



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 2024/25 season and should be read in conjunction with:

- [RFU Regulation 15 – Age Grade Rugby](#)
- [NLD Junior Competition Rules 2024/25](#)

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

Objective

The Conference Cup has been continued into the 2024/25 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 and National Cup or representative rugby for girls both in full teams and in clusters; and to carry on improving 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](#)
- ['Game On' principle](#)
- ['Fair Play' code of conduct](#)
- [Age Grade Code of Practice](#) (please note the codes of practice were last updated Autumn 2023 so in case of discrepancies with Regulation 15, it is the Regulation 15 rules which must be followed).

Game On principles operate in other Cup competitions, including the girls' National Cup. It is expected that all clubs will participate in this spirit and lend/accept players so a full 15 a side game can go ahead or, in cases where this is not possible, agree to drop players down to a minimum of 10 a side.



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 December 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.

Any players playing down an age band MUST be signed off at RFU level. Teams fielding players playing down an age band must notify opposition teams and Head of Girls Rugby at least one week in advance and must identify the players concerned to the referee before the start of the game.

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 another team/s at a triangular or mini festival-style event 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. Please be mindful players do not exceed their maximum playing time.

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, triangular fixtures where teams play a half each against two other teams, or mini festivals, all 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. At mini festivals, 20 minute games will be played.**

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.

If any fixtures do not take place, the teams involved must agree between them if they will arrange to replay the match or if one side is forfeiting and inform the host club and Head of Girls Rugby of the decision.

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 14 days in advance by host team.**

If a game is a triangular and one team cannot make the date, 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.

Each club should 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. Each club should also confirm to Head of Girls Rugby how many players they took to the game and whether the match was 15 a side.

5. Hosting responsibilities

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

NLD will try to 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 times of games and expected numbers. **Timings should be confirmed 14 days ahead of event and expected numbers 7 days in advance. Where the format is a mini-festival, timings should take account of time needed for teams to change pitch and have an adequate drinks break.**

Host clubs do not have to provide match day food or changing facilities, although this is strongly encouraged. If facilities such as food and changing rooms are provided then these should be available to all players. **Host clubs must confirm running order and what facilities will be available at least 7 days in advance – including parking, changing room and refreshment availability.**



Lead contact for all attending clubs should pass on information about facilities and food to players and parents and set expectations before arrival.

Host clubs are responsible for ensuring first aid cover for each pitch, which should be supported by visiting teams, who should be bringing a first aider for their own team. 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 but ideally be fully ERRA qualified.

The host club's fixtures secretary should add the fixture to GMS to allow Referee Societies to appoint registered officials to games.

Host club should check that society referees have been assigned and confirm arrangements directly with them at least 7 days before the fixture and update them of any changes asap.

Please notify NLD Head of Girls rugby of any issues with securing referees to enable chasing with Referee Society.

In cases where a referee has a link to a club playing on the day, where possible they should not be involved in refereeing their own side.

8. Points System

Points will be awarded as follows:

Win = 4 points

Draw = 2 points

Loss = 1 point