

## NLD Girls Conference Cup 2023/24

This guidance document has been produced to provide assistance to clubs competing and hosting within the NLD Girls Conference Cup in the 2023/24 season and should be read in conjunction with RFU Regulation 15: [Regulations \(englandrugby.com\)](https://www.englandrugby.com) and NLD Junior Competition Rules 2023/24 season: [Junior-Comp-rules-2023-24.pdf \(nldrfa.co.uk\)](https://www.nldrfa.co.uk)

In the event of any confusion or conflict, please contact Siobhan Peeling, NLD Head of Girls Rugby: [girlsrugbylead@nldrfa.co.uk](mailto:girlsrugbylead@nldrfa.co.uk)

### Objective

The Conference Cup has been introduced for the 2023/24 season to provide girls in the u14s, u16s, and u18s age groups with competitive playing opportunities; to bridge the gap between development Pitch Up & Play events (“PUPs”) and National Cup or representative rugby for girls in full teams and in clusters; and to improve the playing experience for girls across NLD.

### Ethos

The priority of the Cup is safe participation for as many girls as possible in some version of competitive rugby. All games must be played in line with England Rugby’s Core Values: [Core Values \(englandrugby.com\)](https://www.englandrugby.com), ‘Game On’ principle: [Game On \(englandrugby.com\)](https://www.englandrugby.com) and ‘Fair Play’ code of conduct: [Code of Conduct \(englandrugby.com\)](https://www.englandrugby.com)

### Competition Rules

#### 1. Player Eligibility & Clusters

In accordance with Regulation 15.1.4, all players must be affiliated to their club on the RFU’s Game Management System. Playing unaffiliated age grade players is a breach of RFU Regulations and may have an impact on the club’s insurance.

If playing as part of a clustered team, players do not need to affiliate to all clubs within their cluster, only their home club. Clusters should be announced by 1<sup>st</sup> January to facilitate Cup organisation and cluster training.

All players taking part in the NLD Competition must be under their respective age at 24.00hrs on 31st August of the relevant year or dispensation granted as detailed in RFU Regulation 15.

## 2. Squad sizes and borrowing players

There will be no cap on squad or cluster sizes but we would recommend that clusters aim for no more than 24 players.

**All teams should inform their opposition and host club of anticipated squad numbers for a match no later than 7 days before the game.**

Games may be played with fewer than 15 players, with a minimum of 10 players available. The opposition must match player numbers (unless the reduced numbers are due to yellow cards).

Players may be borrowed from the opposition or the third team at a triangular on match day if the other teams can accommodate in order to allow games to be as close to the 15-a-side game as possible.

Players may only be borrowed to make up to 15, either at the start of the game or if, in the event of injury, one team has dropped to fewer than 15 players and both teams would prefer to play 15-a-side than match with lower numbers.

If a team is unable to field 10 players the game should, if possible, be rearranged, otherwise it will be forfeited – in the case of a triangular the team with low numbers can still support the other two teams with players.

If, during a game, a team can no longer field 10 players, the game must be called and the score at that time will stand as the final score. Teams may then be mixed and the game continued as a friendly.

## 3. Substitutes

Rolling substitutions are permitted. There will be no maximum number of changes enforced.

As per Regulation 15.12, the Half Game Rule will be enforced.

#### 4. Playing Formats

Fixtures will be either standalone matches or triangular fixtures, played to the age grade variations set out in [Regulation 15 Appendix 9](#). **Halves will be 25 minutes for u14s and 35 minutes for u16s and 18s as per Regulation 15.**

Teams may play uncontested scrums and/or uncontested lineouts, if preferred, but teams should give their opposition as much notice as possible (ideally no later than 7 days when teams announce their anticipated squad numbers).

The Cup is a waterfall format so all teams will participate in the finals day. NLD Head of Girls Rugby will allocate teams to a cup or plate final competition on the basis of performance in earlier rounds.

#### 5. Fixtures & results

All matches are scheduled for a Sunday afternoon.

Exact kick off times should be mutually agreed to accommodate the travel time and host club capacity. **All participating clubs and NLD Head of Girls Rugby and any visiting match officials, first aiders etc should be notified of confirmed kick off time at least two weeks in advance by host team.**

**Teams may mutually agree to move fixtures to a different day/date – please inform NLD Head of Girls' Rugby immediately of any change.**

If a game is a triangular and one team cannot make the date and an alternative date is not found, a game should go ahead between the two remaining teams. If possible, the missing team should arrange replacement fixtures with at least one of the other teams and report the result/s. Otherwise, that team forfeits those games.

Teams are reminded that, per Regulation 15.11.3(b), games must be brought to an

end if there is a points difference of 50+ points. At that time, the score will stand for the Conference Cup but teams may be mixed and the game continued as a friendly, if time allows.

For triangulars, each team should play a half game against the other two, unless one team cannot field a minimum of 10 players, in which case they should support the other two teams to play a full match. Scores are submitted for each half played. If a fixture is rearranged from a triangular and only two teams are playing, scores should still be submitted for half time as well as full time.

**The host club should confirm scores on the day with all participating teams and submit a score sheet to Head of NLD Girls Rugby by 9am on the day following the fixture. Head of Girls Rugby will check scores with participating teams and use to determine rankings for finals day.**

## 5. Hosting responsibilities

**Each host club should provide a specified individual to be point of contact for NLD and participating teams.**

NLD will name an individual who will be there on match day to assist host clubs in the smooth running of events.

The host club should liaise with all attending teams about dates and times of games and expected numbers. **Dates and times should be confirmed 14 days ahead of event and expected numbers 7 days in advance.**

Host clubs do not have to provide match day food or changing facilities, although this is strongly encouraged. **Host clubs must confirm what facilities will be available at least 7 days in advance – including parking, changing room and refreshment availability.**

**Host clubs are responsible for ensuring first aid cover for each pitch, which should be**

**supported by visiting teams and confirmed 14 days ahead of event. Host clubs should provide individual coordinators for first aiders and visiting clubs on the day.**

## 7. Referees

**The home/hosting team is responsible for organising referees for each pitch for all u14s games. The referee should have as a minimum an Introduction to Refereeing qualification.**

NLD Head of Girls Rugby will send details of u16s and u18s games to the 'Who's the Ref' platform to allow Referee Societies to appoint registered officials to games, along with contact details of nominated individual from host club.

Any changes to games dates should be notified to Head of Girls Rugby as early as possible, to allow Referee Societies time to organise and appoint to this new competition.

## 8. Points System

Points will be awarded as follows:

Win = 4 points

Draw = 2 points

Loss = 1 point