

Schools & Youth Conferences 2015-16

Frequently Asked Questions – October 2015



1. What is the scoring system within S1 (U13) and S2 (U14) matches?

The Age Grade Law Variations (AGLVs) are available for download from www.scottishrugby.org/school-rugby-age-banding

This booklet confirms scoring within S1 (U13) and S2 (U14) rugby is **3 points for a try** and **1 point for a kick at goal**.

2. What is the match format (length and periods of play) within S1 (U13) and S2 (U14) matches?

The AGLVs state that S1 (U13) playing time is 2 x 20 min or 3 x 15 minute periods, and for S2 (U14) rugby playing time it is 2 x 25min or 3 x 20min period.

3. If 3 periods of play are adopted within S1 (U13) or S2 (U14) matches should the score be counted for all periods of play?

We've been made aware that some clubs/schools wish to play 3 periods but for points to be counted for the first 2 periods only. We have no objection to this match/scoring structure as long as both clubs have agreed to this before the start of the match.

It should also be noted that points for/against do not play a role in the rank order of clubs or schools within any Conference Table across all age groups.

The key piece of guidance we can offer is that clubs communicate prior to the match to agree a match structure that conforms to the AGLVs and that works for the player development needs of the players involved.

If clubs/schools cannot agree on a match structure then the default position will be that the traditional format of 2 periods of play shall be adopted.

We would highlight that the emphasis should be on creating a positive learning environment for all players. As such all players should be provided with meaningful game time regardless of the match structure adopted.

4. Can a player that attends a Tier 3 school play for both their school and a Tier 3 club?

For the next two seasons Scottish Rugby will proceed with a graduated implementation of the new schools and youth competition structure.

This means that during the next 2 seasons we will allow male players from Tier 1– 3 schools and clubs to play for both schools and clubs. In doing so, all involved in age-grade rugby must recognise that player welfare is paramount and, as such, Scottish Rugby recommends:

- S1 (U13) S2 (U14) and S3 (U15) rugby: one game per weekend but will allow flexibility for players to play 90mins in a 24hr period in either club or school or both

- U16 and U18 rugby: players can only play one Tier 1-3 school or club game in a weekend (i.e.) U16 and U18 players can play for both club or school but not in the same weekend. Clubs are expected to act responsibly and we will investigate any examples of bad practice that are brought to our attention

Where an U16 or U18 player has a history of playing at both a Tier 1-3 school and club the decision on if that player should play for the school or club on any given weekend should be made through an open discussion between the player, their parents/legal guardian, the school and the club. We would highlight that player welfare and development of the boy as an individual and as a rugby player, must be at the centre of this decision.

5. Can Conference fixtures be arranged to be played midweek?

Yes, by mutual agreement schools and clubs can re-arrange any fixture to be played on any date prior to the final round of Conference fixtures. This is with the proviso that all matches across all age grades for that 'School v School' or 'Club v Club' fixture are moved to the new date.

Clubs and schools must notify the Conference Administrator when they agree to change the date of any Conference fixture.

In exceptional circumstances clubs or schools will be granted permission to move individual age grade matches to a different date from the block fixture date. In these cases all matches contained within the 'School v School' or 'Club v Club' fixture will still take place within the same week.

6. Is there a dispensation process that would allow a boy to play down an age grade?

No, 1st September is the default cut-off date for all age grades within the Conferences and no player should play a fixture for which he is too old by date of birth.

Players can play up one age group (up to U16) in accordance with the 2 year age banding guidelines contained within the Are Your Ready to Play Rugby (AYRTPR) policies www.scottishrugby.org/get-involved/play/age-banding

Clubs and schools must note that to all school and youth rugby matches, including all friendlies.

For friendly matches out-with Scottish Rugby's schools and youth competitions the AYRTPR policies still apply.

7. Can a player represent a club or school at 2 different age grades within the same 'School v School' or 'Club v Club' Conference fixture?

As all matches across all age grades should be played on the same day/weekend this should not be possible. On the rare occasional where this is not the case clubs and schools should adopt a selection policy that preserves the 'two players playing once, not one player playing twice' philosophy that provides one of the underpinning principles of the conferences.

It's worth noting the player welfare guidelines outlined within the answer to Question 4 are also relevant here.

8. Should a match be stopped if a team goes ahead by a certain number of points?

Although this is not addressed within the Rules of Competition Scottish Rugby would recommend that if a team attains a 60-point lead over the opposition within a S3 (U15), U16 or U18 match then play should be stopped. On the mutual agreement of the two teams a friendly match may be played for the remainder of the playing time.

Within S1 (U13) and S2 (U14) matches the game should be halted if a team attains a 40-point lead.

Once again, we would highlight that the emphasis should be on creating a learning environment for both teams. Games that are too one sided do not provide a good playing environment for any of the players. In these circumstances we would encourage coaches to change the teams and share players to ensure all players in attendance get some meaningful game time.

9. What is the minimum number of players required to fulfil a conference fixture?

Within S2 (U14), S3 (U15), U16 and U18 matches the minimum number of players required to fulfil the fixture is 13, with the proviso that each team has at least five players in the scrum at all times.

Within S1 (U13) matches the minimum number of players required to fulfil the fixture is 10, with the proviso that each team has at least five players in the scrum at all times.

If a team has less than the minimum number of players required we would encourage clubs/schools to share players and play a Development Match (a training game).

10. If a team is short of players (but still has the minimum required to play the match) should the opposition reduce playing numbers to make the sides equal?

Neither the World Rugby Laws of the Game nor the AGLVs stipulate that both teams should field the same number of players if one team is short. The only stipulation is that numbers in the scrum should be the same for both teams. This is also the position taken within the Rules of Competition for the conferences rugby.

However, in accordance with the ethos we aim to instil within and through the competitions, we would encourage the team with a full complement to reduce their numbers to provide as level a playing field as possible. Depending on the nature of the match we would also encourage clubs/schools to consider helping out the team that is short by utilising any subs that may not otherwise get game time.

11. Are team sheets being used for Conference fixtures?

Team sheets are only being used for U18 (1st XV) conference fixtures.

Teams must exchange completed team sheets and pass a copy to the referee at least 30 minutes before kick-off. A copy must also be emailed to teamsheets@sru.org.uk and the Conference Administrator at Scottish Rugby.

The team sheet template is available for download from www.scottishrugby.org/information-schools-clubs

12. Do Conference fixtures qualify for Scottish Rugby's Travel Scheme?

Yes, clubs and schools that encounter journeys of either (a) 200 or more miles or (b) 400 or more miles, will receive a travel contribution in respect of those trips. Conference fixtures will be assessed automatically and payment made in appears.

Where a club or school is required to travel to/from one of the Scottish Islands to fulfil a Schools or Youth Conference fixture, or a Scottish Schools' Cup, Shield or Plate fixture, Scottish Rugby will make a separate travel contribution in respect of each of those trips.

The Travel Scheme is administered by Scottish Rugby's Competitions team. For further information please contact Laura Henderson on laura.henderson@sru.org.uk