

NLDRFU CUP COMPETITION RULES 2022-23

1. COMPETITION DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION

- 1.1. The NLD Knock-Out Competition structure (The Competition) shall comprise the following competitions. The names and rankings are
1. The NLD Cup
 2. The NLD Shield
 3. The NLD Plate
 4. The NLD Vase
- (The above are collectively known as the 1st XV Competition)
5. The NLD Senior Challenge Shield
 6. The NLD Junior Challenge Shield

2. GOVERNANCE

- 2.1. All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of Rugby Union Football.

3. ENTRY INTO THE COMPETITIONS AND SEEDING

- 3.1. Entrants into each competition shall be determined as follows:

The NLD Cup

- The previous season's Cup Winners.
- The highest placed Clubs, within the League structure for the season in which the Cup is being played necessary to bring the number of participants to eight.

The NLD Shield

- The next highest placed Clubs, within the League structure for the season in which the Shield is being played [excluding those qualifying for the NLD Cup competition] plus any club 2nd or 3rd XV seeded by the Competitions Committee to be capable of playing at this level necessary to bring the number of participants to sixteen.
- The early rounds of the competition will be played in geographic conferences.

The NLD Plate

- The next highest placed Clubs, within the League structure for the season in which the Plate is being played [excluding those qualifying for the NLD Cup or Shield competition] plus any club 2nd or 3rd XV seeded by the Competitions Committee to be capable of playing at this level necessary to bring the number of participants to sixteen.
- The early rounds of the competition will be played in geographic conferences.

The NLD Vase

- The NLD Vase shall comprise the balance of all NLD Clubs plus any club 2nd or 3rd XV seeded by the Competitions Committee to be capable of playing at this level [not qualifying to enter the Cup, Shield, or Plate competitions] who may wish to participate.
- Clubs who would normally qualify for the Vase but who were beaten finalists of the Cup or Shield in the previous season will be entered into that same competition for the next season.

THE NLD CHALLENGE SHIELD

- The Challenge Shield competitions shall comprise all club 2nd and 3rd XVs who wish to enter such competition subject to the caveats above.

- 3.2. The Competitions Committee reserve the right to enter a club or club 2nd XV into the Cup, Shield or Plate where it is felt that their playing strength would see them reasonably competing in said competition.
- 3.3. The Competitions Committee reserve the right not to run the NLD Vase should the number of teams entering be less than four. Those teams would then be offered a place in the NLD Plate.
- 3.4. The early rounds of the competition will be played in geographic conferences.
- 3.5. The ranking of a club's 1st XV will be determined initially by the level at which they are playing for that season, followed by their finishing position in the previous season. Promoted club 1st XVs will be placed at the bottom of their new level and relegated club 1st XVs at the top. In case of doubt, points ratio will be used as the final decider.
- 3.6. Clubs competing in the RFU Leagues at Level 4 or above shall be excluded from The 1st XV Competition save that a club competing at this level may enter their 2nd XV into the 1st XV competition at a level to be determined by the Competitions Committee.
- 3.7. The NLD Challenge Shield competitions will only be open to teams representing the 2nd and 3rd XVs of clubs within NLD. These will be seeded at the absolute discretion of the Competitions Committee. The Competitions Committee reserves the right to place a club's 2nd or 3rd XV into one of the 1st XV competitions if it determines that the playing strength of such a team warrants such action.
- 3.8. A club's 1st XV and any lower XV may not compete in the same competition.
- 3.9. Any club 1st XV that plays in an RFU league structure that is not aligned to the Midlands model will automatically be given an away draw, even if drawn out of the hat as the home team.
- 3.10. The draws will be issued to all participating clubs and published on the NLD website within two weeks of the previous rounds play by date. It is the responsibility of all clubs to check these draws.

4. CLUB ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1. Only those Clubs that have paid the NLD Annual Subscription and any appropriate Domestic Union annual subscription shall be permitted to play in any competition.
- 4.2. Any club that has been suspended from its Domestic Union knockout competitions may not be eligible for inclusion in that season's NLD knockout competition.
- 4.3. Teams failing to fulfil fixtures may at the discretion of the Competitions Committee be barred from entering competitions in the following season.

5. ENTRY QUALIFICATION AND FEES

- 5.1. There will be no entry fee. All clubs entering the competition must be members of the Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire RFU and the relevant domestic union.
- 5.2. Clubs who do NOT wish to enter into the 1st XV Competition are asked to advise the NLD Competitions Committee Secretary by the first Friday of June for the following season's competition.

- 5.3. Clubs will be invited to express an interest in their lower level XVs taking part in the Challenge Shield competitions.
- 5.4. Subject to regulation 3.6 a club may not enter a 2nd XV if their 1st XV do not enter. Likewise, they may not enter a 3rd XV if either their 1st or 2nd XVs are not entered.
- 5.5. Clubs are to make contact to arrange fixtures by the play by dates stated by the Competitions Committee. It is both clubs responsibility to make contact and to arrange fixtures, difficulty in contacting a club should be identified to the NLD Competitions Secretary immediately to ensure play by dates are adhered to. Once the clubs have arranged a date they should inform the Competitions Committee Secretary.
- 5.6. No team shall be permitted to enter more than one competition in any one season.

6. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- 6.1. A player may only play for one Club in any one season in The Competition. Players may not play in The Competition if they hold effective registration [as defined by The English Clubs Championship Rules] for any Club other than the Club that they intend to represent in The Competition. For clarification, any player who is eligible to play for a club in an RFU league match by virtue of a “student pass”, “service pass” or sanctioned loan shall be eligible to play for that club in The Competition. All players must be bona-fide members of the Club they represent in The Competition.
- 6.2. Where a Club enters both a 1st and 2nd or 3rd XV into competitions, a player may only play for the club’s 2nd XV if he has not played or appeared on the match card in more than 4 games for the club’s 1st XV in any league or cup competition in the current season. Where a club enters a 3rd XV a player may only play for this side if he has not played for the 1st XV and not played more than 6 games for the clubs 2nd XV in the current season.
- 6.3. A club may be asked by the Competitions Committee Secretary for whatever reason to supply their player appearance records.
- 6.4. Both Clubs shall forward a list of their playing squad for each match within 72 hours of completion of the fixture to the Competitions Secretary by e-mail to office@nldrfa.co.uk. Match cards are available on the NLD website for this purpose.
- 6.5. The NLD Competitions Committee may at any point refer to the lists of playing squads during the Competition, or after if investigations need to take place. These investigations do not need to be instigated by a club. If a club does not supply its list of players within 72 hours of the fixture being played they may be disqualified from the competition.
- 6.6. Breaches of 6.1 or 6.2 will result in disqualification of all teams of the offending club from The Competition and may incur suspension from further season’s competitions.

7. FULFILMENT OF MATCHES

- 7.1. All competition matches shall all be played before or on the designated dates. In the event of a failure to agree a mutually acceptable date between the two teams the match will be played on the designated date. All matches (apart from those on Finals Day or being played midweek) will kick off between 2:00 and 3:00 pm unless mutually agreed by the two teams. The nature of the RFU

structured season may mean that league games (scheduled or rearranged) or RFU Midlands knockout games prevent this. The team who cannot fulfil the fixture should immediately inform the Competitions Secretary in this case. In such circumstances the game is to be rearranged and this may include playing on Sunday or midweek. If the teams cannot agree on a date and time that is acceptable to the Competitions Committee then the Competitions Committee reserves the right to impose these. Teams will be expected to fulfil these rearranged dates and playing strength and unavailability of players is not accepted as a reason as to why a fixture cannot be played.

- 7.2. For the sake of clarification, even if a club has requested an RFU “non-playing” league weekend they may still be required to fulfil an NLD knockout match on this weekend.
- 7.3. If a club are due to play in more than one knockout match on the same date they must fulfil the higher level match in preference to any other. Any club that cancels a higher level match will not be allowed to fulfil any lower level matches scheduled for the same day.

8. FINALS DAY

- 8.1. All Finals will be played on the date agreed by the NLD Competitions Committee.
- 8.2. In the event of a team being unable to play a final on the designated date due to a re-arranged RFU league or play-off fixture the Committee may agree to the match being played on another date. This will nominally be the evening of the Weds following the designated date unless mutually agreed otherwise by the two teams and the Committee. In the event of a team being unable to play on the designated date for this reason they should notify the Competitions Secretary at least three weeks before the due date of the finals.

9. COMPETITION DRAWS

- 9.1. Each round of each competition up to and including the semi-finals shall be the subject of a separate draw. No less than three members of the Competitions Committee shall make all draws. Early rounds or pyramids to finals may be determined at the outset of the competition.
- 9.2. Cup draws will be emailed to clubs fixture secretary and uploaded onto the NLD website by the NLD office. It is the responsibility of the clubs to be aware of these.

10. DETERMINING THE RESULT

- 10.1. If a match is a draw after the completion of 40 minutes of play each way, then extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played with a 1 minute interval.
- 10.2. If the scores are then still level, the team that has scored the most tries shall be the winner.
- 10.3. If this does not produce a result, then the team that has scored the most goals from tries shall be the winner.
- 10.4. In all but the final, if none of the above produces a winner, a coin will be tossed to decide which side shall go forward to the next round.
- 10.5. In the final, in the event of regulations 10.1 to 10.3 failing to produce a winner, the trophy shall be shared, and where appropriate, a coin will be tossed to decide which side is proposed for competitions in the following season.

- 10.6. If any fixture is unable to be played through to a conclusion for any reason (e.g. weather, serious injury, etc.) the NLD Competitions Committee will determine whether the score at the time of the stoppage will stand or the fixture will be replayed. In this case both teams are responsible for completing the match card with the relevant information and for informing the Competitions Secretary within 48 hours of the abandonment.
- 10.7. Any appeal pertaining to the result of an NLD knockout match must be lodged with the Competitions Secretary within 5 days of the match being played. Such an appeal must be in writing and must detail the reasons for the appeal. Any appeal outside this time frame will be deemed to be “timed out”.
- 10.8. Any appeal pertaining to the mandating of a date or venue for a particular match must be lodged with the Competitions Secretary within the timescales stated in the decision document. Any appeal outside this time frame will be deemed to be “timed out”.
- 10.9. Any appeal pertaining to the result of a match shall be accompanied by a cheque for £50 made payable to “NLD Rugby Football Union”. This shall be returned uncashed in the event of the appeal being successful.
- 10.10. On receipt of any valid appeal the Competitions Committee Chairman and two other Committee members shall form an Appeals Committee to adjudicate. The Appeals Committee will receive background information from the Competitions Secretary and will accept written submissions from the clubs involved via the Competitions Secretary.
- 10.11. The decision of the Appeals Committee is binding and there is **no further right of appeal**.

11. MATCH OFFICIALS

- 11.1. NLDRFU Referees Society is responsible for the appointment of referees to all matches. In addition, at the request of the Competitions Committee, the Society has the authority to appoint “teams of three” to any match with the two assistant referees having full authority in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Clubs should not appoint referees to matches without written agreement of the Competitions Secretary.

12. TEAM KITS

- 12.1. In the event of a clash of colours, the Home team shall be responsible for changing its colours.
- 12.2. In the event of a clash of colours in any Final, the team holding the higher place in the RFU League structure, at that time, shall be responsible for changing its colours. Where neither club is in the RFU League structure, the team travelling the shorter distance to the Final venue from its home ground shall be responsible for changing its colours.
- 12.3. All team shirts will be uniquely numbered.

13. SQUAD SIZE, INTERCHANGES, FRONT ROW REGULATIONS AND UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

- 13.1. Game On principles will apply as stated in RFU Regulation 13 – Adult Competitions (appendix 2). If both teams cannot agree which principles to apply, the match will proceed without the application of the Game On principles and the following will apply.

- 13.2. In all rounds of the competitions other than the finals not more than three replacements or substitutes (eight interchanges) are permitted for the Cup and Shield and not more than five replacements or substitutes (ten interchanges) for the Plate, Vase and Challenge Shield. In the finals seven replacements or substitutes are permitted (twelve interchanges). If it is a double header with an RFU league fixture the league regulations will apply to the entire match, including extra time if played.
- 13.3. In the interests of safety each team playing in each match in the Cup and Shield competitions other than the finals must have at least four players in their nominated match squad, all at least eighteen years old, who are suitably trained and experienced to be capable of playing in the front row to ensure on the first occasion (whether due to injury or consequent to a player(s) being temporarily suspended or ordered off) that a front row player is required to be replaced, the team can continue to safely play with contested scrums. For the finals of the Cup and Shield each team must have five such players. For the Plate, Vase and Challenge Shield each team must have at least three such players in their nominated match squad for all matches.
- 13.4. If in a Cup or Shield match on the first occasion any front row player requires to be replaced and his team cannot provide a suitably trained and experienced replacement player at least eighteen years old to play in such a position in the front row to enable the teams to continue to safely play with contested scrums the referee, having made enquiry of and confirmed of this fact with the Captain (or such other person nominated by the club as the manger or person responsible for the team), the match shall continue with uncontested scrums and will be subject to Regulation 13.8. For the finals this will apply to the first and second occasion.
- 13.5. Subject only to the proviso contained in Regulation 13.6 if in any match in a competition any front row player requires to be replaced and his team cannot provide a suitably trained and experienced replacement player to enable the teams to safely play with contested scrums the referee, having made enquiry of and confirmed of this fact with the Captain (or such other person nominated by the club as the manger or person responsible for the team), the match shall continue with uncontested scrums, and subject to Regulation 13.8, the result will stand.
- 13.6. Where a player or players is/are temporarily suspended from the field of play (which includes a blood injury) and his team cannot provide a replacement or other suitably trained and experienced player to enable the teams to safely play with contested scrums the referee, having made enquiry of and confirmed of this fact with the Captain (or such other person nominated by the club as the manger or person responsible for the team), of the side affected the match shall continue with uncontested scrums (but such uncontested scrums shall only continue for the duration of the temporary suspension).
- 13.7. If, on any occasion the referee has to order uncontested scrums due to a lack of suitably trained and experienced front row players then the team causing this shall not be allowed to replace the player leaving the field. For the sake of doubt, this still applies even if the team have interchanges remaining. *It is the responsibility of the team causing uncontested scrums to ensure that the player is not replaced. Failure to comply may result in sanctions up to and including disqualification from the competition.*
- 13.8. The Competitions Committee will review the circumstances in every case where a match is completed with, or contains a period of uncontested scrums. The NLD Competitions Committee shall have the final decision on the result of

the match and all such decisions shall be binding on all participants. It is the responsibility of both clubs to contact the Competitions Secretary in such a situation advising of:

- When uncontested scrums were called during the game
 - The reasons for uncontested scrums being called
 - The points score at that time
 - The referee's name and phone number
 - The final outcome of the match
- 13.9. This information must be forwarded to the Competitions Secretary within 24 hours of the game being played.
- 13.10. The Competitions Committee will let the clubs know of their decision within 48 hours of the information being received.

14. MATCH DATES AND VENUES

- 14.1. All matches, unless agreed by the NLD Competitions Committee, shall be resolved before or on the specified date. In the event of a mutually acceptable "early" date not being agreed the match shall be played on the specified date. It is the responsibility of each team to provide a side and replacements to fulfil the fixtures by the allotted date for the round they are playing in. If teams cannot mutually agree an early date the match will be played the play-on date determined by the NLD Competitions Committee. Failure to fulfil the fixture on that date will result in elimination from the competition of one or both teams.
- 14.2. In the event of the Home team pitch being unplayable; it shall be the Home team's responsibility to find alternative playing facilities; if necessary, by the use of the Away team's facilities. The following order of priorities shall apply
- Home ground / Alternative Home ground / Away ground / Alternative Away ground
- 14.3. In the event that, despite the clearly demonstrated efforts of both teams, the match cannot be played, a coin will be tossed to decide which club shall go forward to the next round.
- 14.4. The Home team is responsible for ensuring the proper marking of its pitch (including technical areas), and for making proper provision for ensuring that all spectators, replacements, coaches and officials [with the exception of assistant referees] are kept at a reasonable distance from the field of play.

15. MATCH RESULT

- 15.1. It is the responsibility of both teams to communicate the match outcome and the fully completed match card to the NLD Competitions Committee Secretary.
- 15.2. The outcome of a match [who won and by what score, OR, where a match was postponed and for what reason] must be passed to the NLD Competitions Committee Secretary within 24 hours of the fixture, and can be communicated as such by email to office@nldrfa.co.uk
- 15.3. In the event of a coin toss being required to determine the outcome of a match, this will be carried out by a quorum of the Competitions Committee within three days of the match date.

16. APPEALS

- 16.1. In the event of a dispute between teams, the Competitions Committee Chairman and two other Committee members shall form an Appeals

Committee to adjudicate. Members will be chosen to reflect County representatives other than those of the teams in dispute plus another representative from the committee independent of any league of those of the teams in dispute. The Appeals Committee will receive background information from the Competitions Secretary and will accept written submissions from the teams involved via the Competitions Secretary.

- 16.2. The Appeals Committee may consult additional members of the Competitions Committee in arriving at their decision.

17. AOB

All other matters, not specifically referred to herein, shall be the subject of decision by the Competitions Committee, and all such decisions sh