



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

1 Competition Entry and Administration

- a) Entry is available to all clubs who are members of the Cheshire RFU and have submitted a completed entry form (available from the Cheshire RFU website) and paid the due entry fee no later than Sunday 6th September 2026. Having submitted a completed entry form all clubs/teams are deemed to have agreed to abide by the Competition Rules as published by Cheshire RFU. The competition covers all age grades from U14s to U18s (inclusive).
- b) All games to be played in accordance with the laws of the game as laid down by the IRB and the RFU Regulations, including those relating to age grades (Regulation 15), discipline (Regulation 19) and Safeguarding (Regulation 21).
- c) All games must be played in accordance with the RFU Regulation 15.12 'Half Game' Rule so that **"each player selected in every match day squad plays at least half of the Available Playing Time"**. Coaches and team managers must monitor this and the team sheet must be signed to show that this rule has been adhered to. Complaints regarding this rule will be dealt with by Cheshire RFU.
- d) If a club has a large enough squad at a particular age group they may enter 2 teams in that age group along with the additional entry fee but they must designate that one is an A XV and the other is a B XV based on the eligibility criteria set out in Rule 2c.
- e) The competitions shall be on a knockout basis and the draws shall be made by the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee and published on the Cheshire RFU website.
 - i. All teams will be entered for the first round of the Cup competition, with losing teams from the first round being placed in the Plate competition.
 - ii. If there are enough entries to require a preliminary round in the first round, then losing preliminary teams will also be placed in the Plate competition.
 - iii. For U14s, U15s and U16s, if there are enough entries to require a preliminary round in the Plate competition, then losing Plate preliminary teams will be placed in a Vase competition.
 - iv. For U14s, U15s and U16s, losing Cup quarter finalists will be placed in a Bowl competition.
 - v. For U14s, U15s and U16s, losing Plate quarter finalists will be placed in a Shield competition.
 - vi. For U14s, U15s and U16s, losing Vase quarter finalists will be placed in a Trophy competition (when practical).
 - vii. The order of precedence of competitions is: Cup – Bowl – Plate – Shield – Vase – Trophy.
- f) The dates for all rounds shall ultimately be decided by the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee, in line with the Structured Season and will be published on the Cheshire RFU website.
- g) Ties must be played **on** the published dates. Any rearranged dates must be approved by the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee and be in accordance with the RFU Structured Season.



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

- h) Any issues with resolving match dates should be escalated by the host club via the Competition Organiser to the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.
- i) It is the host's club responsibility to ensure any issues with playing the game by the published dates are communicated to the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.
- j) Any games that are not played by the published dates and without prior notification or agreement with the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee may have to be conceded by the host club. **The host club is the first drawn in each tie** (see 1l below).
- k) A Match Results Form (available from the Cheshire RFU website) with the names of players plus replacements with their date of birth and RFU ID number must be made available prior to the playing of each game. Players should all be registered correctly on the GMS system for the team for which they are playing.

It is the responsibility of the team managers/coaches to check the details entered on the form. Proof of age and club membership must be made available on request to the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.

Following the match, the Match Results Form should be countersigned by the referee who should also note any Red or Yellow cards against the relevant player's names.

The **winning** team is responsible for the submission of the form and emailing the result to the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.

Results are to be submitted by **email within 48 hours** of the tie and Match Results Forms **within 7 days (by email to cheshirerugby.mj.sec@gmail.com)** to the Competition Organiser as shown on the Match Results Form.

- l) The first drawn club in each tie (other than the final) shall have the choice of ground. Grounds must meet the RFU standard requirements for playing rugby (for 'third generation' artificial pitches see: IRB Performance Specification for Artificial Surfaces for Rugby – Regulation 22).
- m) The selection of venues and the appointment of referees for the finals shall be the responsibility of the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.
- n)
 - 1. Disputes or match complaints – except those regarding RFU regulation 15.12 – must be made in writing within 48 hours of the completion of the match to the Competition Organiser and must only be made by either the coach or manager of the affected Club team but not both. The Competition Organiser and other nominated members of the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee will be the main arbiters in these situations but depending on the nature of the dispute/complaint may refer matters to the relevant Cheshire Disciplinary Panel.
 - 2. Any disputes lodged outside the 48-hour cut-off will not be considered as valid. An appeal against a decision must be made in writing by either the coach or manager of the affected club team (but not both) to the Competition Organiser for referral to the Cheshire RFU Executive Committee.
 - 3. Any appeal must be lodged within 48 hours of the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee's decision being communicated to the clubs concerned.
 - 4. The Appeal Panel shall comprise at least people 3 appointed for the purpose by the President (or in his absence or incapacity the Chairman of the County), none of whom served on the original Mini & Junior Sub Committee and who have not been



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

involved with nor in the dispute/complaint. The Appeal Panel shall afford to the Club raising the complaint/dispute the opportunity to appear before the Appeal Panel and provide evidence or make representations to it. The Appeal Panel are given the power to confirm, vary, or set aside the decision of the Mini & Junior Sub Committee.

5. Any Club that unsuccessfully exercises the right of appeal provided above shall pay to Cheshire RFU the costs reasonably incurred by Cheshire RFU in hearing the appeal.

- o) In order to provide clarity and to resolve issues as close to source as possible, any disputes or match complaints should be copied to the following members of the club raising the complaint. Mini/Junior Chair, Club Coaching Co-ordinator(s), Safeguarding Officer and Club Chair (list is illustrative and not exhaustive). The complaining club should use every effort to solve problems within the club rather than escalate them direct to the committee.
- p) The Mini and Junior Sub Committee reserves the right to amend the rules of the competition at any time to ensure that the integrity of the competition and the ethos of rugby union is paramount. Any changes will be advised via the Cheshire RFU website.

2 Player Eligibility and Registration

- a) Players must be under the respective age (U14, U15, U16, U17, U18) on the 31st August at the beginning of the season in which the competitions are being played. Any club requesting permission for a player to 'play down' must seek a formal dispensation from the Cheshire RFU and perform the required safety assessment (as described in Regulation 15.4). The club must notify the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee of this dispensation and adhere to the regulations regarding notifying their opponents **at least 24 hours in advance**. Teams are bound by the RFU regulations relating to Age Grade rugby (Regulation 15). In particular, a junior player 'playing up' in an older age group, the club/team must adhere to Regulations 15.3.5 and 15.3.6 in terms of consent and risk assessment (see Regulation 15 for details). All competitions must be played according to the Rules/RFU Law Variations for the correct age group.
- b) All players taking part in the competition must be registered with the RFU on GMS prior to the commencement of the match. The coach or manager must ensure that all players are properly registered and should be prepared to provide the registration details to the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee in the event of a complaint.

If the GMS registration details are not available for a player due to him being a new player or a club transfer then suitable evidence of his eligibility should be provided and a note made on the Match Results Form.

If a team has been entered as a mixed team (due to a shortage of players at each club – a maximum of two clubs may combined in this manner and only with the permission of the Mini and Junior Sub-Committee), then the coaches should aim to give each club equal representation, where possible.

- c) 1. A player may only play for one club, and one side and one age group within that club, in the competition in any one season. i.e. if a player is named in a squad on a Match Results Form for a team at one club in the competition and subsequently transfers to another club or another age group within the same club, he is ineligible for any further competition matches for that season.



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

2. Any player transferring from a Cheshire club who is eligible or a player who is new to a club must be registered with the RFU as a Youth Player with his new club prior to the original published date of the competition quarter finals.
3. Any player transferring from a club outwith Cheshire CB must be registered with his new club prior to the original published date of the competition quarter finals in order to be considered eligible to participate in competition matches.
- d) Any club found to be fielding an ineligible player will be removed from the competition and a replacement club will be decided upon by the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee. Appeals against such decisions will be covered by the appeals process set out in Rule 1n above.

3 Player Numbers / Shortages / Replacements / Substitutions

- a) For Under 14 to Under 18 matches any number of players may be nominated in the match day squad**, keeping in mind that RFU regulation 15.12 'Half Game' rule must be adhered to. All players must be listed on the Match Results Form **prior** to the game. A completed and signed Match Results Form is required to be returned for each match and a Match Results Form signed by both Team Managers or Coaches is deemed to indicate that all ID cards have been checked according to Rule 2b.

There is no requirement on the minimum number of front row players available, and any game that is played without a full set of trained front row players can start or continue with uncontested scrums.

** Although the match day squad may contain any number of players, for the finals Cheshire can only supply 22 medals per team. Additional medals can be ordered but would need to be paid for by the team concerned.

- b) The players named on the completed team sheet are the **only** ones permitted to play in the match. Substitute players named on the team sheet must be identified clearly to both sides (e.g. wearing bibs) and remain in a marked 'technical' area unless warming up immediately prior to a substitution. A technical area may be marked with cones if no suitably marked area is available. Any players not named on the signed team sheet, and therefore not part of the match day squad, should be clearly identifiable and should stand behind a pitch barrier (if available) or be otherwise separated from the match day squad.
- c) Teams should make all attempts to ensure fixtures go ahead in spite of other factors. To this end, games may be played at alternative locations (home/neutral/away), and/or in the absence of players (i.e. games cannot be postponed due to players being unavailable). **Competition games must take precedence over other scheduled games (e.g. friendly or league games).**

Team managers and coaches should consider any clashes with this competition's key dates, especially "tours", "county commitments" and "club/school games or event", when they enter the competition. The play on dates need to be respected irrespective of any other commitments. No expectation that dates may be moved should be taken for granted and teams risk removal from the competition should they not comply.



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

All Under 14 to Under 18 games should proceed with a minimum of 13 players per team. If a team is short, their opponents will have no more than a one-player advantage. E.g. turn up with 13 players and your opposition can only field 14. This rule also holds when a player from one side has been removed from the field for a yellow card or a red card (a team can have at most a one player numerical advantage at all times) and, in such situations, scrums must have equal numbers on each side.

- d) If a team concedes a Preliminary or First Round game of the Cup competition due to player shortage they may not be allowed to participate in the other competitions (Plate, Bowl or Shield).
- e) Revolving substitutions are permitted, as per RFU Youth guidelines.
- f) Managers / Coaches must not allow or encourage players to play in a front row position if they do not have suitable training and experience.
- g) If, due to non-availability of suitably trained players at the start of or during a match, the Referee has to order uncontested scrums, the match will continue as a competitive match, save for the scrums, which when uncontested will simply be a method of restarting the game. The 'Man Off' rule from Adult rugby does not apply in these cases.

4 Law / Referees

- a) All Under 14 to Under 18 games will be played in accordance with the IRB 'Laws of the Game' Under 19 variations and in accordance with RFU Regulation 15 and relevant appendices, and refereed by members of a referee society wherever possible, or by a qualified neutral referee who is not associated in any manner with either **team**.
- b) In the event of the host team not being able to provide a suitable referee the non-hosting team must be informed at least 48 hours prior to the match, and given the opportunity to supply the referee who must satisfy the criteria of Rule 4a.
- c) If the host team's referee does not turn up for the game the responsibility to appoint a referee the match should go to the visiting team.
- d) In both occasions if the visiting team cannot find or do not have a suitable referee then the responsibility to appoint a referee for the match goes back to the host team.
- e) Under all circumstances the referee should be qualified to referee that specific age group and if there are any doubts about the suitability of the referee the game should be postponed and rescheduled for the following weekend.
- f) If the points differential in a game reaches 50 points or above the coach of the losing side has the option to ask the referee to terminate the game early as one-sided games do little for rugby development for either winners or losers.
- g) The duration of each game shall be as follows:

Under 14s	25 minutes each way
Under 15s	30 minutes each way
Under 16s	35 minutes each way



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS



RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026

Under 17s 35 minutes each way

Under 18s 35 minutes each way

- h) These timings refer to playing time i.e. time can be added for stoppages due to minor injuries and/or substitutions at the referee's discretion.
- i) Drawn games shall be decided as follows:
 - (1) There will be no extra time in any match
 - (2) In matches other than the finals, the result shall be determined by:
 - (i) The number of tries scored
 - (ii) The number of conversions
 - (iii) If both teams remain equal the away team shall go forward.

In finals, drawn games shall be decided as follows:

- (i) The number of tries scored
- (ii) The number of conversions
- (iii) If the teams are equal on both tries and conversions, the trophy and medals will be shared.

5 Discipline / Fair Play

- a) The Mini & Junior Sub-Committee expects an exemplary code of conduct from all Teams, Managers, Coaches, Players and Spectators before, during, and following matches.
- b) It is a Team Managers and Coaches responsibility to ensure that their Spectators conduct themselves in line with the acknowledged 'Codes of Conduct', refraining from inciting players from the touchline, or abusing Referees before, during, and after games.
- c) Both teams (home and away) are required to nominate one person for each game to act as a **Respect Marshall** to manage **spectator behaviour** and monitor the "No Ref, No Game" policy.
- d) Spectators must be outside the playing enclosure & back from the touchlines at all times and must never enter the field of play.
- e) All host clubs **must** have a technical area marked out and coaches must stay within it. Replacements should be within the technical area, where this is possible. The committee encourages clubs hosting games provide barriers, as required.
- f) All coaches and referees should be aware of RFU Reg 19 (Appendix 6). The Sin Bin is part of the Laws of the Game and thus applies to all levels of junior rugby (U13-U18). Key points (illustrative not exhaustive):
 - If a player is temporarily suspended in an Age Grade match U14-U18, the duration of time in the Sin Bin shall be (Regulation 15, appendices):
 - U14 – 5 minutes
 - U15 – 6 minutes
 - U16, U17 and U18 – 7 minutes



CHESHIRE R.F.U. JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS

RULES

Issue #24v1 July 2026



- Sin Binned Players in junior rugby should stand on the halfway line outside the field of play, but may join the half time team talk,
- The referee is the sole judge of the length of the sin bin.

Yellow cards (and red cards) should be reported to the offending player's Club Disciplinary Officer by the team manager/coach, as required by the RFU guidelines.

- g) Any Player, Coach or Spectator dismissed from the field in a knockout competition match will be subject to the RFU guidelines on discipline. Clubs may also be subject to discipline arising from actions of any of their players, coaches or spectators.
- h) The Referee should submit a report to the relevant Cheshire Disciplinary Panel and the Club should convene a Disciplinary Committee to deal with the matter. The Club Disciplinary Committee should then submit a report of their actions and any sanction imposed to the relevant Disciplinary Panel for review/comment. Any sanction imposed should be in line with the RFU Disciplinary Regulations Youth Sin Bin Protocol.
- i) If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon a match for any reason other than weather conditions, then, irrespective of the number of minutes played the result of the match may be determined by the Mini & Junior Sub-Committee.
- j) If a match is abandoned due to adverse weather conditions the result will stand as long as at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the regular playing time has elapsed.
- k) The Mini & Junior Sub-Committee has a responsibility to its Teams and Players and will not hesitate to remove a Team or Club from the Competition for any occurrence of Player or Referee abuse by Spectators or Coaches, or other incidents bringing Junior Rugby into disrepute.