Transfer Deadline, which is now referenced directly within the body of the Regulations. Removing the appendix simplifies the document, reduces duplication, and improves clarity while retaining all information necessary for the effective administration of the competition.
P_NL	N/A	Remove 'Appendix 2 – National League Division 1: Assistant Referees Agreement'	This appendix has been removed as it duplicated information already referenced within the Competition Regulations. The requirement relating to Assistant Referees remains unchanged and continues to be provided for within the relevant rule. As the underlying agreement and associated procedures have not changed, retaining a separate appendix was considered unnecessary. Its removal simplifies the Regulations, reduces duplication, and improves document accessibility without altering the operation or intent of the existing provisions.
P_NL	4.12	New Rule - A Club may request rescheduling where exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond its control prevent it from fielding a suitably trained front row (e.g. due to injury or concussion protocols). Requests must be submitted by the Tuesday before the fixture. The Competitions Committee may approve rescheduling at its discretion.	This amendment provides a controlled mechanism for Clubs to seek fixture rescheduling where exceptional and unforeseen circumstances leave them unable to safely field a suitably trained front row. It balances player welfare and compliance with front-row safety requirements against the need to maintain competition integrity and fixture certainty. Requiring requests to be submitted by the Tuesday preceding the fixture ensures that issues are identified sufficiently early in the week to allow the Competitions Committee and the opposing Club adequate time to consider and manage any necessary rescheduling arrangements.
P_NL	4.15-4.20	New Rule - Where three or more Players from a Club are selected in the final published matchday squad for an Inter-District Championship fixture scheduled on the same weekend as that Club's National League Division 1 fixture, the Club may apply in writing to the Championship Committee within 24 hours of squad publication for the fixture to be rescheduled. Only Players who are registered and eligible for the Club and who have been materially involved in the Club's recent National League Division 1 matchday squads shall be taken into account for the purposes of Rule 9. The Championship Committee shall consult the opposing Club before determining any application and may approve a rescheduling request only where it is satisfied that: - the loss of the Players materially affects the Club's ability to compete in the fixture; - a suitable alternative date is available; and	This provision recognises the impact that Inter-District Championship selection can have on National League Division 1 Clubs, particularly where multiple players are selected from the same Club. The rule provides a mechanism for Clubs to request fixture rescheduling in exceptional circumstances where player availability may materially affect their ability to compete, while preserving the discretion of the Championship Committee to balance player development, competition integrity, fixture sustainability and the orderly completion of the league programme. The provision does not create an automatic right to postponement but instead establishes a fair and transparent process for considering requests where representative rugby commitments create a genuine conflict with club competition obligations. It will operate as a pilot during Season 2026/27 and be reviewed at the conclusion of the season to assess its effectiveness and impact on the competition.

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		rescheduling would not adversely affect the integrity, sustainability or orderly administration of the Competition. The selection of three or more Players shall not automatically entitle a Club to a postponement, and where no suitable alternative date is available the fixture shall proceed as scheduled. Any fixture rescheduled under this Rule shall not result in a Competition Points deduction, financial sanction or other penalty being imposed on either Club. This Rule shall apply during Season 2026/27 only and shall be reviewed at the conclusion of that Season.	
	All	New Rule - If a Club fails to fulfil a fixture on the date notified and provides less than 48 hours' notice to their opponents, the Competitions Committee may consider further sanctions.	This provision is intended to discourage late fixture cancellations and recognise the significant impact they can have on opposing Clubs, match officials, volunteers, venue arrangements and the wider competition schedule. By introducing the possibility of additional sanctions where less than 48 hours' notice is provided, the rule encourages Clubs to identify and communicate fixture fulfilment issues at the earliest opportunity while providing the Competitions Committee with discretion to consider the circumstances of each case. It also supports the integrity and orderly administration of the competition by addressing situations where late withdrawals result in unnecessary disruption and cost to other participants.
P_NL	5.11	Updated - A dual-registered Player may not play for the first team of their lower Club in its final four Matches unless fewer than 50% of their appearances in the starting XV that season has been for the higher Club, or they have prior written permission from the Competitions Committee.	This amendment reduces the restriction period from the final five matches to the final four matches of the season, providing clubs with greater flexibility in managing dual-registered players while continuing to protect the integrity of competition outcomes during the closing stages of the season. The change seeks to strike a more proportionate balance between player development, club needs and competition integrity. The reduction better aligns the restriction period with the length of the competition schedule, ensuring the safeguard remains effective without being unnecessarily restrictive. Consideration was given to reducing this further however the practical impact was evaluated by considering the following: Final 5 matches: Strong integrity protection, less flexibility. Final 4 matches: A reasonable balance between integrity and flexibility. Final 3 matches: More flexibility but a noticeable reduction in protection. Final 2 matches: The rule becomes largely symbolic, as most league positions are often determined during the preceding weeks.

Commented [NC1]: Have provided suggested improved wording in the Prem & NL rules doc

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			Final 1 match: Provides minimal protection against end-of-season player movement. The final four matches is considered to be a sensible compromise because it captures the period when promotion and relegation races typically intensify, while still allowing dual-registered players to move freely for the majority of the season.
P_NL	5.13	Update - No more than five secondary registered Players may be included in the Match squad of their lower placed Club	This amendment updates the terminology from "dual-registered" to "secondary registered" to align with the player registration categories and terminology used within SCRUMS. The change improves consistency between the Competition Regulations and the registration system, reducing the potential for confusion and ensuring that eligibility provisions are applied using the same definitions and classifications as those recorded within Scottish Rugby's player registration platform. The amendment is administrative in nature and does not alter the operation or intent of the rule, which continues to limit the number of secondary registered players that may be included in a match squad for their lower placed Club.
R_E_W		Remove – all Caledonia-specific provisions have been removed from these Regulations to enable the introduction of a standalone Caledonia League Regulations document.	This approach supports the implementation and assessment of a pilot rule set designed specifically for the Caledonia Leagues.
R_E_W	3.4-3.7	Updated arrangements – Promotion and relegation within the East Regional Reserve Leagues will ordinarily operate on the basis of two clubs being promoted and two clubs being relegated. However, the Competitions Committee reserves the right to vary these arrangements where necessary to accommodate exceptional circumstances or to ensure the effective administration of the competition structure.	This amendment reflects the preference expressed by participating clubs
R_E_W	5.14	In West Regional League Division 1: 5.14.1 A dual-registered Player may not play for the first XV of their lower-placed Club in its final four Matches of the season unless either: 5.14.1.1 at least 50% of the Player's previous first XV appearances that season have been for the lower-placed Club; or 5.14.1.2 the Player has obtained prior written approval from the relevant Competitions Committee.	Similarly to P_NL. This amendment reduces the restriction period from the final five matches to the final four matches of the season, providing clubs with greater flexibility in managing dual-registered players while continuing to protect the integrity of competition outcomes during the closing stages of the season. The change seeks to strike a more proportionate balance between player development, club needs and competition integrity. The reduction better aligns the restriction period with the length of the competition schedule, ensuring the safeguard remains effective without being unnecessarily restrictive. Consideration was given to reducing this further however the practical impact was evaluated by considering the following: Final 5 matches: Strong integrity protection, less flexibility. Final 4 matches: A reasonable balance between integrity and flexibility. Final 3 matches: More flexibility but a noticeable reduction in protection.

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			• Final 2 matches: The rule becomes largely symbolic, as most league positions are often determined during the preceding weeks. • Final 1 match: Provides minimal protection against end-of-season player movement. The final four matches is was considered to be a sensible compromise because it captures the period when promotion and relegation races typically intensify, while still allowing dual-registered players to move freely for the majority of the season.
R_C	Section 3	Revised league structure in place	The revised league structure has been developed following consultation with participating clubs and reflects the feedback received during that process. The changes are intended to better align the competition format with the needs and preferences of clubs, while supporting the long-term sustainability, competitiveness and effective administration of the league programme.
R_C	4.17 -	New - In Regional Division 2 and Regional Division 3, where a Club provides one or more Players to the opposition to enable a competitive fixture to take place, the lending Club shall be awarded one (1) Bonus Competition Point.	This provision has been introduced to recognise and encourage the collaborative approach often required within Regional Division 2 and Regional Division 3 to ensure fixtures can be played. Awarding a bonus competition point to a Club that lends players to its opponents acknowledges the positive contribution made to fixture fulfilment, player participation and competition sustainability. The rule is intended to incentivise clubs to support one another where appropriate, helping to maximise the number of meaningful fixtures played throughout the season.
R_C	4.21	New - In Regional Division 2 and Regional Division 3, where a scheduled Competition fixture cannot be fulfilled but the Clubs agree to play a friendly or adapted fixture in its place, each Club shall be awarded one (1) Competition Point, unless the Competitions Committee determines that alternative sanctions should apply.	This provision recognises the value of Clubs making every effort to provide players with a meaningful playing opportunity, even where a scheduled competition fixture cannot be fulfilled in its intended format. Awarding one competition point to each Club where a friendly or adapted fixture is played encourages flexibility, cooperation and fixture fulfilment, while supporting player retention and participation. The Competitions Committee retains discretion to apply alternative sanctions where the circumstances warrant it, ensuring that the rule cannot be used to avoid legitimate competition obligations
R_C	6.9-6.11	New - In Regional Divisions 2 both teams may start a match with fewer than 15 players, but not fewer than 12. If a Club starts the Match with less than 15 Players both Clubs must start with an equal number of Players ("Player Matching"). In Regional Divisions 3 both teams may start a match with fewer than 15 players, but not fewer than 10. If a Club starts the Match with less than 15 Players both Clubs must start with an equal number of Players ("Player Matching"). Irrespective of how many players are in the starting team, Player Matching must be maintained throughout the Match other than where a player has been permanently or temporarily dismissed from the field.	These provisions have been introduced to support fixture fulfilment and maximise playing opportunities within Regional Divisions 2 and 3, where clubs may face challenges in consistently fielding full squads. Allowing matches to proceed with reduced numbers, subject to minimum player thresholds, provides greater flexibility and reduces the likelihood of fixtures being cancelled due to player availability. The requirement for Player Matching ensures that any flexibility is applied fairly and that neither Club gains a competitive advantage as a result of the other being unable to field a full complement of players. Maintaining equal numbers throughout the Match, except where altered by temporary or permanent dismissals, promotes player welfare, competitive balance and the integrity of the fixture. The differing minimum player thresholds for Regional Divisions 2 and 3 recognise the varying participation levels and operational realities across the league structure, while providing a consistent framework that prioritises rugby being played wherever possible.

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R_C	8.10	Updated - In Regional Division 1 a bonus point is awarded for scoring four or more tries, and to a losing team that finishes within seven points ("Bonus Points").	(Pilot) The rationale for applying Bonus Points in Regional 1 only is that it represents a higher level of competition, where clubs typically have greater player depth, coaching resources, and playing experience. The bonus point system is designed to encourage positive, attacking rugby and reward teams that remain competitive throughout a match. These objectives are more appropriate at this level and align with the ambition of Regional 1 clubs to operate under a competition framework that closely mirrors that of National League 4. In Divisions 2 and 3, the primary focus is on participation, player development, and maintaining competitive balance across clubs with varying resources and playing strengths. Removing bonus points at these levels simplifies league administration, makes the competition easier for players and spectators to understand, and ensures that league standings are determined primarily by wins, draws, and losses. Restricting bonus points to Regional 1 also creates a clear distinction between competition levels, reflecting the increased performance expectations and strategic complexity associated with higher-tier rugby, while avoiding unintended impacts on league standings in lower divisions where disparities in squad depth and player availability can be more significant.
R_C	11.2	New - In Regional Divisions 3, if two or more Clubs are level on Competition Points, their ranking will be determined without reference to points difference or total points scored or conceded. Final rankings shall instead be determined using the following criteria, applied in order until the tie is resolved: • The team with the greater number of match victories during the season shall be ranked higher. • If teams remain tied, the team with the greater number of away match victories during the season shall be ranked higher. • If teams remain tied, the team with the superior head-to-head record in matches played between the tied teams shall be ranked higher. • If teams remain tied after the above criteria have been applied, the Competition Committee may determine final placings by: • a playoff fixture; • If a Play Off fixture is not appropriate, then the Competition Committee will determine final placing by the toss of a coin. • For the avoidance of doubt, points difference shall not be used at any stage to determine competition placings.	(Pilot) The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that competition placings in Regional Division 3 are determined primarily by match outcomes rather than accumulated points difference. At this level of the game, there can be significant variations in squad depth, player availability, and playing strength between clubs. As a result, points difference may not always provide the most equitable measure of comparative performance across a season. The revised tie-break criteria place greater emphasis on winning matches, particularly away from home, and on direct results between the teams concerned. This approach rewards competitive success and performance under varying playing conditions, while reducing any incentive to run up scores in uneven contests. The change also supports the developmental and participation-focused nature of Regional Division 3 rugby by encouraging positive competition and maintaining respect for opponents throughout the season. By removing points difference from the ranking process, league positions are determined by achievement in matches won and results earned on the field, rather than the margin of victory in individual fixtures.
IC&RL	5.13.4	New - In the East Regional Reserve League only, a Team may include up to five (5) Players who would otherwise be ineligible under this Rule in any Reserve League fixture.	(Pilot) The allowance for up to five players who would otherwise be ineligible reflects the operational realities of reserve team rugby and provides clubs with a degree of flexibility in managing player availability throughout the season. Reserve team squads are often affected by fluctuations in first-team selection, injuries, player availability, and wider club demands. Allowing a limited number of otherwise ineligible

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			players helps clubs fulfil fixtures consistently, maintain competition stability, and provide meaningful playing opportunities across the club's playing membership. The restriction to a maximum of five players ensures that the competitive integrity of the East Regional Reserve League is maintained, while recognising the need for flexibility to support club sustainability and reduce the risk of postponed or cancelled fixtures. The rule seeks to balance fair competition with the practical challenges faced by clubs in operating reserve teams over the course of a season.
IC&RL	6.8-6.9	Updated - In the Intercity Reserve and West Reserve Leagues, a team may start a match with fewer than 15 players, but not fewer than 12, provided it fields at least five Players in the scrum at all times. In the East Regional Reserve Leagues, a Team may start a Match with fewer than 15 Players, but not fewer than 10, provided it fields at least five Players in the scrum at all times. Where a Team starts with fewer than 15 Players, both Teams must begin with an equal number of Players ("Player Matching"). Player Matching shall be maintained throughout the Match, except where a Player is temporarily or permanently dismissed from the field	<u>(Pilot)</u> The East Regional Reserve League is to operate under a different player availability and participation environment to the Intercity Reserve and West Reserve Leagues. The reduced minimum starting number of 10 players reflects the principles of the Game On framework, with the objective of maximising the number of fixtures that are played and increasing opportunities for players to participate in meaningful matches. By allowing matches to proceed with fewer than 15 players, the rule reduces the likelihood of fixtures being cancelled or defaulted due to player shortages and removes situations where a fixture might otherwise result in an 28-0 walkover outcome despite both clubs having sufficient players to play a game. The emphasis is on facilitating rugby being played wherever it can be done safely and fairly. The variation therefore balances the objectives of participation, fixture fulfilment, and competitive fairness. The requirement to field at least five players in the scrum at all times ensures that the game can continue to be played safely and in accordance with the principles of the game. This explanation doesn't mention the main purpose of the pilot, the player matching
IC&RL	8.12	New - In all East Regional Reserve League Matches, a maximum points difference of 50 shall be recorded. Once a 50-point margin is reached, the Match shall continue as a competitive fixture; however, the recorded result shall be the score at the point the 50-point difference was achieved.	<u>(Pilot)</u> The introduction of a maximum recorded points difference of 50 points in East Regional Reserve League matches reflects the competition's emphasis on participation, player development, fixture fulfilment, and the principles of Game On. The rule ensures that matches continue to be played as competitive fixtures while preventing excessively one-sided scorelines from having a disproportionate impact on league standings. By capping the recorded points difference, the competition removes any incentive for teams to continue pursuing additional points once a significant advantage has been established. This promotes positive sporting behaviour, encourages respect for opponents, and reduces the potential for teams to run up scores against weakened or less experienced opposition. The rule also recognises the realities of reserve team rugby, where player availability, squad strength, and experience levels can vary considerably from week to week. Limiting the impact of exceptionally large winning margins helps ensure that league placings are determined primarily by match outcomes rather than isolated results where significant disparities exist between teams. Importantly, the match itself continues beyond the 50-point margin, preserving playing opportunities for all participants and supporting the objective of maximising meaningful

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			game time. The rule therefore balances competitive integrity with participation, player experience, and the wider objectives of the East Regional Reserve League.
IC&RL	10.1	Updated - If two or more Clubs are level on Competition Points, their rankings shall be determined as follows: 10.1.1 ranking shall be determined by the total Competition Points obtained in the head-to-head Match(es) between the tied Clubs. 10.1.2 If the Clubs remain tied and the outcome affects qualification, promotion, relegation, or the Championship title: 10.1.2.1 a play-off Match will normally be arranged at a neutral venue; or 10.1.2.2 where a play-off Match cannot reasonably be played, the Championship Committee may apply the criteria set out in Rules 10.2.1-10.2.5, first to the head-to-head Match(es) between the tied Clubs and then, where necessary, to all Matches within the Competition. 10.1.2.3 If the Clubs remain tied after the application of all relevant criteria, the Championship Committee may determine the outcome by the toss of a coin or such other method as it considers appropriate.	This provision is intended to ensure that league placings are determined, wherever possible, by results achieved directly between the teams concerned rather than by broader statistical measures accumulated across the season. Where clubs finish level on Competition Points, priority is therefore given to head-to-head performance, reflecting the principle that the teams' results against one another provide the most relevant measure of comparative sporting achievement. The approach also recognises that, within these competitions, Match results may include awarded walkovers recorded as 28–0. The use of head-to-head Competition Points as the primary tie-break criterion reduces the potential for league placings to be influenced by standardised walkover scores and ensures that final rankings are based principally on results achieved on the field of play rather than points calculations arising from unplayed fixtures. Where a tie has a material impact on qualification, promotion, relegation, or the Championship title, the preferred outcome is that the matter is decided on the field of play through a play-off fixture at a neutral venue. This ensures that significant competition outcomes are determined by rugby performance rather than administrative calculation wherever reasonably practicable. Recognising that logistical, scheduling, or player availability considerations may occasionally make a play-off impractical, the rule provides a structured and transparent process for resolving ties using objective criteria. Only after all available sporting criteria have been exhausted does the Championship Committee have discretion to determine the outcome by lot or another appropriate method. The rule therefore prioritises direct sporting merit, minimises the impact of awarded results on final league placings, provides clarity and certainty for clubs, and ensures that the most significant competition outcomes are resolved in the fairest and most transparent manner possible.
W_L	3.1.2	New - National League Division 1, to be contested by six teams in one division;	The re-introduction of a National 1 League provides a clearer and more progressive competition pathway for clubs, creating an additional tier within the league structure that better reflects the varying standards, ambitions, and resources of participating clubs. The new league will strengthen competitive balance by reducing disparities between teams within existing divisions and increasing the number of fixtures played between clubs of a similar standard. This is expected to improve the quality and competitiveness of matches throughout the season, benefiting players, coaches, officials, and spectators alike. National 1 will also provide an appropriate platform for ambitious clubs seeking to progress within the game, bridging the gap between the existing national and regional structures and creating a more sustainable route for club development. By offering a higher level of competition below the current national leagues, clubs can aspire to progress without facing

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			an immediate and potentially unsustainable step change in playing standards, travel requirements, and operational demands. The re-introduction of National 1 further supports the long-term sustainability of the competition structure by creating clearer promotion and relegation pathways, improving competitive integrity across the pyramid, and ensuring that clubs compete at a level that is more closely aligned to their playing strength, infrastructure, and ambitions.
W_L	3.2-3.3	Updated - The Premiership shall be played in three stages: - Stage 1: the Teams shall play each other on a home-or-away basis. - Stage 2: the Teams finishing Stage 1 in positions 1 to 4 shall play each other on a home and away basis in Stage 2 Division 1 and teams finishing Stage 1 in positions 5 to 8 shall play each other on a home and away basis in Stage 2 Division 2. League points gained in Stage 1 will be carried forward to Stage 2. - Stage 3: at the end of Stage 2 the Teams in places one and two in Division 1 shall contest a final match to decide the Women's Premiership winners. The Team ranked first shall play at home against the Team ranked second. If the scores are level at full-time the Knock-Out Match Extra Time Rules (Rule Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Rule 11.2-11.3) shall apply. - Subject to Rule 11.2, the Team winning the Premiership Final shall be the Scottish Champions. - The Team finishing eighth in the Premiership shall be relegated to the National League. In the National League the Teams shall play each other on a home-and-away basis. - The Team finishing first in the National League shall be promoted to the Premiership. - The team finishing sixth in the National League, together with the winners of each Regional League Division 1, shall qualify for the Women's Regional Play-Off Series. The competition will consist of semi-finals and a final contested by the four qualifying teams. The winner of the Play-Off Series shall secure a place in the National League for the following season. If a Match is level at full time, the Knock-Out Match Extra Time Rules (Rule Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.) apply.	The re-introduction of National 1 requires corresponding changes to the promotion and relegation arrangements between the Premiership and the levels immediately below it to ensure that the competition pyramid remains balanced, sustainable, and aligned with the revised league structure. The revised promotion and relegation framework creates a clearer progression pathway for clubs, ensuring that movement between divisions reflects both sporting merit and the increased number of tiers within the competition structure. By introducing National 1 as an intermediary level, clubs are provided with a more gradual transition between the Premiership and the wider national game, reducing the competitive and operational gap that previously existed. The changes are also intended to improve competitive balance across all levels of the pyramid. A more structured flow of clubs between the Premiership and National 1 helps ensure that teams compete at a level appropriate to their playing strength, resources, and ambitions, resulting in more competitive fixtures and a more stable league structure. In addition, the revised arrangements support the long-term sustainability of the game by providing greater clarity and certainty around progression and relegation. Clubs can better plan for future seasons, while the integrity of the competition is maintained through a promotion and relegation system that is proportionate to the expanded league structure. Overall, the amendments are a necessary consequence of introducing National 1 and are designed to ensure that the league pyramid continues to operate fairly, transparently, and effectively at all levels.
W_L	4.16	Updated - If a Club fails to fulfil a fixture on the date notified it shall receive the following automatic penalty: - First default (in season): a three Competition Point deduction; - Second default: a four Competition Point deduction; and	The removal of the automatic 28–0 awarded score reflects the revised league and season structure, which now provides greater flexibility within the competition calendar to accommodate the rearrangement and completion of fixtures.

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		Third default and subsequent defaults: a five Competition Point deduction.	Historically, the use of a standard awarded score provided an administrative mechanism to ensure competitions could be concluded within a limited season window. With additional capacity now available within the season (significantly less disruption expected with movement of players between domestic competition and Celtic Challenge), there is a greater opportunity to reschedule and play fixtures that might previously have been recorded as walkovers or awarded matches. The amendment reinforces the principle that league outcomes should be determined, wherever possible, by matches played on the field rather than by administrative results. Removing the automatic 28–0 score reduces the potential for league placings, promotion, relegation, qualification, or championship outcomes to be influenced by unplayed fixtures and encourages clubs and competition organisers to prioritise the completion of scheduled matches. The change also improves competitive integrity by ensuring that teams are rewarded for results achieved through play rather than through standardised awarded scores, which may have a disproportionate impact on league standings. The revised season structure makes this approach both practical and achievable while supporting the objective of maximising the number of fixtures played during the season.
W_L	5.15	Updated - A dual-registered Player may not play for the first team of their lower-placed Club in its final three League Matches, or the Regional Play-Off Series, unless at least 50% of their previous competition matches (league and cup) that season have been for the lower placed team or where prior written approval has been granted by the Competitions Committee.	The amendment removes the reference to a club's "first team" and instead applies the restriction consistently to the relevant team of the lower-placed club. This change reflects the evolving structure of the Women's competitions, where a club's second XV may compete at the same level as, or in some cases at a higher level than, another club's first XV. The original wording assumed that the competitive significance of fixtures was linked primarily to whether a team was a club's first XV. However, competition structures now mean that team designation alone is not an accurate indicator of playing standard or the potential impact on competition outcomes. As a result, the rationale underpinning the restriction—protecting competitive integrity during the closing stages of the season—applies equally regardless of whether the team concerned is a first XV or second XV. The amendment therefore ensures that the rule operates consistently across all affected competitions, preventing the late-season movement of dual-registered players in a manner that could materially influence promotion, relegation, championship, or play-off outcomes. It creates a more equitable and competition-based approach, focusing on the level and integrity of the competition rather than the designation of the team involved. The change improves clarity, removes an unintended inconsistency in the application of the rule, and ensures that the underlying objective of safeguarding competitive fairness is achieved across all league structures.
W_L	5.17	Updated - The number of secondary registered Players permitted to participate for their lower-placed Club in a matchday squad shall be, other than as permitted in Rule Error! Reference source not found.: - In the National League: a maximum of three Players. - In Regional League Division 1: a maximum of three Players.	This amendment seeks to balance competitive integrity at the higher levels of the game with the practical needs of clubs operating at regional and community levels, while reflecting the introduction of the new National League Division 1 within the competition structure. In National League Division 1 and Regional League Division 1, the limit of three secondary registered players in a matchday squad helps ensure that competition outcomes are primarily

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		In Regional League Division 2 and below: no limit shall apply.	determined by players who are regularly attached to and represent the club. As the highest levels below the Premiership, these competitions are intended to provide a strong and credible performance environment, and the restriction protects their integrity by limiting the extent to which teams can rely on players from other clubs while still providing sufficient flexibility to manage injuries, player availability, and player development opportunities. The introduction of National League Division 1 creates a clearer performance pathway and a more defined distinction between the upper tiers of the game and the wider regional structure. Applying the same limit in both National League Division 1 and Regional League Division 1 ensures a consistent approach across the highest levels of non-Premiership rugby and supports competitive balance within those competitions. In Regional League Division 2 and below, the removal of any numerical limit recognises the different operating environment faced by clubs. At these levels, player availability can fluctuate significantly due to work, education, family, and other commitments. Greater flexibility in the use of secondary registered players supports fixture fulfilment, reduces the risk of cancellations, and helps clubs maintain viable teams throughout the season. The amendment also supports player participation by creating more opportunities for players to access meaningful game time while enabling clubs to field competitive teams. The differing limits therefore reflect the varying objectives and operational realities of clubs at different levels of the competition structure, balancing competitive integrity at the higher levels with participation, fixture fulfilment, and club sustainability at the community level.
W_L	5.20-5.21	New - Contracted Players to the Central Programme may only play in the Women's Premiership and are not eligible to play in any other Women's Competitions. No more than four Contracted Players may play in any match day squad.	These provisions are intended to support the development and competitive integrity of the Women's Premiership as the highest level of domestic women's club rugby. By restricting Contracted Players from the Central Programme and National Academy Programme to participation in the Women's Premiership, the rules ensure that players operating within the national performance pathway compete consistently at the level most appropriate to their development and performance needs.
W_L	5.22	New - Contracted Players to the National Academy programme may only play in the Women's Premiership and are not eligible to play in any other Women's Competitions.	The restrictions also help maintain competitive balance across the wider women's game by preventing a concentration of national programme players within lower-tier competitions. This supports a more equitable playing environment while ensuring that the Women's Premiership remains the primary competition for players within the national high-performance system. The limit of four Contracted Players in any match day squad further balances the objectives of player development and competition integrity. It enables contracted players to gain meaningful club rugby experience while avoiding an over-reliance on national programme players within individual teams. This helps preserve opportunities for non-contracted players, supports the development of a broader player base, and promotes a more competitive and sustainable Premiership competition. Collectively, these measures strengthen the link between the domestic competition structure and the national performance pathway, while ensuring that opportunities for player

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			development and competitive success remain accessible across all levels of the women's game.
W_C	3.1 – 3.4	Updated – Sarah Beaney Cup 3.1 The Sarah Beaney Cup shall be contested by Teams competing in the Premiership and National League. The detailed format of the competition shall be published by the Championship Secretary prior to the start of the competition. National Shield 3.2 The National Shield shall be contested by Teams competing in Regional League Divisions 1. The detailed format of the competition shall be published by the Championship Secretary prior to the start of the competition. National Plate 3.3 The National Plate shall be contested by Teams competing in Regional League Divisions 2 and 3. The detailed format of the competition shall be published by the Championship Secretary prior to the start of the competition. National Bowl 3.4 The National Bowl shall be contested by teams regularly participating in the Aspiring League programme. The detailed format of the competition shall be published by the Championship Secretary prior to the start of the competition.	The removal of the prescribed competition format provides greater flexibility in the administration of the competition and reflects the practical realities of team entry and withdrawal throughout the season. In recent seasons, team withdrawals and changes in participation numbers have occasionally required competition formats to be amended after the publication of regulations. Prescribing a fixed format within the regulations can therefore create unnecessary complexity and require formal regulatory amendments when adjustments are needed to ensure the competition remains viable and balanced. Removing the detailed competition format from the regulations allows the Competition Committee to determine and, where necessary, amend the format in response to actual team entries and withdrawals. This ensures that competitions can continue to operate effectively while maintaining appropriate levels of participation, competitive balance, and fixture fulfilment. The amendment does not alter the principles under which the competition will be organised but instead provides the flexibility required to respond to changing circumstances. This enables the most appropriate format to be adopted each season and, where necessary, adjusted during the season to accommodate withdrawals or other unforeseen developments without requiring further regulatory change.
W_C	4.15-4.25	Updated - Sarah Beaney Cup Pool Fixtures If a Club fails to fulfil a fixture on the date notified it shall receive the following automatic penalty: • First default (in season): a three Competition Point deduction; • Second default: a four Competition Point deduction; and • Third default and subsequent defaults: a five Competition Point deduction. If a Club fails to fulfil a fixture on the date notified and provides less than 48 hours' notice to their opponents, the Competitions Committee may consider further sanctions. A Club penalised under Rule 1568307896.0 and/or Rule 0, or Scottish Rugby may request a review by the Competitions Committee only where the breach was due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond its control.	The amendments introduce a clearer, more consistent, and proportionate framework for dealing with fixture non-fulfilment across the Sarah Beaney Cup, National Shield, Plate, and Bowl competitions. Historically, the Sarah Beaney Cup applied a standard 28–0 walkover result where fixtures were not fulfilled. While this provided a straightforward administrative outcome, it did not adequately distinguish between isolated incidents, repeated defaults, exceptional circumstances, or situations where a club had deliberately failed to fulfil a fixture. The revised framework replaces the automatic awarded result with a more flexible and proportionate sanctions regime that better reflects the circumstances of each case. The introduction of escalating penalties for repeated defaults recognises that non-fulfilment can have a significant adverse impact on competition integrity, participant experience, and the effective administration of the competition. It also provides a stronger deterrent against repeat offending while allowing clubs that experience genuine and unforeseen difficulties an opportunity to seek review. The changes provide the Competitions Committee with a broader range of discretionary powers to address exceptional circumstances and distinguish between unavoidable non-

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	Requests must be submitted within 7 days of the scheduled kick-off. The Committee may cancel, reduce, uphold, or increase the penalty. Where the Competitions Committee determines that a default resulted from the wilful actions of a Club, it may, in addition to any other sanction: - impose sanctions on either or both Clubs, including a formal reprimand, a warning as to future conduct, a deduction of up to an additional five Competition Points, disqualification from the relevant competition, and/or the withholding of up to the full amount of any participation funding or prize money to which the Club may otherwise be entitled; and/or - award the Competition Points to either Club, apportion them between the Clubs as it considers appropriate, determine that no Competition Points shall be awarded, or order that the Match be replayed. Where a Club is penalised under Rule 1568307896.0 and/or Rule 0, the Competitions Committee may also disqualify the Club if it considers this necessary or appropriate. Where a fixture is not fulfilled and the opposition incurs unnecessary expense, the Women's Competitions Committee may order the defaulting Club to reimburse the reasonable costs of the non-offending Club and Match Officials, subject to proof. If a Club fails to fulfil three or more Competition fixtures in consecutive seasons the Competition Committee may suspend the Club from Competitions for such period as it considers appropriate. National Shield, Plate and Bowl Pool Fixtures Where a Club fails to fulfil a fixture in the league or pool stages of the National Shield, Plate or Bowl, the non-offending Club shall be awarded a 28–0 win and five Competition Points. The defaulting Club shall receive no points, and the Competitions Committee may consider whether to raise a Complaint in respect of the non-fulfilment. Knock-Out Matches Where a Club fails to fulfil a knock-out Match, it shall be liable to disqualification and/or other sanctions Where the Competitions Committee determines that a default has resulted from the wilful actions of a Club, it may: - impose sanctions on either or both Clubs, including a formal reprimand, a warning as to future conduct, a deduction of up to an	fulfilment and situations where a club has failed to take reasonable steps to fulfil a fixture. This enables sanctions to be applied proportionately while ensuring that the interests of the wider competition are protected. Specific provisions relating to short-notice cancellations recognise the disruption and financial impact that can be caused to opponents, match officials, volunteers, and competition organisers. The ability to order reimbursement of reasonable costs ensures that non-offending clubs are not unfairly disadvantaged by the actions of others. For the National Shield, Plate, and Bowl pool stages, the retention of an awarded 28–0 result continues to provide a simple and transparent mechanism for maintaining competition progress where a fixture cannot be played. However, in the Sarah Beane Cup, the revised approach places greater emphasis on accountability and competition integrity by allowing sanctions to reflect the nature and severity of the breach rather than applying a standard result in every circumstance. The introduction of powers to suspend clubs following repeated non-fulfilment across consecutive seasons further emphasises the importance of fixture fulfilment and participation commitments. This measure is intended to protect the credibility of competitions and ensure that places within national competitions are occupied by clubs capable of meeting their obligations throughout the season. Overall, the amendments strengthen competition integrity, improve consistency in decision-making, provide a more proportionate response to non-fulfilment, and better reflect the differing needs of the various women's cup competitions.
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		additional five Competition Points, disqualification from the relevant Competition, and/or a financial penalty of up to the full amount of any participation money to which the Club may be entitled; and/or award Competition Points to either Club, apportion them between the Clubs as it considers appropriate, determine that no Competition Points shall be awarded, and/or order that the Match be replayed. Where any fixture is not fulfilled and the opposing Club incurs unnecessary expense, the Competitions Committee may require the defaulting Club to reimburse the reasonable costs of the non-offending Club and Match Officials, subject to proof of such costs.	
W_C	5.12	Updated - A dual-registered Player may not play for the first team of their lower Club in its final four Matches in a national semi-final or final unless, at least 50% of their competition appearances (league and cup) this season have been for their lower club, or they have prior written permission from the Competitions Committee.	The provision to update the rule and remove 'fewer than 50% of their appearances in the starting XV that season for the higher Club ' is that it does not align with the structure of the women's competitions and is not considered necessary or appropriate in the current competition environment. Unlike the men's game, where similar provisions may have been developed around more clearly defined first XV and second XV structures, the women's competition framework incorporates integrated team structures in which competitive level is not determined solely by whether a team is designated as a first XV or second XV. In some cases, a club's second XV may compete at the same level as, or a higher level than, the first XV of another club. As a result, applying restrictions based solely on first XV appearances or team designation may not accurately reflect the competitive environment in which players are participating. Such an approach could create inconsistencies and unintended consequences, particularly where appearances for a second XV are of equal or greater competitive significance than appearances for a secondary club's first XV. The removal of the provision reflects a desire to ensure that eligibility rules are based on the realities of the women's competition structure rather than replicating arrangements that have been developed for the men's game. The amendment supports a more consistent and competition-based approach to player eligibility, recognising the differing structures, pathways, and competitive environments that exist within the women's game.
W_C	5.21	Players contracted to the Central Programme and National Academy shall not be eligible to participate in Cup Competition Matches	The exclusion of Central Programme and National Academy players from cup competitions is intended to maintain competitive fairness and consistency across all participating clubs. Under the league competition regulations, Central Programme and National Academy players are eligible to play only in the Women's Premiership and are not eligible to participate in National League competitions. Permitting such players to participate in cup competitions would therefore create a situation where Premiership clubs could access players who are unavailable to National League clubs, despite both groups of clubs competing within the same cup structure. This would create an inequitable competitive environment by providing some clubs with access to players from the national performance pathway while denying the same

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			opportunity to others. The potential impact is particularly significant in knockout competitions, where the availability of a small number of high-performance players may materially influence match outcomes. The amendment therefore ensures that clubs compete within the cup competitions using player groups that are available to all participating teams under the same eligibility framework. This promotes competitive balance, protects the integrity of the competition, and ensures that progression through the cup is determined as far as possible by the players regularly available to participating clubs throughout the season. The rule also maintains consistency with the wider eligibility principles governing Central Programme and National Academy players, ensuring that the objectives of the national performance pathway are balanced appropriately against the need for fair and equitable domestic competitions.
W-C	5.18-5.20	<u>The Transfer Deadline date is Monday 14 December 2026.</u> <u>▲ A Player who receives International Clearance, is dual registered, or transfers after the relevant deadline may not play for their new Club in a Scottish Rugby competition for the rest of the season unless:</u> <u>the competition rules allow it;</u> <u>the Player turns 18 after the deadline; or</u> <u>the Player has written permission from the Championship Committee.</u> <u>Permission will normally only be granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a non-rugby change of residence or other situation making it impractical for the Player to remain at their current Club).</u> <u>The Transfer Deadline shall not apply to Teams participating in a Regional League's second or lower divisions. However, any Player registered under this exemption shall not be eligible to participate in a national semi-final or final of the Plate or Bowl without prior written approval from the Competitions Committee. The granting of any such approval shall be at the sole discretion of the Competitions Committee.</u>	<u>Recognising the single transfer deadline date is now also applicable for the cup competitions in an integrated season structure while providing the same provision as the Men's Cup rules to guard against teams who play at a level where the transfer deadline is not applicable cannot transfer or dual register and include players at the later stages of the Cup Competitions without seeking committee approval.</u>

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