

IRFU Women's Junior Cup 2026/2027

Regulations for Women's Junior Cup 2026/2027 (Hereinafter referred to as "the competition")

Competition rules for Junior Cup 26/27:

The Regulations set out in respect of the Women's AIL League & Cup shall apply to the Junior Cup with the following exceptions:

The IRFU National Competitions Committee reserves the right to refuse entry to the competition to any player who is not in compliance with the competition rules.

1.0 All teams and players must comply with the following:

- 1.a** All players must be registered with their respective Clubs and Branch.
- 1.b** Each playing squad to consist of 23 players only for all rounds of the competition.
- 1.c** Dual Status players are not permitted in the Womens Junior Cup unless approved by the IRFU National Competitions Committee (NCC) this application must be made at least forty-eight hours prior to each match in which they intend to play
- 1.d** Any Player who has made 2 WAIL or Cup appearances is not eligible for the semifinals and any player who has made 3 WAIL or Cup appearances is not eligible for the Final.
- 1.e** No current 7s or Senior International players are eligible to take part in this competition. This excludes players who have not been officially capped.
- 1.f** A player or Club shall be entitled in writing to submit to the National Competitions' Committee any special circumstances she or it considers relevant to registration and/or eligibility. The Chairperson may at their discretion refer it to the National Competitions but subject at all times to their right to exercise their absolute discretion.
- 1.g** There must be full front row cover in the replacements (TH prop, LH prop and hooker) and this front row cover to be identified to the match officials prior to the start of the match. Should uncontested scrums become necessary during the game due to a front row player leaving the field due to injury or a red/yellow card, then the team that caused the uncontested scrums may NOT replace that player and must continue with 14 players. Full scrummaging regulations apply to this competition.
- 1.h** Rolling substitution laws are applicable up to a maximum of 12 changes.

- 1.i** Electronic team sheets will be use in this competition, and a signed copy must be presented to the appointed Match Referee for inspection prior to the match.

2.0 Red Cards and Citing's:

Any disciplinary procedures will be conducted by the IRFU Disciplinary Panel under Regulation 5 of the Regulations of the IRFU.

3.0 Competition:

The competition will consist of a knockout round of matches followed by semi-finals and finals.

In the event of a draw in any knockout stages of the Cup, the following regulations will come into effect.

- (i) If clubs are tied at full time, extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played.
- (ii) If still tied, the Club who has scored most tries shall be the winner
- (iii) If still tied, the team who scored the 1st try shall be the winner.
- (iv) If no tries have been scored, the team that scored the first points in the match shall be the winner.
- (v) If the game is scoreless, penalty kicks shall be taken to decide the winner.

FIXTURE SCHEDULE 2026/2027

Sunday 18 th October	Round 1, knock out round
Sunday 29 th November	Semi-finals
Sunday 17 th January	Final

Protocol for Women's Junior Cup

4.0 Fixtures & Participants

The IRFU National Competitions Committee (NCC) is responsible for this competition and will plan the schedule and the times for the above competition. The IRFU will organise a neutral venue for the Junior Cup final.

The competition will consist of 8 teams – two per province. The competing teams will be those teams that finished 1st and 2nd in the top Provincial League in the 25/26 season. Should one of these teams not be in a position to take part in the 26/27 Junior Cup competition, then the Provincial Women's Committees shall nominate the replacement team to take part in the Junior Cup.

5.0 Travel & Accommodation

Mileage and accommodation rates will be in line with the Women's All Ireland League structure. All mileage rates will be paid to all participants at the end of the tournament

6.0 Photographs and or recording of matches

Team managements to make their own arrangements for the recording of matches.

7.0 Officials – same as WAIL note

The Union's Referee Selection panel, together with the Provincial Branches Referee Society/Associations, shall select referees and touch judges for League and Cup matches.

Host club should nominate a 4th Official prior to KO. Match day documents must be handed to the referee post-match.

8.0 Meal

The host club should provide a meal for 30 per visiting squad. The meal should be substantial taking in consideration the distance and time the visitors must travel home. The IRFU will provide meals (for 30 per squad) for the final.

10.0 Warm up

Teams will warm up in the areas designated to them by the hosts and each team must make their own arrangements regarding equipment needed for the warmup and or training before the match.

11.0 Medical

It is the responsibility of the home club to have a medical officer and qualified first aid persons in attendance at matches. It is strongly recommended that the medical officer is a qualified medical doctor working within their scope of practice. However, in cases where a medical doctor is not available to act as the medical officer on match day, a qualified first aid person may be nominated to act in this role. The qualified first-aid person may be: a Corú-or registered physiotherapist, a registered nurse, a paramedic, or advanced paramedic. It is recommended that designated personnel should be SAFE Rugby trained and present during all club rugby activities.

12.0 Match balls

The IRFU will provide match balls for the finals.

13.0 Coaches

Coaches and other members of the team management must be positioned in the stand or area allocated to them during the game and only the coach, assistant coach and nominated medical person will be allowed onto the pitch during half time.

14.0 Ground

Should a home pitch be unplayable, clubs must show they have made a genuine effort in obtaining another venue, even if this is a distance from their own club. The emphasis must be on getting the match played and all reasonable endeavours must be demonstrated in doing so, to the satisfaction of the National Competitions Committee.

On the pitch itself, two technical areas should be marked out. These should measure nine metres long by three metres wide and be located not less than two metres from the touchline on either side of halfway. Replacements and four (4) persons to be located in this zone

15.0 Squad members

All replacements must sit in the stand or technical area allocated to them until required to play in the match and replacements to warm up in the opposition goal area. Non-playing squad members must be seated in the stand or behind the technical zone.

16.0 Water and or water carriers

During the match water can only be allowed onto the pitch during injury stoppages or when a try is scored. Person(s) carrying water onto the pitch are not allowed to engage, in any form, with players and or members from the opposition team. Players are permitted to take water from the side line.

17.0 Squads

23 Players per playing squad and replacements must include full front row cover as per World Rugby regulations. Front row cover to be identified to the referee prior to the start of the match and marked on the team sheet.

18.0 Behaviour

The team management are responsible for the behaviour of their squad at all squad activities and must ensure that at all times the behaviour of their group does not bring JRugby into disrepute.

19.0 Match officials

Teams are reminded that as part of the ethos of the game all match officials are to be respected by players, management, and spectators and that their contribution and support to this competition are valued.

20.0 Promotion/Relegation

The Women's Junior Cup is a stand-alone competition with no promotion or relegation associated with it.

21. Trophy/Winners Medals

The IRFU will provide a Junior Cup Trophy, a pennant and 30 winners medals.

APPENDIX 1

Formal Acceptance by a Participating Club in Women's Junior Cup 2026/27

_____ RFC ("the Club") accepts the invitation to take part in the Women's Junior Cup for the season 2026/2027 on the basis of the regulations governing the All Ireland League and Cup for this season a copy of which has been provided to the Club. The Club agrees with the Union as defined in the regulations, on its own behalf and on behalf of each member of its team, to observe all regulations and the decisions of the Union, the National Competitions' Committee, the Disciplinary Committee and the Committee of Appeal.

The Club agrees to be bound by the procedures set out in the regulations in respect of the regulations governing the Women's All Ireland League and Cup and the specific regulations which relate to the Women's Junior Cup.

The Club accepts that the Union or National Competitions' Committee shall have no liability to the Club arising from any negligence or failure by the Union or the League Sub Committee (NCC) to ensure compliance with these regulations and/or any other regulations which relate to Cup or in relation to any other failure in the administration or management of the Cup.

The Club accepts that the decisions of the Committee of Appeals are final and binding on all parties and shall not be appealed to or reviewed by a court of law.

The Club will ensure that each member of its team is made fully aware of the regulations before the commencement of the Cup and that each or any member of its team will comply with such regulations.

Should a home pitch be unplayable, clubs must show they have made a genuine effort in obtaining another venue, even if this is a distance from their own club. The emphasis must be on getting the match played and all reasonable endeavours must be demonstrated in doing so, to the satisfaction of the National Competitions Committee.

SIGNED for _____ R.F.C. for and on behalf of the Club and its Players

Name (Signature of duly authorised signatory)

Print (in block letters)

Position in Club: Date: