

Regulation 18

HAMPSHIRE RFU MERIT TABLES

1 Description and Aims

- 1.1 The Merit Tables shall be called Hampshire Senior Merit, Hampshire Merit One and Hampshire Merit Two (with sponsors' name if applicable). Additional Tables may be authorised by the Governance Committee.
- 1.2 The aims are to
 - 1.2.1 promote participation in competition rugby below First XV level and thereby improve player retention.
 - 1.2.2 produce winners of, respectively, the Phil Pinnock Cup, the Hampshire Merit One Cup and the Hampshire Merit Two Cup.
- 1.3 All matches in the Competition shall be played under the laws of Rugby Football and comply with the Rules and Regulations of the RFU where appropriate unless amended herein.
- 1.4 The winning Clubs shall be responsible for the insurance, safekeeping and the engraving of the respective Trophies.

2 Definitions

In this Regulation:

County	means Hampshire and the Isle of Wight only
Club	means a Mainland Member or Associate Club of the Union
Committee	means the Union Competitions Sub-Committee
Competition	means the Merit Tables specified in paragraph 1.1 above
Mainland	means Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
MLO	means the person appointed to be the Union's Media Liaison Officer
Officers	means the Officers of the Union
Organiser	means the person appointed by the Committee to manage a Merit Table
RFU Competition	means the English Clubs Rugby Union Championship
Society	means the Hampshire Rugby Union Referees' Society
Union	means the Hampshire Rugby Football Union Limited

3 Organising Committee

- 3.1 The Competition shall be organised by the Committee which may issue administrative instructions in amplification of this Regulation.
- 3.2 All communications from Clubs relating to the Competition are to be addressed to the Organiser whose details shall be promulgated in the Union Handbook.

- 3.3 Each Club must nominate a Club Official who shall be responsible for communication with the Organiser. The name and contact details of this official must be sent to the Organiser before the beginning of September each year.
- 3.4 Except where otherwise stated, the decision of the Committee shall be binding and final on any matter not provided for in and on the interpretation of this Regulation.

4 Eligibility of Clubs

- 4.1 The Competition shall be open to all mainland Member and Associate Clubs, which may enter any of their male adult XV's (except of course the First XV if the Club participates in the RFU Competition).
- 4.2 There shall be no promotion or relegation. Teams will be allocated to the most appropriate Table as determined by the Committee.
- 4.3 Not more than one XV of a Club shall be placed in any one Table.

5 Eligibility of Players

- 5.1 Only bona fide members of a Club may represent, i.e. play or be selected as replacements for, a Club in the Competition.
- 5.2 A Club may not be represented by a player who has not reached the minimum age set by the RFU for registration for the English Club Championship.
- 5.3 Players do not have to be registered for RFU competitions.
- 5.4 To meet the primary aim of retention of players, all Clubs must endeavour to get games played for the benefit of all the players concerned. To achieve this, it is permissible for players to be loaned to a Club with less than a full XV.
- 5.5 However, any deliberate infringement of paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 will result in the disqualification from the Competition for that season of the Club involved.

6 The Competition Format

- 6.1 Matches will be played between all Clubs in each Table on a home and away basis.
- 6.2 In the spirit of the Competition if more senior teams in a Club are not playing then the merit table team should be selected only after senior team selection has taken place, and the opposition told of the situation. A merit table team should not be "loaded" with players from a higher XV.
- 6.3 The position of a Club in the Table will be decided on a percentage basis.
- 6.4 In the Senior Merit and in Merit One, two Competition points will be awarded for a win, one for a draw.
- 6.5 In Merit Two, three Competition points will be awarded for a win, two for a draw and one for a loss. The object of this is to try to reduce late cancellation of matches.
- 6.6 The Table Winners will be determined only from those Clubs which have completed at least 75% of their scheduled fixtures.
- 6.7 If one or more Clubs in a Table have the same percentage then the ratio of match points for and against will be used. If this fails to produce a winner then the results of the games between the Clubs concerned shall decide; then it will be the Club scoring most match points in those games.
- 6.8 If a match is played under non-standard arrangements as permitted within this Regulation then the captains must agree beforehand whether the result will count for the Competition.

7 Fixture Dates

- 7.1 Fixture lists will be produced by the Committee and issued to Clubs and the Society as early as possible normally not later than 31 May each year.
- 7.2 Matches shall normally be played on the same day as a First XV league fixture, or in the case of a Third XV match on the same day as a Second XV Competition match.

8 Colours

- 8.1 In the event of a clash of colours the home Club shall change subject to the satisfaction of the referee.
- 8.2 The jerseys of teams should be numbered to ensure correct identification of players and replacements during a match.

9 Replacements

- 9.1 Not more than three replacements or substitutes are allowed.
- 9.2 The RFU Competition regulations applying to the front rows do not apply; uncontested scrums are permitted and will not affect the award of Competition points.
- 9.3 It is hoped that wherever possible a match will continue to be played with contested scrums so that all the players may gain satisfaction from the game.

10 Kick-off Time

- 10.1 Kick-off Time normally shall be the "Recommended Kick-off Times" as printed on the inside cover of the Handbook. This may be changed with the agreement of both captains and the referee.

11 Venues and Grounds

- 11.1 Clubs may agree to change the venue of a Competition match. The original home Club shall inform the Organiser and the referee of such a change.
- 11.2 The home Club is responsible for correctly and clearly marking its pitch and it must make proper provision for the safety of all involved.
- 11.3 If a late decision (i.e. a decision made or to be made within three hours of the scheduled kick-off time) as to the fitness of the pitch is necessary, it shall be made by the captains of the two teams concerned. If they are unable to agree the decision shall be made by the referee.
- 11.4 At all times there should be easy accessible entry for an ambulance to the pitch and ready access to a telephone (ideally a mobile telephone at pitch side).

12 Referees and Touch Judges

- 12.1 The Society will endeavour to appoint a referee to all Competition matches.
- 12.2 Each Club shall provide a touch-judge, who may be a replacement, for each Competition match.
- 12.3 If the appointed referee has not arrived by the agreed kick-off time, or if the referee is unable to officiate for the whole of the match, and a replacement referee is available, the captains of the two teams concerned may agree that a replacement referee may officiate. Such agreement shall be binding on the Clubs and the match result shall stand. If the captains are unable to agree and the match cannot be rescheduled or replayed then the match shall be declared void.

13 Spare

14 Postponed and Abandoned Matches

- 14.1 If the reason for not playing a Competition match is acceptable to the Organiser, and the match cannot be rescheduled, the match shall be void.
- 14.2 If a Club withdraws from a match before 2000 on a Thursday evening the match shall be void. The non-offending team will be able to count this as a match towards their 75% of fixtures completed.
- 14.3 If the reason for not playing a Competition match is not acceptable to the Organiser, the non-offending Club may be awarded two points and the offending side may be deducted two points. No match points will be calculated.

15 Notification of Results

- 15.1 The home Club shall inform the Organiser of the result of the match or of the fact that the match has not been played as soon as possible and certainly no later than 2000 on the Monday following the match.
- 15.2 A match may be declared void if the result is not reported on time.

16 Finance

- 16.1 Each participating Club shall pay an entrance fee, which shall be determined annually by the Governance Committee. This fee will be invoiced at the beginning of the season (with the annual subscription).

17 Protests, Disputes and Transgressions

- 17.1 Any matters in dispute or any transgressions of this Regulation shall be referred in person or by telephone within forty-eight hours of the end of the match to the Organiser together with written confirmation (which must also be copied to any other interested parties) within a further forty-eight hours, setting out the grounds of the complaint in full. The Committee shall have discretion to resolve any such complaint and shall inform the interested parties of their decision firstly by telephone and then in writing.
- 17.2 If a Club wishes to appeal against the decision of the Committee, the appeal must be lodged with the Executive Director and confirmed in writing on the same time scale as above on hearing the decision of the Committee. The appeal will be considered by the Management Committee if time permits or by the Officers if not. Their decision shall be final and binding.

18 Terms and Conditions of Participation

- 18.1 Applications for entry to the Competition are to be forwarded to the Organiser by 30 April each year.
- 18.2 A Club withdrawing from a Competition match after 2000 on a Thursday shall be responsible for all reasonable and irrecoverable expenses incurred and invoiced by the opposing Club.
- 18.3 Any Club, which withdraws from a Competition match and subsequently plays in another fixture on the scheduled date, shall be fined £25 on the first occasion and £50 on each and every subsequent occasion. These fines shall be set annually by the Governance Committee
- 18.4 If the reason for any withdrawal is not acceptable to the Committee the Club may be excluded from the Competition in the following season or seasons and may be required to pay a £100 bond before any subsequent entry is accepted.
- 18.5 Regulation 1 is also relevant.