



The WRU National Premiership Cup 2021-2022

COMPETITION RULES

1. **Description:** The Competition shall be called the WRU National Premiership Cup.
2. **Form:** The Competition shall be played on a pool stage and then 'knock-out' basis.
3. **Competition Format**

The Competition will be for the Clubs in the Premier Division.

Teams will be placed geographically into two different groups. the top 4 in each group will then qualify for the knockout stages with the following Quarter Final games to be played:

- 1 East v 4 West
- 1 West v 4 East
- 2 East v 3 West
- 2 West v 3 East

The Semi Finals and Final will then be played to determine the winner

4. **Eligibility to Participate:**

- (I) **Clubs**
 - (a) All Clubs in the Premier Division are eligible to participate in the Competition provided that a Club has not been excluded from the Competition by 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 member of that Club, or registered with a Regional Academy, or
 - 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 represent two different Clubs in the same Competition during the Pool Stages..
- (d) A Club may have registered no more than 2 overseas players in a matchday squad who will at any one time be eligible to play in fixtures. In the case of a professional player from outside the EC and who does not have EC workers rights, a licence to employ the player must be obtained by the Club from the UK Border Agency. An application for a licence to employ a professional rugby player must be supported by the Union. The Union will not support an application for a licence to employ a professional rugby player other than an application made by a Professional Region, Development Region or a Premier Division which has been granted an A Licence. The numbers of non-Welsh qualified players which may be contracted by Regional Teams is governed by the Rugby Services Agreements between the WRU.

Clubs are limited to the number of non-Welsh qualified players or overseas players they are allowed to register in their respective squads and each team is only permitted to select a maximum of 2 overseas players in each matchday team (such players must provide documentary evidence to prove they have a right to reside in the UK and Clubs must confirm such players do not receive any material benefit from playing Rugby Union).

An overseas player is one who is not qualified to play for Wales at the date of registration and who cannot prove to the satisfaction of the WRU that he is entitled to the rights granted under Title III of the EC Treaty or under the EEA or other European Agreement (i.e. a person who has European workers rights).

- (e) **Clubs in the Premier Division** which run only one senior team will be limited to having up to 32 registered players who will be eligible to play for the Club in the Competition. Clubs in the Premier Division which run two or more senior teams, provided that the second team plays at least 16 matches a season, will be allowed to have more than 32 registered players.
- (f) No player is eligible to play for a Club in the Competition if he transfers, or is registered, after 11:59pm on 31st January 2022, 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 WRU's 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 WRU's Competitions Management Committee.**

- (g) A player who is transferred prior to 11:59pm on 31st January 2022 will be eligible to play for his new Club in the Competition provided that the transfer and registration process is completed properly and confirmation has been received by the Club in accordance with the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.

(i) **PLAYER PERMITS**

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

- (i) Clubs may use up to 23 permits during the pool stages of the competition
- (ii) In any knockout phase match in the Competition, a Club may play up to a maximum of 6 players on permit in total. Of these 6 permits, clubs from the Premier Division are entitled to a maximum of four (4) Regional or Regional Academy Players with there being no limit on the number of times that the player has represented the club on permit in the Premier Division.
- (iii) Permits may not be granted to players who have already represented one Club in the WRU National Cup as they are then cup tied for the remainder of the Competition. This applies only to the knockout stages
- (iv) A player registered with a Regional team may play on permit in the Competition for a Premier Division Club. A player registered with a Regional Academy may play on permit for a Premier Division club in the Competition. There will be no requirement for Regional Players to have played a certain number of games for that club in the Premier Division to become eligible to permit
- (v) A Regional Team player who is an Overseas player may play on permit for a Premier Division in the Competition.
- (vi) In the case of **Regional Academy players** who may play on permit for a Club in the Premier Division the requisite permits may be granted only by the Manager of the Regional Academy, or his nominated deputy. For this permit to be valid it must be lodged with the Union's Competitions Manager.

Permits may be obtained as follows:

Division	Clubs from where permits may be obtained
Premier Division	Regional Teams Regional Academy Premier Division Club Championship & Divisions 1 to 3 District member clubs

- (vii) 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.

- (viii) Details of the player permit system and process are outlined in Regulation 6 of the Player Registration and Transfer Regulations.
- (ix) Team sheets submitted to the match official prior to the start of a match **must** identify players on permit. 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.
- (x) It is expected that team sheets are submitted electronically via MyWRU no later than 24 hours after the date of the tie.

(k)

REPLACEMENTS

In all matches during the Competition, up to 8 replacements may be named provided that of the 23 named players and 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 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.

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

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. 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 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"):

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 uncontested 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 Cup, the Competitions Management Committee have the discretion to apply criteria to the Club prior to accepting its re-entry into the National Cup 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 the 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 round of the Competition subject to availability of the required officials and on the premise all fixtures are treated equitably.

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 Referee is to be the sole judge of the amount of time played.

9. **Venue**

Except by mutual agreement, which should be provided in writing by both clubs, of the competing Clubs, all matches in the pool stage and Quarter Final will be played on the ground of the Home Club.

The Semi-Finals will be played at the ground(s) selected by the WRU

The Final will be played at the 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 and/or requests from the appointed Broadcaster.

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.

11. Declaration of Winners

The top 4 teams in each Pool will qualify to the Knockout stages. Should clubs finish 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:-

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 there is no clear winner, 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 Cup 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 the 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 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 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 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.

(c) **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.

(d) **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.

(e) **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 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 independent Chairman, provided that the Club's appeal is lodged in writing, with the WRU's Competitions Manager within seven days of the 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 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 lodged against them 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 have £250 forfeited from the Club's core 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 Cup rules should they deem it necessary and appropriate.

17. Security of Trophy

The Cup shall be handed to the winner of the Competition.

Whilst the trophy is in the possession of the Winning Club it will ensure the trophy and ensure it is kept in good repair and condition.

18. Accounting Issues

a.

Financial Statements

Financial statements must be produced in respect of all matches played in the Semi Finals and subsequent rounds of the Competition, irrespective of whether a profit has been made, and forwarded to the WRU Fixtures Manager as follows:-

- i. Semi Final
- by the Club at whose ground the match is played.
- ii. Final
- by the WRU

b. Timescales

These financial statements are to be produced as follows:-

Semi Finals / Final – not later than 28 days after the date of the match.

c. **Financial Distributions**

Pool Stages and knockout stages up to and including the Quarter Final Gate receipts are to be kept by the home club.

Knockout Stages Prior to Semi Finals

The WRU will make payment of £100 to the away side and will also make a payment to the Away Sides, where applicable, for excess mileage (see travel expenses below).

Semi-Finals

Gate receipts from the semi-final matches, after deduction of expenses incurred by the WRU in staging the match and where appropriate, travelling expenses for Clubs participating, will be divided as follows:

Clubs participating	100% (25% each)
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Allowable Expenses

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.

19. 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.

20. Medical Provision

For each game in the Competition, the Minimum Standards protocol must be followed in terms of match Doctors.