

# SSI/IRFU

## Men's Rugby

### 2023-24



## Playing Rules

### 1. Divisions

Student Sport Ireland in association with the IRFU shall coordinate the Men's Rugby League with divisions as follows:

#### 1.1. Brendan Johnston Cup & Division 1 – IRB Law 20

<b>Scrum:</b>	No restrictions
<b>Scrumhalf:</b>	If uncontested scrums, the non-feeding scrumhalf is restricted to the halfway point of the scrum and may not follow the ball around.
<b>Lineouts:</b>	Lifting/supporting is permitted.
<b>Hand off/Fend:</b>	Permitted.
<b>Maul:</b>	No restrictions.
<b>Ruck:</b>	No restrictions

#### 1.2. Tier 2 Cup – IRB (Law 20.13) U19's Law with following variations.

<b>Scrum:</b>	IRB U19 Law Variation (1.5 m push) for Tier 2 Cup.
<b>Scrumhalf:</b>	If uncontested scrums, the non-feeding scrumhalf is restricted to the halfway point of the scrum and may not follow the ball around.
<b>Lineouts:</b>	Lifting/supporting is permitted.
<b>Hand off/Fend:</b>	Permitted.
<b>Maul:</b>	No restrictions.
<b>Ruck:</b>	No restrictions

#### 1.3. Tier 3 Cup & Division 2 & 3 League – IRB (Law 20.13) U19's Law with following variations.

<b>Scrum:</b>	Uncontested.
<b>Scrumhalf:</b>	The non-feeding scrumhalf is restricted to the halfway point of the scrum and may not follow the ball around.
<b>Lineouts:</b>	Lifting/supporting is permitted.
<b>Hand off/Fend:</b>	Permitted.
<b>Maul:</b>	No restrictions.
<b>Ruck:</b>	No restrictions.

## 2. Uncontested Scrums

If a team is unable to field the required number of front row players to start a match, and as a result the match must begin with uncontested scrums, the following will be the consequence:

- The team who are unable to field a full front row will be restricted to fielding 14 players only
- No point's restrictions shall apply.
- Both teams still have use of their substitutes in accordance with the laws of the game.

If a team begin a match with contested scrums and do not nominate the required number of players capable of playing in front row positions, but after injuries and/or a red card /yellow given to front row players the captain of that team declares that he has no front row replacements, the match will continue with uncontested scrums and the following shall apply:

- The team who need to go to uncontested scrums cannot replace that front row player who is leaving the field thereby reducing their number by one.
- No point's restrictions shall apply.
- Both teams still have use of their substitutes in accordance with the laws of the game.

## 3. Equipment

Ball: Size 5  
 Boots/Studs: World Rugby Approved.  
 Additional Items of Clothing: World Rugby Law 4 and Regulation 12.

## 4. No of Players Per Team and Substitutions

- 4.1. Division 1, 2, 3 leagues, Brendan Johnston Cup, Tier 2 Cup, Tier 3 Cup and O'Boyle Cup teams shall run as a 15-a-side from a match day panel of 22 players with rolling subs (maximum 12 allowed).
- 4.2. In Division 3 where both teams are in agreement, a game can be played with less than 15 a side with a minimum of 10 a side. This rule is to facilitate participation and the reduction of the amount of walk overs. If both teams are not in agreement to this the game reverts to the original 15 a side.

## 5. Matches Duration

- 5.1. Where a match is played with 15 players the match shall be of 80 minutes' duration (40x2).
- 5.2. Where a match is played with 10 players the match shall be of 60 minutes' duration (30x2).
- 5.3. Where a match finishes level at the end of normal time in a knockout game, extra time of ten minutes per half will be played. (Please read section 6 for all information on stipulations in the event of a draw in knockout phase game).

## 6. Scoring

- 6.1. Four points will be awarded for a win
- 6.2. Two points will be awarded for a draw
- 6.3. No points for a loss (unless awarded bonus points)
- 6.4. One bonus point will be awarded for a team scoring four tries or more or by losing a match by seven points or less
- 6.5. One point is deducted for any team that withdraws from a fixture.
- 6.6. Five points are awarded to the non-offending team for a walk over, but no bonus point will be awarded.

## 7. Knockout Stage Ties – In the event of a tie at the end of a knockout game, the following criteria will take place

- 7.1. **Extra time** – following an interval of five minutes, extra time of ten minutes each way (with an interval of five minutes) shall be played in full.
- 7.2. **Most tries scored** – If after extra time the sides are still level the team with the most tries in normal time shall be declared winners of the game.
- 7.3. **First Try Scored** – if the teams are still level on number of tries scored the team who scored the first try will be declared winners.
- 7.4. **First Points scored** - if the teams are still level on who scored the first try the team who scored the first points will be declared the winners.
- 7.5. **Kicking competition** – if after 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 no winner can be declared a kicking competition will be organised between the two teams. The winner of that competition shall be declared the winner of the match.

## Kicking Competition

If at the end of a knockout match, after 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 the teams remain tied, then the referee will conduct a place-kick competition to determine the winner of the match.

The following procedures apply:

All players and the match officials will remain on the field of play. The referee will call the captains of the two teams to the centre of the playing enclosure and will conduct a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will choose which team kicks first.

Only players on the playing enclosure at the time of the completion of the sudden death period may take part in the kicking competition. For the avoidance of doubt, no substituted (including for injury and/or blood), ordered off or temporarily suspended player not on the field at the completion of the sudden death period may take part in the kicking competition at any time. The five players selected and the order in which they kick do not have to be specified at the start of the kicking competition.

The match officials and team members will assemble on the halfway line. Team members must remain behind the halfway line in the side of the playing area not being used for the kicking competition. No one except the referee, two assistant referees and two ball boys are allowed in the part of the playing area being used for the competition.

The five players from each team will place kick from three different areas, all on the 22 metre line, as follows:

First area: directly in front of the posts

Second area: on the 15 metre line on the left hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts)

Third area: on the 15 metre line on the right hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts)

The referee will start the competition by calling the first player selected from the team kicking first to the first kicking point. Once the player has taken the kick, the referee calls a player from the opposing team to kick from the same area.

The next two players (one from each team) will kick from the second area in turn. This will continue until all five players from each team have kicked (the next players kicking respectively from the third area, first area and finally the second area), or until one team is unable to equal the score of the other team within the remaining number of kicks.

If there is an equal number of successful kicks once each team has completed its five kicks, the competition continues on a “sudden death” basis, following the same order of kickers used in the first five kicks.

The competition will continue two kicks at a time (one from each team), going progressively through the three kicking areas stated above (and repeating the process if necessary) until one player succeeds with a kick and the player from the other side taking the same kick misses it. Once this occurs, the team of the player who succeeded with the kick will be declared the winner.

Throughout the kicking competition:

Players must be nominated immediately on request by the referee. Once a player has been handed the ball on the kicking area, he must take the kick within one minute. Should he take longer, the referee shall declare the kick void.

After each kick, the referee will record the number of the player and whether or not the attempt was successful, the match commissioner will record the same details on the official match report.

Whether or not the kick is successful is the sole decision of the referee, who may at his sole discretion rely on the assistance of his assistant referees. The referee’s decision shall be final and binding.

Once a player has completed his kick, he shall return to stand with his team behind the halfway line in the side of the playing area not being used for the kicking competition.

## 8. Group Stage Ties.

In the event of a tie at the end of the group stage of the league or cup, group winners will be decided by the following criteria:

- 8.1. The head-to-head result in the games between the two teams.
- 8.2. The team with the most wins in the league
- 8.3. The team with the most drawn matches in the league
  - 8.3.1. In the event of the teams playing each other more than once in the league the result will be decided as follows:
    - 8.3.1.1. the team with the greater number of league points in the matches against each other;
    - 8.3.1.2. the team with better point's difference in the matches against each other;
    - 8.3.1.3. the team that scored most tries in the matches against each other;
  - 8.3.2. In the event of three or more teams finishing level the finishing order will be determined as a result of the matches between those teams as follows:
    - 8.3.2.1. The team with the most league points
    - 8.3.2.2. The team with the most wins,
    - 8.3.2.3. The team with the most draws,
    - 8.3.2.4. The team with the best point's difference,
    - 8.3.2.5. The team that has scored most tries
- 8.4. The actual point's difference scored for and against all teams in the league
- 8.5. The team that has scored most tries in the league.
- 8.6. If it is still not possible to separate the teams a play- off will be held between the teams with home advantage decided by coin toss by the SSI office.

## 9. Registration and Eligibility

- 9.1. Only teams from SSI affiliated colleges are eligible to participate in the SSI leagues & cups. A list of SSI member colleges can be found on the SSI website at [www.studentsport.ie](http://www.studentsport.ie)
- 9.2. All registered players must satisfy SSI's Eligibility Criteria for Domestic Competitions and which are available for download from SSI's website at [www.studentsport.ie](http://www.studentsport.ie)
- 9.3. All players must also be aware of and compliant with all rules and regulations of the IRFU.
- 9.4. A student must be fully registered and hold a valid student card for the institution with which they are internally registered. All players must carry their student card with them to all fixtures.
- 9.5. A student must be 18 years or older to compete in Student Sport Ireland national third level sports competitions on the island of Ireland.
- 9.6. The year of grace rule does not apply to SSI leagues or cups.
- 9.7. Four points will be deducted from a team found to have played an ineligible player during a group match.

- 9.8. The penalty for teams found to be playing an ineligible player during a knockout match whether it be the qualifiers, quarter- final, semi- finals or final will be the awarding of the match to the non-offending team.
- 9.9. All teams must complete the relevant competition registration sheet and return to SSI office by the determined deadline prior to the start of each competition, failure to do so will result in elimination from the competition. For the Men's League competitions all registration sheets must be sent into the SSI Office on or before Tuesday October 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 by 5pm.
- 9.10. For all league competitions, a player cannot play for a team of lower rank in their club if they have played in two fixtures for a team of higher rank. (Example if a player plays two games in Division 1 they cannot play any more games for his club's team in Division 2 or 3)
- 9.11. For all senior cup competitions, a full panel of players must be registered, and a registration sheet signed and stamped by your college registrar must be submitted before the start of the competition. Closing date for receipt of registration sheet for Tier 3 Cup teams is Monday February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm. Closing date for receipt of registration sheets for Brendan Johnston Cup and Tier 2 Cup teams is Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 5pm. Failure by any team to send in a registration sheet prior to these closing date will mean they are eliminated from the competition immediately.
- 9.12. For all senior cup competitions, a player may not play for another team in their club of lower standing once they have played for the highest (or second highest for clubs with three teams) ranked team in their club. A player is deemed to have played once they are named in the starting fifteen or are a used substitute in a cup match. Exception to this rule all props who come on as substitutes may continue to play for their clubs second team but once they are named as a starting player then they are cup tied to the highest ranked team.
- 9.13. For all senior cup competitions, a player can move to a team of higher rank in their club but cannot then move back to the lower ranked team for the next round of the competition.

## 10. Fixtures Secretary

- 10.1. Each team shall appoint a fixtures secretary whose role will include but not limited to:
- 10.1.1. Act as primary contact between opposition teams and the SSI Office
  - 10.1.2. Booking of pitches
  - 10.1.3. Confirming all fixture dates, times and venue with opposition teams and SSI Office within designated time period (see below)
  - 10.1.4. Taking responsibility for correctly completing match cards and returning to SSI Office within 5 working days (see below)
  - 10.1.5. Maintaining contact with SSI Office throughout academic year.

## 11. Appointment of Referees

- 11.1. The SSI Office will list all confirmed fixtures on the IRFU Rugby Connect system at 12pm, 8 days out from all fixtures. From there the local provincial branch make the referee appointments. Any fixtures not confirmed 8 days in advance SSI and IRFU branches cannot guarantee referee appointment.
- 11.2. In the case of a neutral venue SSI will liaise with the IRFU to appoint a referee.

## 12. Setting of Fixtures

- 12.1. The SSI office shall set the fixture list for the duration of the league in September /early October.
- 12.2. 2pm on Wednesday afternoon shall be the default time and day set by the SSI office for the playing of fixtures.
- 12.3. Teams can reschedule a match for another day during the week of the fixture set by SSI. In this instance, to facilitate booking of referees, notice of confirmed fixture must be sent to the SSI Office 8 days in advance of the fixture.
- 12.4. The home team is responsible for the confirmation of the fixture with the away team.
- 12.5. The deadline for the teams to agree the scheduling of a fixture shall be Monday 5pm of the week previous to the fixture date set by SSI.
- 12.6. Once teams have agreed the date and time for the fixture the date, time, venue and name of the match referee must be emailed to the SSI office ([noel@studentsport.ie](mailto:noel@studentsport.ie)).
- 12.7. Where teams cannot agree on a date and a time for the playing of a scheduled fixture, the fixture shall proceed as scheduled by SSI.
- 12.8. If less than one week's notice is given the said team will forfeit the match and lose 1 point and the non-offending team shall gain four points. If this happens more than once during the course of the league the offending team may be removed from the competition and may not be allowed to enter the league the following year.
- 12.9. If pitch does not have match standard floodlights all cup games must start by 2.30pm in the event of the game going into extra time.
- 12.10. When the distance between two teams is more than 300km from travelling colleges to their host nominated venue, the game will then be played in a Neutral venue decided by Student Sport Ireland.

## 13. Rescheduling of Fixtures

- 13.1. Only with the written confirmation of the SSI office and the agreement of both teams can teams reschedule fixtures for a date later than the week set for the fixture by SSI.
- 13.2. Rescheduled matches cannot be fixed for the same week as a scheduled fixture or that of knockout matches.
- 13.3. For all cup games the home team must have the following day lined up as an alternative date in the event of abandonment.

## 14. Double Headers

- 14.1. SSI will not recognise any matches played as double headers i.e. one match cannot produce the result for two fixtures.

## 15. Booking of Pitches

- 15.1. The home team makes all arrangements regarding booking pitches for the match including having a backup pitch available.
- 15.2. SSI and IRFU will make all arrangements for neutral venues in cup competitions.

## 16. Kick-Off Delay

- 16.1. Any delay to the kick-off of a match may be reported to the SSI Office. It is advisable to have confirmation by the referee of any delay. The SSI Office will then take appropriate action, when all the circumstances have been taken into consideration. It may lead to the fixture being awarded to the non-offending team.

## 17. Abandonment

- 17.1. If a pitch is unplayable the away team and the SSI Office must be notified at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled kick-off time.
- 17.2. In this scenario the SSI office will press the home team to seek an alternative/back up pitch.
- 17.3. Where the SSI Office and the travelling team are notified 24 hours before the scheduled kick off that the pitch is unplayable the home team will retain home advantage for the rescheduled match.
- 17.4. For all cup games the home team must have the following day lined up as an alternative date in the event of abandonment.
- 17.5. Failure by the home team to notify the away team and the SSI office within 24 hours or failure by the home team to present a pitch on the nominated day, whatever the circumstances, will result in the away team being awarded home advantage for the rescheduled fixture.
- 17.6. In the case where a referee decides within 30 minutes of the start of the match that it is unsafe for a match to be played or when during a match the referee decides that it is unsafe to continue, the match will be abandoned. In this scenario the away team is awarded home advantage for the rescheduled fixture (this is to ensure that the away team in the scheduled fixture does not have to travel twice for the same match).

## 18. Walkovers

- 18.1 If any team concedes a walkover in any of the cup competitions they are immediately disqualified from the competition.

## 19. Match Sheet Procedures

- 19.1. Team coach / manager is required to give the referee two signed copies of the Team Sheet at least 20 minutes before the appointed kick off time.
- 19.2. The referee to ensure that he retains the originals and gives the second copy to the opposing signatory coach / manager.
- 19.3. No team sheets – no match. Whatever the competition or level, including friendlies.
- 19.4. The referee inspects both team sheets to ensure they are legible and has a registration number opposite each named player.
- 19.5. After the match the referee signs and prints his name on each team sheet, s/he enters the score including number of tries scored by each team.
- 19.6. A photo/scan of home and away team sheet (signed by referee) must be returned to the Student Sport Ireland office within **24 hours** of the end of the game by the home fixtures secretary by email to [noel@studentsport.ie](mailto:noel@studentsport.ie). A hard copy of home and away team sheet must be posted to the SSI Office within **5 working days**.



- 19.7. If 17.6 is not fully completed, the away team will be awarded the match in the form of a walkover. (League only)
- 19.8. If 17.6 is not fully completed, the home team will be eliminated from the competition at this stage. (Cup only)
- 19.9. As O'Boyle Cup is based on age group all teams are to send in their own team sheet from each round as all player's date of births must be checked post games.

## **20. Appeals Process**

- 20.1. Appeals must be submitted via email by the college Sports Officer to the SSI office by 5pm the day after the fixture was played or a decision communicated.
- 20.2. All appeals will be considered by the appointed independent Rugby Commissioner who will act as sole and final arbitrator of the appeal
- 20.3. The appeals process is set out below:
  - 20.3.1. On receipt of the appeal to its decision or finding SSI will collate all relevant information in relation to the appeal in advance of emailing the file to the Commissioner.
  - 20.3.2. Following review, the Commissioner can request any additional information or documentation from either SSI or the appellant and is free to contact SSI, the IRFU, the appellant or other related parties as s/he sees fit.
  - 20.3.3. The Commissioner will communicate his /her the decision to SSI at the earliest Opportunity but ideally within five working days. The office will then communicate The decision to the appellant.
  - 20.3.4. The Commissioner's decision is final and binding for all parties to the appeal.

## **21. Entry Fee**

- 21.1. An entry fee of €175 is charged per senior team entered.
- 21.2. O'Boyle Cup Entry Fee will be decided based upon the number of entries into the competition.

## **22. Enforcement of Rules and Regulations.**

- 22.1. SSI shall have the power to enforce all regulations concerning this competition and to decide for any matters not provided for in the rules to ensure that the league and cup is run in a fair and equitable manner.