

SYNOPSIS OF CHANGES TO RFL OPERATIONAL RULES FOR TIERS FOUR TO SIX (COMMUNITY GAME) FOR 2017

Further to previous correspondence, below is a summary of the changes to the Tier 4 – 6 Operational Rules for 2017.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to two new sections in the Operational Rules namely a new section on Arbitration (Section E) and the new Betting and Related Activity Code of Conduct for the Community Game (Section F2).

Arbitration

In 2016 a new arbitration section was included in the Tiers 1-3 Operational Rules. In accordance with a whole game solution there was a commitment to considering including similar provisions in the Tier 4 – 6 Operational Rules subject to appropriate amendments to reflect the different resources of the Tiers.

The detail of the Rules has been considered by the Regulatory Group and the Community Board). In summary they: (i) expressly provide that Misconduct hearings are arbitral and therefore, once all internal routes of appeal are exhausted, decisions are final and binding; and (ii) provide for any legal challenges by Clubs, Leagues and Players to RFL rules and decisions to be submitted to arbitration with the arbitral panel exercising a supervisory jurisdiction. The intention is that this shall ensure that any such disputes are determined in a cost effective and confidential manner within an appropriate timescale.

To reflect the resources at Tier 4 -6 and in order to seek to make arbitration accessible to all, the Rules provide for an Independent Operational Rules Tribunal to usually hear any arbitration (the RFL retains the ability to refer to Sports Resolution where this is appropriate on the facts). The Rules set out in detail the procedural steps that anyone wishing to take a matter to arbitration should follow and these include safeguards to ensure that significant costs are not incurred unless necessary.

Betting and Related Activity Code of Conduct for the Community Game

It is becoming increasingly more likely that bookmakers will offer odds on markets involving Community Game Clubs. As a result of this it is necessary for Rugby League to protect the integrity of the sport by including regulations regarding betting and regulated activities within the Operational Rules.

As drafted, the code of conduct is proportionate in that it does not preclude community game participants from gambling on professional game matches (save for where their Club is playing in a Challenge Cup or League 1 Cup match).

Education awareness on obligations will be provided in association with Leagues in the New Year.

Summary of Changes

Definitions

- i) “Operational Rules Tribunal” wording has been added to clarify that the RFL Board appoint the panel members.
- ii) “Compliance Manager” has been added to clarify the role of this person.

- iii) “Senior Operational Rules Tribunal Member” has been added to clarify the role of this person.

Section A

- A1:2 Inserted to clarify that the Leagues are bound by the rules of arbitration
- A1:5 Additional wording added to reflect that there is now a Betting and Related Activity Code of Conduct for the Community Game.
- A2:2 Inserted to clarify that the Clubs are bound by the rules of arbitration
- A2:4 Additional wording added to reflect that there is now a Betting and Related Activity Code of Conduct for the Community Game.

Section B

- B2:11 Amendment to the wording to reflect that it is now essential that a First Aider is in attendance at the ground at every match. This is the responsibility of the home club.

Section C

- C1:1 Wording inserted to reflect that the Policy relates to the Community Game.
- C1:2 Inserted to clarify that Persons subject to the Operational Rules are bound by the rules of Arbitration.
- C2:7:1 Amended the wording to lower the age a child can play Rugby League.
- C2:7:3 Amended to clarify that players can complete a playing season – despite new age bandings becoming active on the 1st September. For the avoidance of doubt this also relates to girls playing mixed rugby.
- C2:9:5 Amendment to reiterate that it is the responsibility of the Management Groups to administer the transfer procedure.
- C3:2:4 Inserted to clarify the obligations of Clubs to ensure that key roles are in place at Club/Team level as set out in the table.
- C4:1:1 Inserted reference to the League being responsible for the appointment of Match Officials.

Section D

There are a number of amendments to Section D which are linked to the external advice received relating to arbitration.

Kelly Barrett
Head of Operations
December 2016