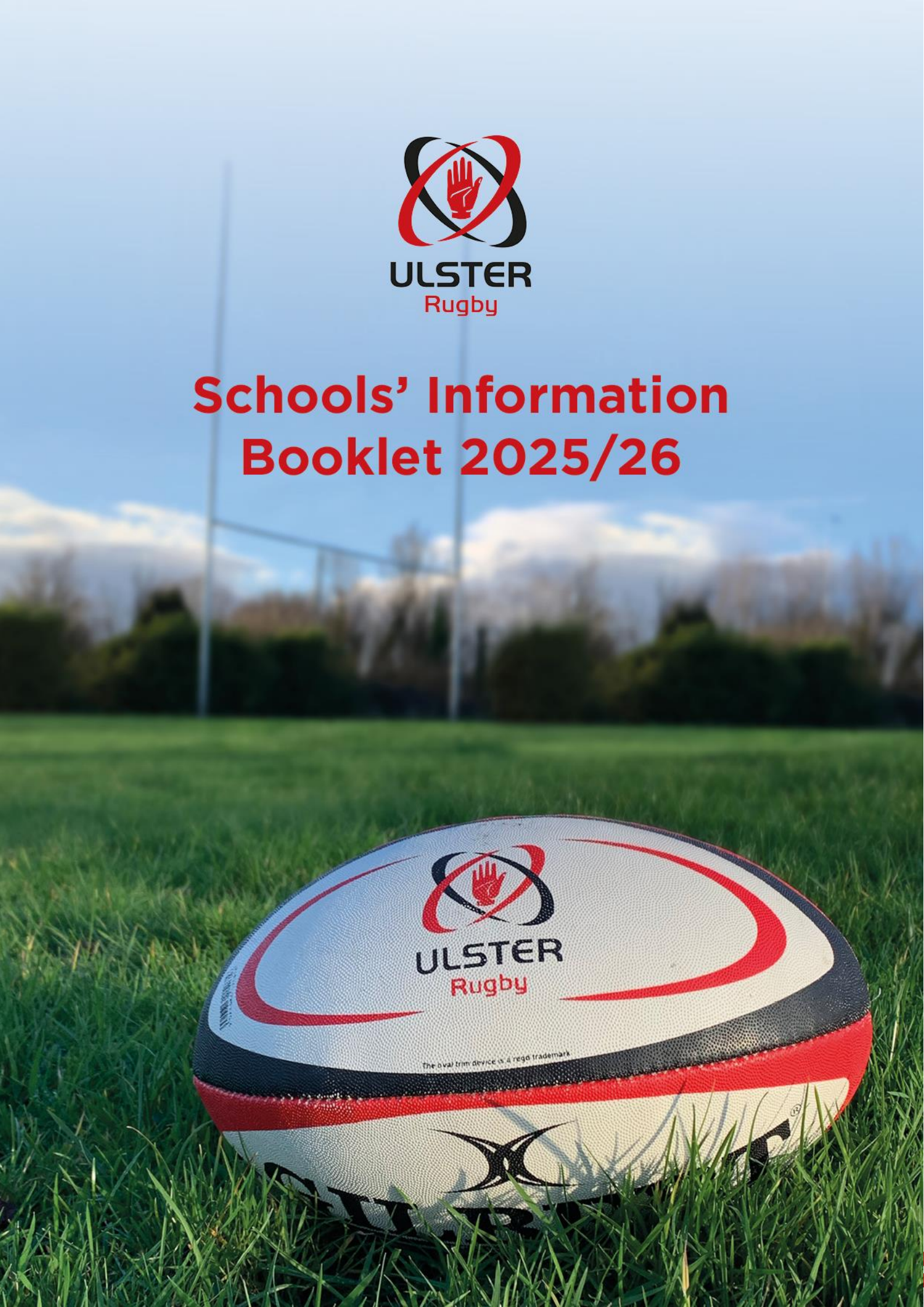
ULSTER
Rugby

Schools' Information Booklet 2025/26



Rugby Connect

Rugby Connect is the IRFU Platform for all aspects of game and competition administration. Schools are required to use the system for various aspects of Game Administration including registering players and completing team sheets.

Rugby Connect Administrator Access

Administrator access can be amended or assigned by the Master in Charge of Rugby by emailing RugbyConnect@ulsterrugby.com with the name and email address of the individuals requiring access. Administrators should log in via the following link:

https://irfu.sportsmanager.ie/maint.php

Schools Player Registrations

All schools' players should be registered as a 'Schools Player' for the 2025/26 season. Players that have been registered previously at a school can be renewed by the school via the Bulk Renew function. Players that are not involved in schools' rugby for the upcoming season **should not** be re-registered.

Players that haven't previously been registered can be added via the Register Members function. All that is required is the full name of the player and their Date of Birth.

E-Team Sheets

E-Team Sheets should be completed for all schools fixtures. This can be done by clicking the 'Team Sheets' button on Rugby Connect and then by clicking on the name of your school on the relevant fixture and adding players to the team sheet.

Schools can create Team Sheet Panels to group players in to the teams in which they play. This can make filling in E-Team Sheets faster by using the 'Player Source' function when filling out E-Team Sheets and selecting the relevant squad.

Another way to save time completing E-Team Sheets is to use the 'Copy Existing Team Sheet' button, which allows you to copy a previous team sheet and make any amendments required from there.

E-Team Sheet Volunteers

Schools may wish to enlist the help of a pupil or pupils at the school to assist with Rugby Connect administration and completing E-Team Sheets. Support from Ulster Rugby is available by contacting Colin Hunter (Colin.Hunter@ulsterrugby.com) or Nicci Wilson (Nicci.Wilson@ulsterrugby.com)

In return, the young people will register and receive accreditation through the Sports Inspire Awards Programme, which also presents the young volunteer with an opportunity to enhance their UCAS application. Further details on Sports Inspire Awards can be found here

Further Support

If you have any queries surrounding the Rugby Connect system, please contact RugbyConnect@ulsterrugby.com

User Guides and Further Information on Rugby Connect can be accessed here

Game Administration

Affiliate Referees

It is IRFU Policy that all matches from U13 upwards are refereed by:

- Branch Referees or
- IRFU Affiliate Referees

IRFU affiliate referees are defined as adult persons (Aged 16 to 59) who are qualified to referee matches involving a club or school to which they are affiliated, where no Branch referee has been appointed.

Further information on Affiliate Referees can be found here

Fixtures

Any fixture related queries should be directed to fixtures@ulsterrugby.com

Any new fixtures or amendments to fixtures, should also be submitted via this email address.

IRFU Insurance

Details on IRFU Insurance coverage can be found via the following webpage:

https://www.irishrugby.ie/running-your-club/insurance/

Insurance application forms should be completed by schools and uploaded to Rugby Connect via 'Attachments'.

Tour Approvals

All incoming and outgoing tour matches must be approved by Ulster Branch for matches involving Home Nations and by the IRFU involving teams from other unions.

Incoming Tour Form

Outgoing Tour Form

Please note that tour forms should be completed in good time and returned to Tour.Approval@ulsterrugby.com

In each case permission from other union should also be in place, and confirmed in writing.

Injury Reporting

All injuries that require hospital treatment and **all** confirmed/suspected concussions should be reported to the IRFU. Info on injury reporting and concussion protocols can be found here.

Coaching

Access to further information on Coaching, Resources and details of upcoming coaching courses can be found here.

Discipline Overview

Red Cards

Red Cards may be issued by USRFR appointed match officials or by Affiliate Referees. Sanctions will be determined by the Ulster Rugby Disciplinary Committee

STEP 1

Branch Referee completes Red Card Report Form within 48 hours of fixture and sends to USRFR Disciplinary Support Officer.

STEP 2

Red Card report sent from Branch staff to school of offending player and to Disciplinary Committee. Player asked to fill in Player Directions Form in response to referee's report. This should be completed within 24 hours, alongside any supporting evidence and returned to discipline@ulsterrugby.com

STEP 3

Player accepts red card report- case reviewed by single judicial officer.

Player does not accept red card report-online hearing set up. Player and referee should be both be available for this. This usually will take place on a Wednesday evening.

STEP 4

Sanction communicated to player. Please note that a player may not play until outcome of Red Card sanction has been reached (and any ban served)

Reports on red cards issued by Affiliate Referees should be sent to discipline@ulsterrugby.com directly and will be dealt with via same process

Citings

Acts of Foul Play not sanctioned by Match Officials that non-offending school wish to bring to the attention of the Disciplinary Committee

STEP 1

Gather Evidence in relation to incident - this can be witness statements, video evidence and other information pertinent to Citing Form.

STEP 2

Submit Citing Form in full and associated evidence within 72 hours of end of day that match occurred. This should be done in writing by the Master in Charge of the School and sent to: discipline@ulsterrugby.com

STEP 3

All information passed from Branch staff to Disciplinary Committee, as well as cited player and their club.

STEP 4

Disciplinary Committee will convene and decide whether citing meets red card threshold.

STEP 5

Citing does not meet threshold School informed that there will be no sanction (player may still receive a written warning).

Player accepts citing- Reviewed by Single Judicial Officer

Player does not accept citing Online Hearing Set Up.

STEP 6

Sanction communicated to player. Please note that a player may continue to play until conclusion of a School Reported Citing Hearing.

Off Field Disiciplinary

STEP 1

Referee completes Disciplinary Report Form in full within 48 hours of fixture and sends to USRFR Disciplinary Support Officer.

STEP 2

USRFR consider report and then forward to Ulster Branch Honorary Secretary for investigation.

STEP 3

Full details of report sent to Principal of School in which complaint is made against. The school has 7 days to respond in writing to the complaint, via the Ulster Branch Honorary Secretary.

STEP 4

Information from both parties then passed on to Disciplinary Committee for consideration

STEP 5

Discipline Committee meet to discuss and decide on next course of action.

Referee Liaison Officers
All schools should appoint a referee liaison officer to ensure that match officials are welcomed and respected when conducting their roles.

Online Resources

Respect UR Game or IRFU Discipline Home Page

Discipline Queries

Any queries in relation to discipline can be made via discipline@ulsterrugby.com

Key Contacts

Coaching- Budge Pountney, Budge.Pountney@ulsterrugby.com

Disability Rugby- Shel Laffin, Shel.Laffin@ulsterrugby.com

Fixtures- Fixtures@ulsterrugby.com

Participation Rugby- Ally Skelding, Ally.Skelding@ulsterrugby.com

Rugby Connect- RugbyConnect@ulsterrugby.com

Schools E-Teamsheet Volunteers- Colin Hunter/Nicci Wilson, Colin.Hunter@ulsterrugby.com
Nicci.Wilson@ulsterrugby.com

Spirit of Rugby- Kerry Spence, Kerry.Spence@ulsterrugby.com

Women & Girls – Mollie Davies, Mollie.Davies@ulsterrugby.com