



The WRU National Shield 2021-2022

COMPETITION RULES

1. **Description:** The Competition shall be called The WRU National Shield
2. **Form:** The Competition shall be played on a Pool Stage and Knock-out basis.
3. **Competition Format**

The Competition will be open to the clubs that play in Division 3 East C, East Central C, West Central C and Division 3 North of the WRU National League.

The Pool stages will see clubs play either on a home and away or home or away basis depending on the number of teams within each Pool with the top club in advancing to the knockout stages

In the Knockout stages the Clubs will play on a knock-out basis.

4. **Eligibility to Participate:**

- (I) **Clubs**
 - (a) All Clubs outlined in the Competition Format of the WRU National League are eligible to participate in the Competition provided that a Club has not been excluded from the Competition by the WRU. This is to include the Second XV Teams who are participating in Division 3 North of the National League.
 - (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 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 18 years and above at 1 September of relevant year) or 23 days for children and adolescents (defined as a player aged under 18 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 same Competition be it Premiership & Championship Cup, Plate, Bowl or Shield during the knockout stages.
- (d) Due to there being no transfer window during the competition window, players will be eligible to transfer to other clubs throughout should they wish and the correct procedures followed. Please be aware that the CMC have the discretion to amend this regulation should they wish throughout the competition.
- (e) However, if the player has played for another Club in the previous round of a WRU National Knock Out Competition in the 2021-2022 season (be it Premiership & Championship Cup, Plate or Bowl), he must miss the round for his new Club immediately after the date of his transfer before he becomes eligible to play

(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) During the Pool Stages, permits can be sought from Clubs one Division (as per the 19-20 National League season) higher than the team seeking the permit. Players may permit from higher than a Division provided that the player was registered with the club seeking the permit immediately prior to moving. Once the pool stages conclude, the previous Plate regulations relating to permits then apply
- (iii) Permits are not allowed to be granted to players who have already represented one club in the WRU National Shield during the knockout stages only as they are then Cup tied for the remainder of the competition. However, they will be allowed to permit to teams still involved in the Premiership & Championship Cup, Plate and Bowl provided they miss the following round of that competition. This only applies to permits granted during the knockout stages.
- (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 WRU's Fixtures Manager no later than 24 hours prior to the kick-off of the match.
- (v) **Permits from Clubs in the Premier Division, Championship, Divisions 1 East, 1 East Central, 1 West, 1 West Central, 2 East, 2 East Central, 2 West, 2 West Central, 3 East A & B, 3 East Central A & B, 3 West Central A & B, 3 West A & B and 1 & 2 North ARE NOT ALLOWED during the knockout stages.** Permits may only be obtained as follows:-

Division	Clubs from where permits may be obtained
Division 3 East C, East Central C, West Central C and North 3	Regional Academy (max 4) *Premier Division (max 4 subject to the player being registered with the club seeking the permit immediately prior to transfer) *Championship (max 4 subject to the player being registered with the club seeking the permit immediately prior to transfer) *Division 1 (max 4 subject to the player being registered with the club seeking the permit immediately prior to transfer) *Division 2 East, East Central, West & West Central (max 4) *3 East A & B, 3 East Central A & B, 3 West Central A & B, 3 West A & B and 1 & 2 North (max 4) Divisions 3 East C, East Central C, West Central C & 3 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 7 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.
- (vii) Details of the player permit system and process are outlined in Regulation 7 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.
- (viii) Team sheets submitted to the match official prior to the start of a match **must** identify all players on permit or loan 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 24 hours after the date of the tie.

(g) **Dual Registration Scheme.**

Dual registered players are ineligible to play for their secondary club in the Shield Competition.

Replacements

From the Pool Stages of the Competition to the early knockout rounds, 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.

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

- (ii) **From the Quarter Finals of the Competition to the Final** 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.

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 however will be able to use their required number of rolling replacements.**

- 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”):
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 is notified by their opponents prior to a scheduled fixture that scrums will be going uncontested, the team not electing to go to uncontested scrums 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.

II) Rolling Substitutions

Teams will be permitted to use rolling substitutions throughout the Pool stages of the competition with the following provisions in place

In a match where consent has been given prior to the Season and subject to Regulations each team shall be permitted to use rolling substitutions of not more than the maximum number of the Player interchanges (“Player Interchanges”) set out in the table below:

- Number of Replacements - Player Interchanges

Up to 3

8

4	9
5	10
*6 to 8	12

‘*’ indicates that this is subject to CMC discretion should any changes be made to the Competition dates

- After the Player Interchanges have been made no other replacements, substitutions or Player Interchanges will be permitted for any reason (including temporary or permanent injuries, sending offs and suspensions) and in the event that a Player is injured, sent off or suspended from the field the team will play with one less Player and with uncontested scrums in the event that this involves a front row Player and the game cannot continue safely with contested scrums.
- For the avoidance of doubt, Player Interchanges replace the “blood bin” which means that if a Player has uncontrolled active bleeding and thus has to leave the field, this will not be classified as a Player Interchange if that Player is replaced by another Player. If a team has used all of its Player Interchanges, that Player may be replaced and the team shall continue. The Player is permitted to return once the wound has been treated and the bleeding stopped.
- Not more than three Player Interchanges per team may occur at any one time and may only occur during a stoppage in play and in all cases with the permission of the Referee.
- A Player must enter the field of play on the halfway line.
- A Player who is a replacement shall not be entitled to take a kick at goal until a passage of play has taken place since that Player took to the field of play.
- A Player who is previously injured in the match shall not return to play as a Player Interchange .
- In addition to the powers set out in the Laws of the Game, Referees are entitled in their sole opinion to prohibit or postpone a Player Interchange if they believe either that the Player Interchange would prevent the opposition from restarting the game quickly or where the replacement Player is not fit to continue playing in the match.
- Any player leaving the field of play with suspected concussion is not allowed to return to the field of play.
- Under dispensation provided to Unions by World Rugby, where these rolling substitutions Regulations conflict with the Laws of the Game these Regulations shall take precedence.

5. Entry Condition

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

6. **Responsibility for Organisation**

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

7. **Match Officials**

- (a) Referees will be appointed by the WRU for all matches in the Competition.
- (a) Assistant Referees may be appointed by the WRU for the knockout stages depending on availability. The competing Clubs will appoint touch judges for all other matches in the Competition where Assistant Referees are not appointed.

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.

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, 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.

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. **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.

Should a team be unable to fulfil a fixture outside of adverse ground or weather conditions then the opposing side will be awarded five (5) points and a 20-0 victory.

Should a team be unable to play due to Covid-19 related reasons, then evidence will need to be produced to the Rugby Operations department to collaborate this and should it be satisfactory then the fixture will be rearranged for the next available Saturday following a proper isolation period. Should the game not be played due to anything other than adverse ground or weather conditions then the team unable to fulfil the fixture will forfeit the game and their opponents awarded a bonus point 20-0 win in the Pool Stages and qualification to the next round in the Knockout stages.

No sanctions will be imposed on the team who was unable to fulfil the fixture.

All Pool stage games are to be completed on or before Saturday 30th October 2021.

11. **Declaration of Winners**

- The winners of each Pool will qualify to the Knockout stages. Should clubs in first and second place be on the same number of points then the following will be used to determine the higher placed team in the following order:-

- Number of wins
- Fewest losses
- Tries scored
- Tries conceded
- If all of the above are identical then points scored will be divided by their points conceded with the team with the highest going through.

Winners of the matches in each knockout stage 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.

12. 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 1 hour of the match taking place. the appointed Match Official must submit be accompanied by team lists, which must be completed by Officials of each Club and handed to the Match Official prior to the kick-off.

13. Postponed or Abandoned Matches

- (a) **Postponed Matches:** Postponed matches due to adverse ground or weather conditions must be played on the next available Saturday or midweek should there be mutual agreement. If a game is not played due to a team unable to play, then during the Pool stages the opposing team will be awarded 5 points and a 20-0 victory. Should it be during the knockout stages then the opposing team will progress to the next round
- (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 and the difference in score be 30 or more points then the result of the tie shall stand and be submitted with the team leading progressing to the next round. This is regardless of whether both teams agree or not

If the difference in score is 29 points or less 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 exceptional circumstances.

- (c) **Rearranged Matches:** Participating Clubs are entitled to rearrange matches that are either postponed or abandoned due to adverse ground or weather conditions. 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.
- (d) **Covid-19 Related Postponements:** Should a team be unable to play due to Covid-19 related reasons, then evidence will need to be produced to the Rugby Operations department to collaborate this and should it be satisfactory then the fixture will be rearranged for the next available Saturday following a proper isolation period. Should the game not be played due to anything other than adverse ground or weather conditions then the team unable to fulfil the fixture will forfeit the game and their opponents awarded a bonus point 20-0 win in the Pool Stages and qualification to the next round in the Knockout stages

14. 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 of the WRU, which may include the appointment of a legally qualified Chairman, provided that the Club's appeal is lodged in writing, with the WRU's Competitions 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. **Please note that there is no obligation of the WRU or Competitions Management Committee to appoint a legally qualified independent Chairman.**
- (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 consideration.

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 against them has been accepted to be heard.

15. 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 will not face any sanction.

Expenses incurred in staging a match will be limited to normal actual expenses, and accounts will be examined 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 for knockout stages.

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 aforementioned regulations.

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.

18. Competitions Management Committee of the WRU

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.