



The WRU National Plate 2019-2020

COMPETITION RULES

1. **Description:** The Competition shall be called
The WRU National Plate
2. **Form:** The Competition shall be played on a 'knock-out'
basis.
3. **Competition Format**

The Competition will be open to the Clubs who play in Divisions 1, 2 (not 2 North), and Division 1 North of the WRU National League.

In Round 1 a maximum of 108 Clubs will participate. 54 teams will progress.

In Round 2 the qualifiers from Round 1 (54 Clubs) – Open Draw

In Round 3, the qualifiers from Round 2 – 27 Clubs will participate. 11 ties will be drawn and 5 will receive byes.

In Round 4, the qualifiers from Round 3 (16 Clubs).

In Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and Final the Clubs will play on a straight knock-out basis. (8, 4 and 2 Clubs respectively).

4. **Eligibility to Participate:**

- (I) **Clubs**
 - (a) All Clubs in Divisions 1, 2 (not 2 North), and Division 1 North of the WRU National League are eligible to participate in the competition provided that a Club has not been excluded from the Competition by decisions of the WRU.
 - (b) All Clubs have the responsibility to field a minimum of twelve players at the commencement of any match.
- (II) **Players**
 - (a) No player may represent a Club in the Competition unless:
 - i. He is a registered or a dual registered member of that Club, or registered with a Regional Academy
 - ii. a permit has been granted for him to play by his parent Club/Region

- (b) It is recommended that any player who has suffered concussion shall not participate in any match or training session for a minimum period of 19 days for adults (defined as a player aged 19 years and above at 1 September of relevant year) or 23 days for children and adolescents (defined as a player aged under 19 years at 1 September of relevant year) from the time of injury. All players should be reviewed by a medical practitioner and should not return to train or play until symptom free and having successfully completed the WRU graduated return to play programme. It is recommended that declarations of return to fitness to train and play be supported by a written medical practitioner's report. The WRU Concussion Guidance document is available online at wru.wales/medical
- (c) **A player may not represent** two different clubs in the Competition.
- (d) No player is eligible to play for a Club in the Competition if he transfers, or is registered, after 11:59pm 31st January 2020, unless such player is:
- (i) A player, registered with that Club's Youth team, who has attained the age of 18 and is subsequently registered as a senior player with that Club.
 - (ii) A Player who is subject to a permanent residential relocation from another area where extensive travel (in excess of 100 miles round trip) precludes the player continuing to play for his former Club **Before such a player may play in the Competition the player's registration must be sanctioned by the Competitions Management Committee.**
 - (iii) A Player not previously registered with any other rugby Club. **Before such a player may play in the Competition the player's registration must be sanctioned by the Competitions Management Committee.**
- (e) A player who is transferred prior to 11:59pm on 31st January 2020 will be eligible to play for his new Club in the Competitions provided the transfer and registration process is completed properly and confirmation has been received in line with the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.

However, if the player has played for another Club in the previous round of a WRU National Knock Out Competition in the 2019-2020 season (be it Cup, Bowl or Shield) he must miss the round for his new club immediately after the date of his transfer before he becomes eligible to play. However, he is ineligible to play for two separate teams in the same competition.

(f) **PLAYER PERMITS**

The **player permit** scheme will operate as follows:

- (i) In any match in the Competition, a Club may play up to a maximum of 4 players on permit in total.
- (ii) A player may not play on permit for another Club if he has played for his Club in the previous round of a WRU National Knock Out Competition in the 2019-2020 season (be it the Cup).

- (iii) Permits are not allowed to be granted to players who have already represented one club in the WRU National Plate as they are Cup tied for the remainder of the competition. However, they will be allowed to permit to teams still involved in the Cup provided they miss the following round of that competition.
- (iv) A player registered with a Regional team is not eligible to play for a Club in the competition. A player who is registered solely with a **Regional Academy** may play on permit for a Club in the Competition. The requisite permits may be granted only by the Manager of the Regional Academy, or nominated deputy, and lodged with the Union's Fixtures Manager 24 hours before the match takes place.
- (v) **Permits from Clubs in the Premier Division and Championship ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Permits may be obtained as outlined in the following table:-

Division	Clubs from where permits may be obtained
Division 1	Regional Academy (max 4) Divisions 1 to 3, 1 & 2 North (max 4) District member Clubs (max 4) (OVERALL MAXIMUM OF 4 PERMIT PLAYERS PER MATCH)
Division 2	Regional Academy (max 4) Divisions 1 to 3, 1& 2 North (max 4) District member Clubs (max 4) (OVERALL MAXIMUM OF 4 PERMIT PLAYERS PER MATCH)
Division 1 North	Regional Academy (max 4) Divisions 1 to 3, 1& 2 North (max 4) District member Clubs (max 4) (OVERALL MAXIMUM OF 4 PERMIT PLAYERS PER MATCH)

- (vi) A permit must be sought for each match in which a player plays and such permit may be granted for a match at any time in the season subject to the conditions set out in Regulation 6 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.
- (vii) Details of the player permit system and process are outlined in Regulation 6 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.
- (viii) Team sheets submitted to the referee prior to the start of a match **must** identify players on permit and their parent Club. The Team sheets must identify the tight head and loose head replacements. In addition, the Team sheets must identify the Head Coach of each Team.
- (ix) It is expected that team sheets are submitted electronically via MyWRU no later than 72 hours after the date of the tie.

(g) **Dual Registration Scheme**

A player who is dually registered will be eligible to play in the Competition. Details of the Dual Registration Scheme are set out in Regulation 8 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations. A player may not play for his Club if he played on dual registration for another Club in the previous round of a WRU National Knock Out Competition (be it Cup) however they

are ineligible to play for another team in the WRU Plate if they have already represented another team in the competition.

(i) **Replacements**

- (i) **In Rounds 1 to 4 of the Competition**, no more than 5 replacements may be named. If a Club does name 5 replacements, there must be a total of 5 players who are suitably trained and experienced who can play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required and, on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. This will include Two Hookers and three (3) prop forwards. The replacement prop must be either a Tight Head or Loose Head or a player capable of playing on both Heads. This will ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required the game can continue safely with contested scrums. If a Tight Head were to be required and a team only has a Loose Head named as a Front Row replacement and he/she is not trained or able to play in that position then uncontested scrums will be ordered by the referee. Similarly, if a Loose Head were to be required and a team only had a Tight Head named as a Front Row replacement and he/she is not trained or able to play in that position then again uncontested scrums will be ordered by the referee.
- (ii) **In Quarter Final to Final Rounds of the Competition**, no more than 8 replacements may be named. If a Club does name 8 replacements, there must be sufficient front row players to play at hooker, tight head prop and loose head prop who are suitably trained and experienced who can play in the front row 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.

A Club may play without any named replacements. If that Club names 12 players only there is no need to name more than 3 suitably trained and experienced front row players.

If they are available, a team must have three (3) front row players in the front row at all times in an uncontested scrum, only when there is no available front row replacement or substitute is any other player permitted to play in the front row Law 3.6.e applies

For clarification, the Laws of the Game states:-

It is a team's responsibility to ensure that all front row players and front row replacements are suitably trained and experienced. (Law.3.12)

When 16 or 17 players are nominated in a team there must be three players capable of playing in the front row.

When 18 players are nominated in a team there must be four players capable of playing in the front row. (Law 3.8)

When 19, 20, 21 or 22 players are nominated in a team there must be five (5) players who can play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required and, on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. When 19 or 20 players are nominated in a team there must be five (5) players who can play in the front row (two (2) Hookers and three (3) Prop Forwards) as outlined above)

If a front row player is issued with a red or yellow card and as a result uncontested scrums are requested, then there is no need to further reduce the playing numbers.

During rounds when squads of up to 23 are allowed, a player whose departure has caused the referee to order uncontested scrums cannot be replaced, even if a team decided to start the game with less than a 23-man squad,

- Should a team be unable to field a front row at the start of a match, the match will begin with uncontested scrums. In such a scenario, the offending team will have to start the match with 14 players (it is the decision of the offending club which player they choose to remove, save that each team will be required to have 8 players in each uncontested scrum). The offending club will then only be entitled to two replacements for the match.
- Should a fixture start with contested scrums but, during the course of the match, a front row forward is unable to continue (the “Injured Forward”):
 - a) Where there is a front row forward replacement on the bench, the Injured Forward shall be replaced by the front row forward replacement. In such a scenario, the offending team may elect to move to uncontested scrums. However, should the offending team elect to do so, they must remove another player of their choice from their team (i.e. they will continue the match with 14 players). Each team will be required to have 8 players in each uncontested scrum.
 - b) Where there is no front row forward replacement on the bench, the Injured Forward shall be removed but not replaced. In such a scenario, the match will proceed with uncontested scrums. Each team will be required to have 8 players in each uncontested scrum.
- If a team starts a fixture with contested scrummaging and has the required front row cover to ensure they have named replacements but has to go to uncontested scrummaging they will still be allowed to use the named replacements for the remainder of the match.
- If a team is notified by their opponents prior to a scheduled fixture that scrums will be going uncontested, the team not electing to go passive will still be required to name five front row forwards in order to name a squad of 20 in line with National League Regulations.

The replacement of a front row forward **must** come from suitably trained and experienced players who **started** the match or from the nominated replacements.

If after a front row player has been sent off or during the time a front row player is temporarily suspended, and there are no further front row players available from the nominated team, then uncontested scrums will be ordered and the team electing to go uncontested will be unable to replace the offending player.

NB: In uncontested scrums there must always be 8 players in the scrum and the No8 from either side cannot pick up.

It is not the responsibility of the match official to determine the suitability of trained front row replacements nor their availability, as this is a team responsibility.

5. **Entry Condition**

All Clubs participating in the Competition shall be subject to and shall comply with these Rules.

If a Club is expelled or withdraw from the National Plate, the Competitions Management Committee have the discretion to apply criteria to the Club prior to accepting its re-entry into the National Plate in future seasons.

6. **Responsibility for Organisation**

- (a) All matches from Round 1 to Quarter Final (inclusive) in the Competition - Home club
- (b) Semi Finals and Final of the Competition - WRU
- (c) The Final will take place on the date and at a venue specified by the WRU

7. **Match Officials**

- (a) Referees will be appointed by the WRU for all matches in the Competition.
- (b) Assistant Referees will be appointed by the WRU for each of the *Quarter Final*, *Semi Final* and *Final* matches subject to availability of the required officials and on the premise all fixtures are treated equitably. The competing Clubs will appoint touch judges to all other matches in the Competition.

8. **Duration of Play**

80 minutes each match (40 minutes each half) plus any time permitted for delays. At half time, an interval of not more than 10 minutes is allowed. If scores equal at full time - see Rule 12.

The match official is to be the sole judge of the amount of time played.

9. **Venue**

Except by mutual agreement, which must be provided in writing by both clubs, of the competing Clubs, all matches in the Competition in Round 1 to the Quarter-Final Rounds (inclusive), will be played on the grounds of the Clubs drawn first in respect of each match. This Club will be the Home Club - see Rule 14.

The Semi-Finals will be played at a ground or grounds selected by the WRU

The Final will be played at a ground selected by the WRU.

10. **The Draw**

The draw for Round 1 shall be made on or before 31st August 2019.

The draw for Round 2 and subsequent rounds shall ordinarily be made during the week following the scheduled date of the preceding Round in the Competition.

11. **Dates for Rounds**

All matches must be played on the following dates except in the case of postponement because of adverse ground or weather conditions.

Plate

Date

Round 1	21 st September 2019
Round 2	12 th October 2019
Round 3	16 th November 2019
Round 4	7 th December 2019
Quarter Final	11 th January 2020
Semi Final	21 st March 2020
Final	19 th April 2020 (provisional)

12. Declaration of Winners

Winners of the matches in each Round in the competition will be:-

- (a) The Club which has scored the greatest number of points at the end of the match.
- (b) In the event of an equal number of points being scored by each Club at the end of the match, winners will be declared in the following priority:-
 - (i) The Club which has scored the greater number of tries.
 - (ii) The Club which has scored the greater number of (converted tries).
 - (iii) If after (i) and (ii) have been applied no clear winner has emerged, extra time of 20 minutes (ten minutes each way) will be played and the winners declared in accordance with (a) or (b), (i) and (ii).
 - (iv) If the result is still a tie the Club playing away from home will be declared the winner, except in the case of the Semi Finals where a replay will take place, such replay to be played within 14 days. If the result is still a tie then the winners will be decided on the toss of a coin. In the Final, following the application of the above priorities, the result shall be declared a draw and the Trophy held by each Club for six months.
- (c) **If a Club elects to take uncontested scrums** in a tie the matter will be reported by the appointed Referee to the Competitions Management Committee. The Competitions Management Committee will hold an inquiry into why uncontested scrums had taken place during a match. If after this inquiry the Competitions Management Committee deems it appropriate it may apply any of the sanctions upon the offending club set out in Rule 16.

13. Notification of Winners

The appointed Referee will electronically notify the WRU of the result of each match up to and including the Semi-Finals, within 2 hours of the match taking place. The appointed Match Official must submit team lists, which must be completed by Officials of each Club and handed to the Match Official prior to the kick-off.

14. Postponed or Abandoned Matches

- (a) **Postponed Matches:** Postponed matches must be played any time midweek or on a non-League weekend at least seven (7) days prior to the next scheduled Round of the Competition. The match will be played either at the original venue or at a venue and time acceptable to both Clubs.
- (b) **Abandoned Matches:** All matches must be played to full time. The Referee is to be the sole judge of the amount of time played. If a match is abandoned before full time it must be replayed within 10 days, either at the original venue or at a venue and time determined by the Home Club **unless both**

Clubs agree the score, at the time of the abandonment, should stand. The WRU has the discretion to extend the 10 day period in the event of extenuating circumstances.

- (c) **Rearranged Matches:** Participating Clubs are entitled to rearrange matches that are either postponed or abandoned. However, if after two attempts both Clubs are unable to rearrange the match, the Competitions Management Committee has the absolute discretion to determine the venue at which the rearranged match will be staged.

15. Protests and Disputes

Save for matters which fall to be determined in accordance with the WRU's Disciplinary Regulations, the WRU's Competitions Management Committee shall be responsible for and have discretion in dealing with any protest or dispute arising out of the Competition or these Rules. Any such protest or dispute must be made by a Club in writing to the WRU's Competitions Manager and accompanied by a fee of £100 which may or may not be refunded. No protest or dispute relating to matches played in the Competition will be considered if made more than four days after the match in question has taken place. The WRU's Competitions Management Committee shall have discretion to investigate any breach of these Rules at any time and to take such action as it shall deem appropriate.

- (i) Any Club that wishes to appeal a decision of the WRU's Competitions Management Committee made pursuant to these Rules may do so to an appeal body appointed by the Board of Directors, which may include the appointment of a legally qualified independent Chairman, provided that the Club's appeal is lodged in writing, with the WRU's Administration Manager within seven days of the WRU's Competitions Management Committee's decision being notified to it, accompanied by a fee of £100 which may or may not be returned. If the decision is given orally, the period of seven days shall run from the date of the oral decision but otherwise shall run from the date of receipt of the decision in writing by the Honorary Secretary of the Club.
- (ii) In carrying out their functions pursuant to these Rules, the WRU's Competitions Management Committee and any appeal body appointed by the Board of Directors of the WRU pursuant to Rule 15(i) shall make recommendations to the Community Game Board for further decision and action.

A member of the Competitions Management Committee will be entitled to attend any appeal to provide the rationale for the original decision taken. The representative of the Competitions Management committee will not be a voting member at the appeal.

Clubs will also be notified when an appeal is lodged and has been accepted to be heard.

16. Sanctions

- (i) The WRU's Competitions Management Committee may apply any appropriate sanction it deems fit to any Club without limitation, found to be in default, or failing to comply with these Rules.
- (ii) Where any Club has been found to have included an ineligible player(s), that is a player who is not registered with a Club or a player whose name does not appear on the team sheet submitted by the Club in a match in the Competition, the WRU's Competitions Management Committee shall have the power to penalise the offending Club further by disqualifying the Club from the Competition. Should a Club withdraw its participation prior to the start of the Competition, or fail to complete a match in the Competition, that Club may be barred from entering the WRU cup competitions in the following Season and a fine of up to £250 may be deducted from the Club's core rugby grant in the relevant Season.
- (iii) Should any Club withdraw from the Competition for two consecutive seasons, they may be withdrawn from the Competition for future seasons, the period of which will be determined by the Competitions Management Committee.
- (iv) The Competitions Management Committee has the absolute discretion to suspend any sanction contained within these National Plate rules should they deem it necessary and appropriate.

Allowable Expenses

Expenses incurred in staging a match will be limited to normal actual expenses, and accounts will be examined so as to exclude unauthorised expenses and those of an unreasonable nature. Copy invoices must be provided on request.

Non-Allowable Expenses

- (a) Expenses incurred with arrangements for special training.
- (b) Payment to players or the payment of players' expenses to point of assembly or the expenses of players not travelling by official transport.
- (c) Hire of additional spectator refreshment facilities.
- (d) Expenses of Match Officials which are to be claimed in the usual way.
- (e) Payment of bar and other staff.

Final

Gate receipts, after deduction of expenses incurred by the Union in staging the match and where appropriate, travelling expenses of Clubs participating, will be attributed to the Competition's Reserve Fund. Prize money will be paid to the winners of the Competition.

Travel Expenses

The Away Side will receive a payment of £2.10 per mile by way of travel expenses incurred in a round journey in excess of 60 miles.

Where a club needs to travel to or from District J it can claim for the cost of a coach and overnight meals and accommodation for 26 people up to a maximum of £1,750. Invoices and receipts must be submitted to support the claim. This replaces the £200 and excess mileage payments.

Ticketing

Home Clubs are obliged to offer their visitors a minimum of one third of available Stand Tickets.

When tickets are issued by the WRU on a sale or return basis, any unsold tickets must be returned no later than 14 days after the date of the match with a breakdown of concession tickets sold where applicable.

Admission Charges

Admission charges for ties played in the Semi Finals and Final in the Competition shall be determined, from time to time, by the WRU.

Programmes

Receipts from separate programme sales may be retained by the Home Club. Similarly, any loss sustained in the production of a programme shall be borne by the Home Club and not included in the match account. These provisions shall not apply to Semi Finals and Final where net receipts shall be included in the match account. Where admission is by programme the whole net receipts shall be regarded as gate money.

The Competitions Management Committee has the absolute discretion to adapt any area contained within these regulations to ensure the integrity of the Competition is maintained and the Competition is concluded in a clear, fair and equitable manner.