



## Howden Rossllyn Park National Schools Sevens Rules 2026

### 1. Introduction

1.1 These Regulations apply to the tournament held in 2026 and are effective immediately. All participating schools, teams, players, and staff are bound by them for the duration of the event.

1.2 Failure to comply with these Regulations may result in sanctions, as outlined in Section 9.6, which may be applied during the tournament or retrospectively.

1.3 Entry into the tournament constitutes acceptance of these Regulations and agreement to abide by all decisions made under them, including any rulings by the Schools Manager in accordance with Section 9.

### Extreme Weather

1.4 In the case of extreme weather, the Tournament Committee reserves the right to cancel or postpone fixtures. This decision will be made in consultation with the Schools Manager and Head Referee Manager. Cancellation will be communicated to all affected parties via official tournament channels.

### 2. School Entrant Eligibility

2.1 All English registered schools must be members of English Rugby Schools.

2.2 All non-English registered schools must obtain permission from their own national union prior to competing in the tournament. Notification of this must be sent to the England Rugby Schools email - [Tours@EnglandRugby-Schools.com](mailto:Tours@EnglandRugby-Schools.com) no later than **four weeks before the tournament**. Failure to provide this will result in team disqualification in accordance with Section 9.6.

2.3 Invitational sides comprising players from different educational establishments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This can only be decided in advance of the tournament and no ad-hoc arrangements can be made during the event without the consent of the Schools Manager.

2.4 Intention to enter a team consisting of different educational establishments must be made when registering for the competition. Please accompany the online registration with an email of intention to: [registration@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:registration@rosslynpark.co.uk). If successful with entry into the competition draw, evidence of academic enrolment and insurance will need to be provided **two weeks prior to the tournament start date**. Any breach of this will result in sanctions per Section 9.6, up to and including team disqualification.

2.5 Schools or colleges that compete within the RFU ACE league must enter any U18 teams containing ACE scholars into the U18 Boys Cup Competition and may not enter the U18 Vase Competition.

2.6 The Committee has absolute discretion to re-classify a team from the U18 Boys Vase to the U18 Boys Cup.

2.7 Schools or colleges that compete within the RFU ACE league must enter any girls teams into the U18 Girls ACE Competition and may not enter the Girls Open Competition without the consent of The Tournament Committee.

2.8 Only schools in membership of IAPS or ISA can enter the U13 Junior Preparatory Competition (or by special invitation).

### **3. Player Eligibility**

3.1. Participants are only eligible to play in the tournament if they have attended their school or college for the whole 2025/26 academic year (i.e. September 2025). Any exceptions (e.g., mid-year transfers) require written approval from the Schools Manager at least **six weeks before the tournament**.

3.2. The Schools Manager has the right to request evidence of academic enrolment for any participant. Evidence of student enrolment can be provided by the school's admissions office or through recognised school management software such as ISAMS/SIMS.

3.3. Age eligibility for each competition:

All U18 competitions - under 18 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August/1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

All U16 competitions - under 16 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August/1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

All U14 competitions - under 14 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August/1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

All U13 competitions - under 13 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August/1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

All U11 competitions - under 11 at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> August/1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

3.4. Playing up or down age-grades for English registered schools is permitted only in accordance with [RFU Regulation 15](#) (as in force on 1 September 2025). Playing up or down of a player applies to the whole season, not specific games or competition such as the RPNS7's. Evidence of RFU approval for each player playing out of age-grade must be submitted to [registration@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:registration@rosslynpark.co.uk) **two weeks prior to the tournament**.

3.5. Non-English schools may not play participants up or down an age-grade under any circumstances.

3.6 No player can represent their school in two separate competitions in the tournament (e.g. both the U18 Boys Vase & U18 Boys Cup)

3.7. All competitions from U13-U18 are separated by gender and do not allow mixed teams. However, in the U11 Mixed Competition both boys and girls may play together with no mandatory gender ratio for this competition.

### **Girls Competition**

3.8. In exceptional circumstances, and solely to prevent a team's withdrawal due to insufficient numbers, the tournament may permit schools to supplement their squad with a limited number of players from other local schools. This allowance exists to safeguard participation opportunities and to encourage development in the girls' game, not to strengthen teams or gain competitive advantage.

3.9. Regulation 3.8 only applies to the U14 Girls, U16 Girls and U18 Girls Open competitions (excludes U18 Girls ACE). If, prior to the tournament, a school can demonstrate that it will be unable to field a minimum squad of **ten players** from their school, it may request permission to add no more than **three players** from other local schools.

3.10. Any such players must:

1. Have written authorisation from the Head Teacher of both schools and confirmation of valid playing insurance.
2. Play strictly within their correct age-grade (no exceptions, regardless of English or non-English school status).
3. Have no record of regional or international representation (e.g. England U18).

3.11. The request and all required documentation must be submitted by email to [registration@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:registration@rosslynpark.co.uk) no later than **two weeks** before the tournament start date.

3.12. Approval will only be granted in advance by the Schools Manager. No ad-hoc or on-the-day arrangements will be considered. Breaches will result in sanctions per Section 9.6, up to and including team disqualification.

## 4. Tournament Format

### Schedule

4.1. The schedule for the 2026 competitions are as follows:

Monday 23 March – U18 Boys Vase and U14 Girls.

Tuesday 24 March – U18 Boys Vase, U14 Boys and U18 Girls ACE.

Wednesday 25 March – U14 Boys and U16 Boys Colts.

Thursday 26 March – U16 Boys Colts, U18 Boys Cup, U18 Girls Open, U16 Girls and U11 Mixed Festival.

Friday 27 March – U18 Boys Cup, U18 Girls Open, U16 Girls, U13 Preparatory Schools Festival and U13 Junior Festival.

4.2. For competitions that are held over two days. Three different formats are used to determine who goes through to the second day of the competition.

U18 Boys Cup & U18 Girls Open - Both group winners and runners-up will go through to the second day to compete for the Cup and Plate respectively.

U16 Girls - An elimination round will be played at the end of the first day between all of the group winners and the best runner-up. The winners of these elimination matches will go through to day two to compete for the Cup and the losers will also go through to day two to compete for the Plate.

U14 Boys, U16 Boys Colts, U18 Boys Vase - An elimination round will be played at the end of the first day between all the group winners and the four best runners-up. Only the winners of these elimination matches will go through to day two.

4.3. Teams will be awarded 2 match points for a win and 1 for a draw. In the event of a tied number of match points, group winners and best runners up will be decided by:

Check 1. Greatest points difference (points scored minus points conceded).

Check 2. Greatest points scored.

If all equal then toss of coin – this must be conducted in the presence of both team representatives, referee management and a committee member/schools manager.

4.4. For the purposes of ranking runners-up from any pool rounds the points difference and points scored will be divided by the actual number of games played and, if match points are tied (teams in reduced pools being awarded 2 match points for “walk-overs”), the resulting average points difference and points scored will be used to rank the teams.

4.5. The Committee or Schools Manager has authority to override any of these regulations for the benefit of the tournament or under exceptional circumstances. If a school wishes to appeal such a decision, details on how to do so can be found in Section 9.5.

## **5. Competition Management**

### **Squad Lists**

5.1. All teams may bring 13 players plus one travelling reserve. The reserve must not play unless replacing a withdrawn player in accordance with Section 6.1. Any breach will be sanctioned in accordance with Section 9.6.

5.2. Prior to arrival, the full names of all players in the squad must be submitted via the official online form, which will be sent to the school's designated representative on the morning of the competition. The representative must certify, on behalf of the school, that every player fully meets the eligibility requirements set out in this document. If a school has been unable to submit their squad online, hard copies will be available at the tournament control points. False or incomplete declarations will result in sanctions per Section 9.6.

5.3. On arrival, and before taking part in any match, each team must formally register at the Control Point for their allocated venue (Wimbledon, Merton, ASDA or RE). Registration must be completed in person by the team's staff member in charge.

5.4. No player may act as a substitute or replacement for another school under any circumstances. Breaches will result in sanctions per Section 9.6.

### **Half Game Rule**

5.5. The school staff member/s in charge of each of the schools teams shall be responsible for ensuring that each member of their squad complies with RFU Regulation 15.12 (Half Game Rule, as in force on 1 September 2025).

5.6. On each competition day, the 'available playing time' of this regulation shall be based on the number of guaranteed games (e.g. pool games). The regulation will not apply to knock-out games. However, in the interests of player welfare, teams are strongly encouraged to manage playing time sensibly during knock-out games. Further clarification may be obtained from the Referee Manager if required.

### **Match**

5.7. Regarding RFU Regulation 15.11.3. Matches must come to an end when the game reaches a 50-point differential in all U14 to U18 competitions or a 30-point differential in both U13 and U11 competitions.

5.8. A size 5 RFU regulation ball will be used in all U16 to U18 competitions. A size 4 RFU regulation ball will be used in all U11 to U14 competitions.

5.9. For the U11 Mixed Competition, there will be a maximum pitch size of 60 metres by 43 metres. All other competitions will use full-size compliant adult pitches.

### **Yellow & Red Cards Process**

5.10. A player receiving a yellow card will receive a two minute in-game suspension. There is no limit to the amount of yellow cards a player can receive throughout the tournament.

5.11. Any player who receives a red card will be suspended for the remainder of the match and is not allowed to participate in any further games in the tournament. This also applies to any two day competitions. The suspended player is not eligible to be replaced by a travelling reserve as per Section 6.1.

### **Playing Kit**

5.12. A coin toss will determine which team must change shirts in the event of a clash of colour.

## **6. Replacements**

6.1. A travelling reserve may only come into a school's playing squad due to injury. If the travelling reserve comes into the squad of 13 players there must be 1 outgoing injured player. This outgoing player may not take part in any future games regardless of being a 1-day or 2-day competition. If this change takes place, it is the responsibility of the staff member in charge to report this to their control point.

6.2. Unlimited rolling substitutions are permitted in all matches. A player who has been substituted may later replace any player, whether or not that player has been injured. However, this must still be in compliance with the half-game rule (see 5.4. & 5.5.).

## **7. Non-fulfilled, Postponed or Abandoned Matches**

7.1. If, before their first game, a school is unable to field seven players, then a reserve side will replace them. If a reserve team is not available, then the pool size will be reduced. The committee have the right to amend fixtures and formats with the agreement of affected schools in cases where no replacement teams are available.

7.2. If a team arrives late for its pool matches, unless with the approval of the Tournament Committee and the team's opponents, it is agreed to reschedule the affected games to a later time. The team may be replaced by a reserve team. If it has

not been possible to replace them, any games they play will be treated as friendlies and will not count towards the official pool standings. Only matches that are officially scheduled and approved by the tournament committee as part of the competition will count towards pool results.

7.3. If, before any pool game other than its first, a side is unable to field seven players, then the pool game is null and void, all previous results in the pool involving the side are also null and void and the side is removed from the tournament unless a committee decision is officially made, specifically when influencing another team's progression.

## **8. Match Officials**

8.1. Any verbal or physical abuse directed to officials (on field or off) will not be accepted. This is inclusive of participants, school staff and parents/supporters. If this is deemed unacceptable, via review, if necessary, then the Committee may disqualify or deduct points from the offending team. Notice will be given to the team being sanctioned before their next fixture.

## **9. Breach of Regulations: Process & Sanctions**

### **Authority and Control**

9.1 The tournament is conducted under the authority of the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens Committee. The Committee's decisions in all matters are final. In any situation of dispute, the Schools Manager will make the final ruling.

### **Obligation to Cooperate**

9.2 All participating schools, teams, players, and staff are required to cooperate fully with any disciplinary or regulatory investigation. This includes providing requested documents, statements, and evidence promptly. Failure to cooperate, delaying provision of information, or obstructing an investigation may itself be treated as a breach of regulations and sanctioned accordingly.

### **Reporting Suspected Breaches**

9.3 Any suspected breach of regulations must be reported immediately to the Control Point or Tournament Office by a team's designated staff member in charge. Reports should provide as much detail as possible (including the nature of the breach, individuals involved, and any supporting evidence). Anonymous or unsubstantiated claims may not be investigated unless credible evidence is provided.

### **Dispute Process**

9.4 All disputes and complaints will be handled in accordance with the process below:

- Any on-field decision by a referee is final and cannot be overturned by this process.

- Off-field disputes relating to player eligibility, breaches of regulations, or competition administration must be submitted to the Schools Manager or Control Point after the conclusion of the match or incident in question.
- Disputes made following the conclusion of the tournament must be made in writing to [registration@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:registration@rosslynpark.co.uk) no later than **five working days** post the final day of the tournament.
- The Tournament Committee will review the matter promptly and may request additional evidence from any party involved.

## Appeals

9.5 The following steps set out how teams may lodge an appeal and the circumstances under which an appeal will be considered:

- A team may appeal the Committee's decision only on the grounds that the regulations have been incorrectly applied or that relevant new evidence has become available.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to [registration@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:registration@rosslynpark.co.uk) within **five working days** of being notified of the decision.
- Appeals will be considered by the Schools Manager, whose decision will be final and binding on all parties.

## Sanctions for Breaching Regulations

9.6 If a breach of regulations is proven, the Tournament Committee may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

1. **Formal warning** - issued to the team and/or school, recorded for future reference.
2. **Reversal of match result** - the win awarded to the opposing team, with a standard score applied (20-0).
3. **Deduction of match points** - reducing the team's position in the pool table.
4. **Annulment of results** - affected matches declared null and void.
5. **Player suspension** - immediate removal of a player from the tournament.
6. **Team disqualification** - removal from the relevant competition bracket or age group.
7. **Exclusion from future tournaments** - suspension of the team or school from entering for a set period or permanently.
8. **Reporting to the governing body or school leadership** - passing details of the breach to relevant school bodies for further action.
9. **Reporting to the team's home union disciplinary secretary** - passing details of the breach to relevant authorities for further action.
10. **Financial penalties or cost recovery** - charging the team/school for additional expenses caused by the breach.

**Additional Provisions**

9.7 The following additional provisions apply to all disciplinary matters, breaches of regulations, disputes, and appeals:

- Sanctions may be applied during the tournament or retrospectively, depending on when the breach is discovered.
- All disciplinary processes will prioritise player welfare, fairness, and the integrity of the competition.
- The Committee reserves the right to amend or clarify any ruling to protect the tournament's integrity.
- The most serious breaches may result in exclusion from future tournaments and referral to the relevant rugby governing body.