

The NORTH MIDLANDS COLTS LEAGUE

A. Aims, Authority and Delegated Powers

1. The Aim of the North Midlands Colts League (NMCL) shall be to create a league structure for the U18 Teams of North Midlands and Staffordshire Clubs or combinations of Clubs (and any other U18 team that the Committee at its discretion, should invite to join).
2. All matches are played under the jurisdiction of the RFU and in accordance with World Rugby Laws and Regulations, RFU Rules and Regulations (including where applicable Game Regulations), and the World Rugby and RFU U19 Age Grade Variations. For the avoidance of doubt, the Law Variations are available at the bodies' respective websites, www.worldrugby.org and www.rfu.com.
3. The League(s) will be administered by the North Midlands RFU, who will delegate its powers to a committee formed for this purpose. The Committee will be designated the North Midlands Colts League Committee (NMCLC) and will operate as an "Organizing Committee".
4. NMCLC will elect such Officers as required including a Chairman and a Secretary.
5. The Powers of Delegation are granted to the North Midlands Colts League Committee (NMCLC) from the RFU and through the North Midlands Rugby Football Union.
6. At the discretion of the NMCLC, and with the approval of the North Midlands RFU, the name of any sponsor or sponsors may be incorporated into the title of the Competition.
7. The NMCLC may appoint a League Secretary for each of the Colts Leagues under its management.
8. NMCLC may obtain sponsorship in order to assist with the financial management of the Leagues. Before contracting with any sponsor, NMCLC will seek the approval of the North Midlands RFU.

B. Disciplinary Powers, Disputes Resolution and Sanctions

1. The North Midlands Colts League Committee shall have the right to discipline member teams for breaches of Competition Regulations only.
2. Disciplinary Offences as listed in the RFU Disciplinary Regulation 2.5 including Sending's-Off, abuse of Match Official, citings or other forms of Misconduct and Breach of RFU Rule 5.12 shall be dealt with by the Constituent Body Disciplinary Panel. All cases of Abuse of Match Officials and the abandonment of matches for Disciplinary reasons must also be reported directly to the RFU Disciplinary Manager.
3. Disputes or complaints should be notified to the League Secretary (Di Hickinbotham) by phone or e-mail, within thirty-six (36) hours of the relevant game or situation.
4. A Right of Review is available for teams that are dissatisfied with any ruling made by the NMCLC. Requests for such a Review should be made in writing to the President of the North Midlands RFU by the Honorary Secretary of the parent club of said team. The request should be submitted within seven (7) days of the ruling being made. The President may conduct the Review himself or delegate this power to an appropriate person or panel.
5. If after the completion of the Review, the parent club of the dissatisfied team, or any party having an interest are aggrieved at the outcome of the Review, a further level of appeal is available through an RFU Competitions Appeal. This process is described under RFU Game Regulation 10.2.10.

C. Conditions of Entry

1. The parent clubs of all teams must be affiliated to a Referees Society.

2. The League will arrange a Pre-Entry Meeting, normally held in April or May, to pool ideas and improvements for the coming season. Teams must be represented by a team Manager who will be involved with the day-to-day running of the team.

3. The League's AGM will be held before the end of July. A team managers' meeting will be held immediately subsequent to this meeting. All member teams must send at least one representative to this meeting. The representative must be involved with the day to day running of the team on penalty of a two (2) Competition Point deduction at the start of the season for not attending.

4. Any team entering the League is required to pay a fee for the season.

a. For Clubs in North Midlands the entry fee will be £95 including the North Midlands Colts Cup.

b. For Clubs who are not members of North Midlands, ie Staffordshire or Warwickshire, the entry fee will be £65

5. The NMCLC may at its sole discretion impose a surety on any club with a history of defaulting on fixtures in previous seasons.

D. Player Eligibility

1. Players must be bone fide playing members of the parent club of the team for which they play and be registered with the RFU.

2. With the exception of players living away at university and playing during term time for a local club, players cannot play at senior or junior level for any other club that runs an appropriate age group team (U17s, U18s, Junior or Senior Colts).

3. A player must have reached his 16th birthday prior to the 1st September in the season in which he plays in the NMCL.

4. A player must not have reached his 18th birthday prior to the 1st September in the season in which he plays in the NMCL.

5. Evidence of a player's age must be available at least 30 minutes prior to Kick Off. This can take the form of a player's RFU registration, be it Junior or Adult Registration. In the event that a player is not registered with the RFU the NMCL committee may consider exceptions but ONLY if they are notified and consent received PRIOR to the Player taking the field in a match. In this instance a driver's licence or other photo ID only will be accepted for inspection.

6. Where players are under the age of 18 years, permission to play must be obtained from the player's parent or guardian in line with RFU Schools and Youth Regulation 2.3. 7. The transfer of Players between Clubs is permitted. However, Coaches and Managers must not actively solicit the services of a Player from another Club. 8. The RFU Guidelines with regard to the overplaying of players must be observed.

E. Fixtures and Venues

1. Matches will be played in the order and on the dates laid down by the NMCLC. Any variation to this can only be made with the approval of the NMCLC.

2. The home team contact must confirm the fixture (including the colours to be played in) with the away team's fixture contact by 7pm on the Tuesday prior to the fixture.

3. In the event of a clash of colours, it will be the home team's responsibility to change shirts. Where there is doubt, the referee will be the arbiter in deciding whether a similarity of colours constitutes a clash.

4. Should a team or teams wish to switch venues, this is permissible by mutual consent and with the approval of the league secretary.

F. Referees

1. Home teams are responsible for applying to the Referees' Society to whom their clubs are affiliated for the appointment of a neutral referee. In order to assist the Referees' Society Appointments Officer, the team fixture list should be provided to the Society prior to the commencement of the season.
2. Home clubs should follow the protocols of the relevant Referees' Society in confirming the referee in the week prior to the match. Contact with the referee should be direct. An answer phone message or an email without a reply is not considered to be direct contact.
3. In the event that a referee is not confirmed because of the negligence of the home club and a match is postponed or another referee has to be found on the day the home team will be liable to a deduction of two competition points. If clubs fail to make contact with the Match Referee in a timely manner prior to the game, they should immediately notify the Referees' Society Appointments Secretary, seeking his intervention.
4. Failure by the home team to immediately inform their appointed referee of any cancellation, postponement, or switch of venue will result in a two (2) point deduction.
5. In the event of a Referees' Society being unable to provide a referee or a confirmed referee crying off late, the home club should ask the away club if they are able to provide a qualified Foundation or ELRA referee, who is not a manager or coach of the team or a parent of a player.
6. Should a team experience difficulty with the official appointments channel from their local Referees' Society they should inform the League Secretary who will give them assistance in resolving this issue.
7. In the event of the away team being unable to provide a referee in line with paragraph 5 above, the home club may provide a qualified Foundation or ELRA referee who will not be a manager or coach of the team, or a parent of a player in that team.
8. The home club will pay the referees legitimately incurred expenses.
9. In the event of a re-arranged match, the home club must inform the Referees' Society of the re-arranged date as soon as that date is known.
10. The team managers of clubs should together meet with the match referee at least 30 minutes prior to the kick off to ensure a consistent understanding of these Regulations, and to ensure that their opposite numbers and the referee are aware of the number of players including replacements to be fielded by each team. Team managers should carry with them their players registration details.

Postponement and Rearrangement of Fixtures

1. If two teams wish to and agree to swap the location of a fixture from the assigned home club to that of the away club, it is the original home team's responsibility to inform the League Secretary (Di Hickinbotham) and the League Results Secretary. If there is a further fixture between the two teams within the season, then the return match location will be swapped accordingly.
2. If prevailing weather conditions prior to the day of the fixture are such that pitches are projected to become dangerous or unplayable, or to cause travel conditions to be impossible or hazardous, a match may be postponed.
3. In the event of a poor weather forecast, the team managers will be expected to discuss the likelihood of an unplayable pitch as soon as possible (Thursday /Friday). If it is anticipated that a home team's pitches will be unplayable, the home team manager should make every effort to find a replacement pitch. If a suitable replacement pitch is not available, then it is recommended that the venue be switched to the away team's ground. If this is the first meeting of the season between the clubs, then the reciprocal match venue will likewise be reversed.
4. On the day of a match when representatives of both teams and the referee are present and there is doubt about as to the fitness of the pitch by either team then the terms of World Rugby Laws of the Game 2016 Section 1.6 will apply.

5. If two opposing teams are scheduled to play a match but mutually agree that they wish to reschedule a fixture for other reasons, they may propose a postponement to a particular date.

6. Any prospective postponement whether due to weather or other reasons must be notified to the League Chairman – John Griffiths (or his delegated deputy), with whom the sole authority to postpone a fixture lies. No fixture can be postponed for any reason without his explicit consent.

7. Postponed fixtures and any proposed dates advised by the League Chairman to the League Results Secretary. Unless a proposed date has been agreed by the League Chairman, the League Results Secretary will re-arrange the fixture for the “Next Available Weekend”. This date will be determined by the League Results Secretary. Re-arranged matches will take precedence over any friendly fixture arranged. Only National Colts Cup/plate or previously arranged CB Colts Cup/Plate matches will take precedence over rearranging League fixtures.

8. In the event that a match is postponed or cancelled, the home team must inform the referee as soon as possible.

H. Failure to Honour Fixtures

1. A shortage of players, for whatever reason, cannot be considered a justifiable reason for postponement.

2. A club anticipating that it will not be able to honour a fixture must give as much notice as possible to the other club to allow an alternative fixture to be arranged.

3. If one club fails to notify the other of the intention not to honour a fixture, or provides notification only on the day of the fixture, then the offending club shall incur a fine of £50, payable to NMCL within five (5) working days of the cancelled fixture. The offending Club may appeal this fee to the Chairman (John Griffiths jgatdkinpenn@gmail.com) within 36 hours of the arranged KO time.

4. In the case of the above, if the non-offending club was the home club, then NMCL will pay the non-offending club £50 to offset unnecessary catering, staffing or costs that may have been incurred. If the home club is the offending club, then the £50 fine will be retained by NMCL.

5. If a club unjustifiably fails to honour a fixture, a “20-0 win” will be awarded to the non-offending team, entitling them to one (1) bonus competition point.

6. The offending team will suffer a deduction of two (2) competition points.

7. If the team failing to honour a fixture is the away team, the reciprocal fixture will be played at the venue of the non-offending club.

8. A team that unjustifiably fails to honour a fixture on three or more occasions in one season will be suspended from the league for a period to be determined by NMCLC.

9. Any team so suspended or any team that withdraws from the League for any reason shall incur a financial administration charge of £95 in addition to the Entry Fee, payable by their Club to cover the extra admin costs caused by that team's withdrawal.

10. Players are to be encouraged to play representative rugby when selected. Clubs will put no impediment in their way. League fixtures must still be honoured when such players are absent on representative duties.

I. Kickoff Times

1. The default kick off time will be 2.00 pm.

2. Variations in kick off times may be mutually agreed by the teams concerned but should be advised by the home team to the League Results Secretary as soon as agreement is reached to enable the website to be updated.

J. Match Management

1. Matches will be played in accordance with the World Rugby and RFU U19 Law Variations applicable on the date of the particular match.
2. Each match shall consist of two periods of 35 minutes, with no extra time. The referee is the sole judge of time.
3. A squad of up to a maximum of 22 players, including replacements, may be selected with rolling substitutions allowed.
4. Teams should make all attempts to ensure fixtures go ahead in spite of a shortage of players. League games may be played with a minimum of 12 players per team. If a team is short and their opponents are not prepared to lend them players, games can proceed with no more than a one-player advantage to any side i.e. turn up with 12 players and your opposition can only field 13. Should any team have fewer than 12 players, a 0-0 win will be awarded to the non-offending team, but a match should be played if at all possible. A team that turns up and plays, irrespective of the number of players, will not receive a two-point penalty under section H6.
5. Teams must observe the "half-game regulation" for all players who attend each game unless there is a safety issue in playing any player for that long. This should be reported to the League Secretary within 24 hours of the game being completed
6. Should a reduced numbers game be necessary:
 - a. Only 7 replacements may be used by the team that is not short on numbers.
 - b. Playing time may be reduced by 5 minutes per half, by agreement.
 - c. In any match where one team starts with one player fewer, the difference of one must be maintained if the lesser side loses a player(s) through injury; the objective being to maintain a competitive game.
 - d. This also applies in any match where teams start with level numbers but one team loses two players through injury and has no replacements; their opponents must reduce their numbers to a difference of "plus one".
 - e. In the event of a sin-bin or sending off there will be no requirement for the non-offending side to reduce numbers; however the Referee can use his judgement to request the non-offending side reduce the number of players in its team, if he considers continuing without such a reduction would be dangerous.
7. Where the points difference in a match for the first time reaches 50 or above (e.g. the score moves from 56-7 to 61-7), the teams can agree on one of two options;
 - a. The match can be halted and the result stands, irrespective of the game time completed.
 - b. The match can continue, with each team able to score further points in the game, but the recorded result (including the number of tries) will be that at the time the 50 point difference was first reached.

K. Front Row Replacements

1. Team managers must ensure that all front row players and players nominated as such are suitably trained and competent as front row players.
2. Clubs are encouraged to train suitable players to act as Front row replacements even if they normally play in another position.
3. All front row players must be clearly identified FR on the Match Result Card which must be handed to the Referee before the game.
4. The table below indicates the minimum number of suitably trained front row players to a team must have according to the number of players in the match squad per World Rugby Laws of the Game 2016 Section 3.5. They must be suitably trained to cover loose and tight head prop and hooker.

- a. 15 players or fewer - Three players who can play in the front row
- b. 16, 17 or 18 players - Four players who can play in the front row
- c. 19, 20, or 21 players - Five players who can play in the front row
- d. 22 players – six players who can play in the front row (U19 variation)

5. Should a team not have the required number of front row players and replacements, it must reduce its match squad accordingly. In general terms the administration of front row replacements shall be in accordance with RFU Game Reg. 7.2 and 7.3. 6. Where a team has 15 players or fewer, and the team is unable to provide a front row replacement on the first occasion one is required, the match will continue with uncontested scrums and the result at full time will stand.

7. Where a team has 16, 17 or 18 players, and the team is unable to provide a front row replacement on the first occasion one is required, then the offending team will lose one (1) of any competition points gained in the match. If the team is unable to provide a front row player on the second occasion one is required, the match will continue with uncontested scrums and the result at full time will stand. If as a result of the team being unable to replace a front row player on the second occasion, the referee orders uncontested scrums, the front row player leaving the field may not be replaced.

8. Where a team has 19, 20, or 21 players and the team is unable to provide a front row replacement on the first occasion one is required, then the offending team will lose two (2) of any competition points gained from the match. If the team is unable to provide a front row player on the second occasion one is required then the offending team will lose one (1) of any points gained from the match. If the team is unable to provide a front row player on the third occasion one is required the match will continue with uncontested scrums and the result at full time will stand. If as a result of being unable to replace a front row player on the third occasion the referee orders uncontested scrums, the front row player leaving the field may not be replaced.

L. Abandoned Matches

1. When a match has been abandoned for reasons other than those of discipline, the result of the match shall stand provided 50 minutes of playing time has elapsed or by agreement between the team managers. The League Results Secretary must be informed immediately and will arrange a new date if either club is unwilling to accept the score when less than 50 minutes playing time has elapsed.

2. When a match has been abandoned for reasons of indiscipline, foul play or any misconduct, the result of the match will be held in abeyance until all disciplinary action has been completed.

M. Competition Points

1. Competition Points following a match being played will be awarded on the following basis:

- a. Four Competition Points will be awarded for a win.
- b. Two Competition Points will be awarded for a draw.

2. Competition Bonus Points where a match is played will be awarded on the following basis:

- a. One Bonus Competition Point will be awarded to a team for scoring four tries or more, irrespective of whether that team wins, draws or loses the match.
- b. One Bonus Competition Point will be awarded to a team that loses by seven points or fewer.

3. Competition Points where a team fails to honour a fixture will be applied on the following basis:

- a. Five Competition Points will be awarded to the non-offending team, and a 20-0 win recorded.

b. Two Competition Points will be deducted from the offending team for failing to honour the fixture. This may cause a team's total Competition Points to become negative.

4. If a team withdraws or is permanently suspended from the NMCL, then all fixtures against that team for the season, played or unplayed, will be set to "abandoned" and no competition points awarded. Any competition points (including bonus points) earned by opposition teams from fixtures that have been played will be overridden.

5. League Tables will be published on the RFU website

6. At the end of the season, Competition Points will be the deciding criteria for position in the League assuming that all sides complete the same number of games. Two (or more) teams tied on equal Competition Points will be separated by The number of wins, then Bonus Points gained and finally Match points difference. Unplayed games, forfeits, and points deductions may be taken into account and determined by the NMCLC. The decision of the NMCLC is final.

N. Match Cards and Reporting

1. A Match Result Card must be completed and signed by both team managers and the referee. 2. Match results must be reported by each team manager to the League Results Secretary by text sent to (mobile to be confirmed) by 6pm on the day of the match.

3. The format of the text must be:

HomeTeam 99 v 99 AwayTeam ManagerName YourTeam Your Tries Bonus Competition Points will only be awarded on receipt of that team's results text.

4. Completed Match Cards must be returned to the League Secretary Di Hickinbotham, 15 Greyfriars Ave, Hereford HR4 0BE or by email to dihickinbotham@gmail.com by the first post of the Wednesday following the match.

Trophies

The NMCLC may award trophies and individual players' medals at its sole discretion.

P. North Midlands U18 Colts Cup

1. Entry into the North Midlands U18 Colts Cup Competition is automatic for all NMCLC member teams that are affiliated to North Midlands Rugby Union.

2. Managers must advise the NM Colts Cup Administrator by November 30th if their team does **not** wish to be entered into the Colts Cup and Plate.