

## **Rules and Guidelines for the Club Academy Competition 2021/22**

In the first year of the Club Academy, outline rules and guidelines have been developed in recognition of the standalone nature of the competition, which are distinct from other Ulster Branch competitions.

The rules and guidelines are focused on providing a framework for competitions within the overall ethos of promoting participation by this age group.

### **RULES**

#### **1 Oversight of the Club Academy competition by the Competitions Management Committee**

- 1.1 The Competitions Management Committee (“the CMC”) will be responsible for oversight of the Academy Competition including when matches, including replays shall be played, the venues of matches, and whether or not extra time shall be played. The CMC will also arrange to make the draws for all knock out competitions.
- 1.2 The CMC may at any time scrutinise team lists and referees’ reports or other relevant material, and apply competition regulations as appropriate. Including in respect of protests referred to the CMC.
- 1.3 The CMC may refer matters of conduct and responsibility, or of discipline, to the Honorary Secretary of the Branch. Any CMC decision which is disputed may be appealed as per Section 22 of the Ulster Branch Adult Male Competitions Regulations.

#### **2 Registration and eligibility of players**

- 2.1 A player shall not be eligible to play for an Academy team unless he is registered with that club before he plays.
- 2.2 The club academy structure will prioritise players who are U21 on 1 July of the season in which the competition is played i.e.A player born between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2003 inclusive, is considered to be U21 for the duration of the 21/22 season.

| <b>Age Grade</b> | <b>Inclusive dates</b>                        |                            |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| U19              | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2002                     | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2003 |
| U20              | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2001                     | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2002 |
| U21              | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2000                     | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2001 |
| Over 21          | Anyone born before 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2000. |                            |

- 2.3 Any team, competing in league or cup competition within the club academy structure must feature no fewer than 12 players of this age in the starting 15 of a club academy fixture.
- 2.4 A club may not select a player to play in the semi-final or final of any cup unless the player has played in minimum of 3 club academy fixtures during the same season or in exceptional circumstances permission is granted by the CMC.

### 3 Numbers of players in a team

- 3.1 All teams may nominate up to 22 players of whom up to 7 may play as substitutes or replacements
- 3.2 A team must comply with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game in respect of the nomination and replacement/substitution of players.

| Squad size       | Minimum number of front row players in the squad | Must be able to replace at the first time of asking |
|------------------|--|---|
| 15 or fewer      | 3  | -   |
| 16, 17 or 18     | 4  | Either a prop or a hooker                           |
| 19, 20, 21 or 22 | 5  | Both a prop and a hooker                            |
| 23               | 6  | Loose-head prop, tight-head prop and hooker         |

- 3.3 Rolling subs may apply throughout the duration of the game.
- 3.4 If a Club Academy team is unable to field in a League fixture, shall have one point deducted from its league points scored, and their opponents shall receive five points.
- 3.5 A Club Academy team may play League games with fewer than 15, but not less than 12 players, provided however that the scrums are equally matched at all times.
- 3.6 Where a team is unable to meet requirements to fulfill a competitive league fixture (e.g. Playing numbers, age profile or front row), they shall be awarded 1 league point where a fixture takes place in a modified format (reduced numbers, uncontested scrums). Their opponents shall receive 5 points.
- 3.7 Participating teams must always submit e-teamsheets in line with IRFU (Ulster Branch) regulation.

### 4 Match duration and kick-off times

- 4.1 Club Academy League and Cup games shall be for a period of 80 mins, played in 2 x 40-minute halves.
- 4.2 Fixture dates and kick-off times should be mutually agreed by both teams involved in a club academy fixture and confirmed to the IRFU (Ulster Branch) through [paul.whitten@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:paul.whitten@ulsterrugby.com) no later than Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- 4.3 Referees will be appointed by the USRFR\*.
- 4.4 Where clubs are unable to agree a date and time for a fixture, a CMC sub-group (or a league monitor) will arbitrate to find an agreeable date for the fixture. If agreement is not reached, then the decision of the CMC will be binding.

## 5 Competition provisions

- 5.1 The team winning a league match shall be awarded four points. In the case of a drawn league game, each team shall receive two points. One bonus point will be awarded to a team scoring four or more tries in a league match, and one bonus point will be awarded to a team losing by seven points or less.
- 5.2 Where there is a margin of 40 or more points between the teams at any time during a League or Cup fixture the referee shall end the match early and the fixture shall be awarded to the team that is leading at the time. The team that is losing at the time shall not be subject to any penalty. *On occasion of an extreme mis-match, where a 40 point margin has been established early, i.e. within the first half, and following the awarding of the fixture the competing teams are encouraged to make adjustments, such as the mixing of teams, to allow for a meaningful rugby experience.*

### GUIDELINES

1. Clubs should actively seek to schedule games away from the Saturday, 2.30pm kick-off slot that is a standard for adult rugby in Ulster. *It is understood that this may not be possible for participating clubs without access to floodlighting or where lengthy travel time is necessary.*
2. All players listed in the match-day squad **should** play a minimum of half of the game (40 mins). *(These 40 mins can be allocated as a straight 'half' of the game OR made up of several shorter stints under the rolling sub provision).*
3. Where players Over 21 are required to field a team, the remaining players should ideally be U23 (based on the date of eligibility criteria listed in section 3), and be of a playing standard that will not corrupt the integrity of the game.
4. \*While we aim to supply referee's appointed by USRFR, we would recommend that the host club plan a contingency in the event that a referee cannot be appointed. This is the first year that the society has had to facilitate Club Academy fixtures and it is accepted that there *may* be occasions where matches cannot be fulfilled.