



## **RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WOMEN'S ALL IRELAND LEAGUE 2025/26**

### **1. General**

- 1.1. These regulations govern the **Women's All Ireland League** for 2025/26
- 1.2. Each participating Club has indicated, by written acceptance, its wish to compete in the Women's All Ireland League and, thereby, to adhere to and be bound by this and any other regulations which govern the competitions (including for the avoidance of doubt the Women's All Ireland League Participation Criteria)
- 1.3. The IRFU, through the Rugby Committee, reserve the right to amend or make changes to the season structure, format or regulations of any competition under their control, should it deem it necessary and appropriate, as a result of unforeseen circumstances. Or in its absolute discretion, subject to the approval of the IRFU Committee, it deems it is in the best interests of the game, the relevant competition or the Union to do so.

### **2. Governing Provisions, Interpretation and Definitions**

- 2.1. The competition shall be called the Women's All Ireland League, hereafter for the purposes of these regulations referred to as "the League".
- 2.2. Defined terms in this regulation shall have the same meanings as in the laws and regulations of the Union except where the context otherwise requires.

### **3. Administration and Management of the League**

The Union shall appoint a National Competitions' Committee (hereinafter referred to as the NCC)

- 3.1. (NCC) comprising a chairperson, a representative from each of the four Branches of the Union, a representative of the Women's Sub Committee and the Rugby Competition Manager appointed by the Union. The Rugby Competition Manager shall act as administrator of the Committee only [appointed by the Union] and is a non-voting member.
- 3.2. The NCC may co-opt a person(s) to assist in the management and administration of the League and Cup
- 3.3. The NCC shall administer and manage the League.

### **4. Powers of the National Competitions' Committee**

- 4.1. The NCC shall: -
  - 4.1.1. Have power to make decisions regarding the administration and management of the League.
  - 4.1.2. Have power to hear complaints as provided for in this regulation and to impose such sanctions as may be permitted by these regulations;



- 4.1.3. Be entitled, at its discretion, to delegate to the Rugby Competition Manager (or in their absence such other person as may be nominated by the Union or such one or more members of the National Competitions' Committee as it may determine) such of its functions as it may decide.
  - 4.1.4. Any decision of such person or persons so delegated shall be as valid and effective as if made by the NCC.
- 4.2. Where the functions of the NCC are delegated to the Rugby Competition Manager they may at their absolute discretion:
  - 4.2.1. make decisions themselves;
  - 4.2.2. refer the matter to the Chairperson of the League Sub Committee to make the decision; or
  - 4.2.3. refer the matter to the NCC (of which they are a member) to make the decision.
- 4.3. Decisions of the NCC shall be communicated to such Club(s) as maybe directly affected as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 4.4. The Union or the NCC shall have no liability to any Club or person arising from any negligence or failure by the Union or the NCC to ensure compliance with these regulations or in relation to any other failure in the administration or management of the League.

## **5. Complaints**

- 5.1. A Club or the Rugby Competition Manager may make a complaint in relation to an alleged breach of these regulations by any Club or in relation to any matter arising out of the administration or management of the League, which complaint shall be in writing and shall be received by the Union not later than fourteen days from midnight on the date of the event giving rise to the complaint.
- 5.2. A Club may only make a complaint in relation to a matter that affects it directly and which causes it to suffer a disadvantage in the League or some other material form of prejudice.
- 5.3. Time shall be regarded as being of the essence in relation to the enforcement of the time limit under regulation 5.1.
- 5.4. For the avoidance of doubt, the fourteen-day time period runs from the date of the actual event and not from the date of the Club becoming aware of the event giving rise to the complaint.
- 5.5. All complaints must be in writing and signed by the Rugby Competition Manager, or the Secretary of the Club as applicable and state the grounds of the complaint.
- 5.6. All complaints by Clubs in relation to these regulations must be accompanied by a payment of €500.
- 5.7. The onus of proof shall be on the Club or Rugby Competition Manager making the complaint to establish the breach or infringement of these regulations. The standard of proof shall be on the balance of probability.
- 5.8. The Union shall cause a copy of any valid complaint to be sent to any Club, or person directly affected as soon as is practicable after it has received the complaint.



## 6. Adjudication of Complaints

- 6.1. The Chairperson of the NCC shall be entitled to determine any pre- adjudication procedural or evidential issues or disputes, including whether or not to hold a hearing, without recourse to the other members of the NCC.
- 6.2. The Chairperson of the NCC shall:
  - 6.2.1 Adjudicate on the matter themselves as Chairperson or,
  - 6.2.2 Have the matter adjudicated on by the NCC (on which they shall act as Chairperson and have a casting vote).
- 6.3. Where a hearing is being held, the persons referred to in Regulation 6.2 shall be referred to as the “Hearing Committee” for the purposes of this Regulation 6 and shall adjudicate upon the complaint in accordance with the following procedures:
  - 6.3.1 The Chairperson shall arrange for a hearing of such complaint with all convenient speed at such time and place as they may determine provided that any Club or person directly affected shall be given reasonable notice either in writing or orally to be confirmed in writing, of the time and place of such hearing.
  - 6.3.2 No person may be a member of the Hearing Committee who has made, or acted on any committee that has made, a decision that is the subject matter of the complaint or who is or is a member of a Club that is directly affected by the complaint.
  - 6.3.3 A Club or person appearing at a hearing before the Hearing Committee shall be entitled to be represented by not more than two persons (one of whom may be a legal representative provided that legal representation at the hearing shall not be permitted unless reasonable prior notice of such legal representation shall be given to the Hearing Committee and any Club or person directly affected by the complaint).
  - 6.3.4 The Hearing Committee shall permit any Club or person directly affected by a complaint to submit evidence, call witnesses and make representations at the hearing.
  - 6.3.5 Subject to the requirements of natural justice the procedures to be adopted at the hearing shall be entirely at the discretion of the Hearing Committee. The Hearing Committee shall be entitled to seek such advice as it may require, including specialist or legal advice. The costs of same shall be the costs of the proceedings.
  - 6.3.6 The Hearing Committee shall also be entitled to require a Club to submit, in advance, written submissions to the Hearing Committee, which shall set out the points and submissions that the Club will be seeking to rely on at the hearing. Any such submissions may at the discretion of the Hearing Committee be distributed to the other Club(s) participating at the hearing.
  - 6.3.7 The decision of the Hearing Committee shall be notified to all parties directly affected as soon as reasonably practicable and where appropriate confirmed in writing.
  - 6.3.8 All hearings shall be held in private, unless otherwise ordered by the Hearing Committee.
  - 6.3.9 The Hearing Committee shall be entitled, where the circumstances warrant, to adjourn or postpone a hearing as it thinks fit.



6.3.10 A quorum for the NCC shall be the Chairperson and two other members. In the absence of the Chairperson a member of the NCC shall be delegated to act as Chairperson.

**7. Provision of Information**

7.1. Where the NCC, the Chairperson of the NCC or the Committee of Appeal requests a Club or person to provide information in relation to any matter, a reasonable time limit may be imposed and notified for the provision of such information and in the event that such time limit is not complied with, the NCC or the Chairperson of the NCC or the Committee of Appeal (as may be appropriate) may deal with the matter in the absence of such information.

**8. Appeals**

8.1. An appeal shall lie from any decision of the NCC to the Committee of Appeal pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Union.

8.2. Where a decision is made pursuant to these regulations by the NCC which affects the League or Cup position of any Club, it shall not be permissible for any Club which was not involved in or did not participate in the match in respect of which the decision was made, to lodge an appeal against any such decision.

**9. Sanctions**

9.1. The NCC shall be entitled in its absolute discretion to impose all or any of the following sanctions or penalties on an offending Club:

9.1.1. A caution, a warning as to future conduct, or a reprimand;

9.1.2. A fine;

9.1.3. The requirement to replay a match at such time and at such venue as is thought fit;

9.1.4. The forfeiture of, and/or the granting to another club or clubs, of the competition points for a match; which may include a bonus point;

9.1.5. The deduction of competition points;

9.1.6. The suspension or expulsion of the Branch, Club, player or person for such period as may be deemed appropriate;

9.1.7. Such other penalty or sanction as may be deemed appropriate;

9.1.8. Make a decision as to payment of costs by a club.

**10. Structure of League**

The format chosen for the All Ireland League Women's Division (hereinafter referred to as WAIL) will see all ten teams playing each other twice, home and away, and finishing ranked 1-10. The semi-final will be between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed teams. Teams finishing the regular season in positions 5-8 will compete for the Conference Cup which will see the 5<sup>th</sup> placed team playing the 8<sup>th</sup> placed team and the 6<sup>th</sup> placed team playing the 7<sup>th</sup> placed team in two semifinals, the higher ranked team having home advantage.

10.1 The position of a Club in the division shall be established by awarding four League points for a win, two League points for a draw and -5 points for conceding a match.



- 10.2 One bonus point shall be awarded to a Club scoring four or more tries in a match and one bonus point shall be awarded to a Club losing by 7 points or less.
- 10.3 A team in receipt of a conceded match shall be awarded 5 points. A score line of 28-0 will be applied to the match in favour of the non-offending club.
- 10.4 In the event of Clubs being equal in League points gained, winning a division or section, or determine ranking or relegation, shall be decided on the basis of match points scored, the Club or Clubs at the top with the larger differences between “points for” and “points against” winning the division. In the event of two or more Clubs having the same number of League points and the same match points difference, then the Club or Clubs scoring the larger number of wins shall be preferred followed by the most draws and then the most tries. Thereafter, if two or more clubs are still tied, then the club that earned the most league points in the matches between the clubs shall be preferred.
- 10.5 In the event of a draw in any knockout stages of the League, the following regulations will come into effect.
- (i) If clubs are tied at full time, extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played.
  - (ii) If still tied, the Club who has scored most tries shall be the winner
  - (iii) If still tied, the team who scored the 1<sup>st</sup> try shall be the winner.
  - (iv) If no tries have been scored, the team that scored the first points in the match shall be the winner.
  - (v) If the game is scoreless, penalty kicks shall be taken to decide the winner.
- 10.6 Amalgamated clubs are not permitted to participate in the WAIL or the promotion playoffs.

## **11 Promotion and Relegation at the end of the season**

- 11.1 There will be promotion and relegation at the end of the 25/26 season. One team will be promoted from the winners of the 25/26 Provincial Qualifying Leagues. This team will be determined by a play-off (semi-finals and a final) between the four provincial winners with the winner being promoted to the AIL Women’s Division 26/27 season
- 11.2 The team ranked lowest in the AIL Women’s Division at the end of the 25/26 season will be relegated to the Provincial Leagues for the 26/27 season.
- 11.3 No club shall have two teams in the League.
- 11.4 It is recognised that a team should have a starting minimum of 15 players in addition to having sufficient replacements to safely fulfil fixtures throughout the League and Cup. Any team that forfeits one or more games in a season, or fails to show its sustainability in regard to player numbers, welfare or best practise, may result in that team appearing before the National Competitions Committee and having their League status reviewed by the National Competitions Committee after consultation with the IRFU Women’s Sub Committee.

## **12 League Fixtures**

- 12.1 Matches shall be played on dates decided by the National Competitions’ Committee who shall arrange the fixture list for each season. Matches shall normally be played on Saturdays (depending on fixtures outlined at the start of the year) but the NCC shall have full power to arrange matches on other days and to alter previously fixed dates and venues should circumstances arise to warrant such alteration.



- 12.2 Matches shall kick off at 5pm on Saturday (unless otherwise determined by the NCC). Should a club seek to request a change in date or kick off time in a League or Cup match, they must first make contact with the opposition club as well as Rugby Competition Manager. If both clubs are in agreement with the requested change, then the club seeking the change must send the Rugby Competition Manager full details of the request with agreement from the opposition. Should the opposition club decline the request, and the club seeking the change still feels the request falls under an exceptional circumstance situation, then they may apply to the NCC for a decision. Both teams will be allowed to make submissions stating their cases. Any request for rescheduling a fixture must be received by the Rugby Competition Manager at least 21 days prior to the date of the fixture. Unforeseen circumstances which occur less than the 21 days, may be considered at the discretion of the NCC.

### **13 Postponements, Re-Arrangements, Fitness of Ground Fixtures**

- 13.1 Only in very exceptional circumstances shall a League match be postponed and then only with the approval of the NCC or its nominee. When a League match is postponed or abandoned, unless there has been a failure to fulfil a fixture, it shall be played or replayed later in the season at the earliest available date, such date to be decided by the NCC or its nominee.
- 13.2 The NCC shall provide a list of nominated persons to act on the Ground Fitness Panel, as set out in the regulations, who shall be available for consultation when the fitness of a ground is to be considered. A Club which has doubt about the fitness of its ground shall contact the Rugby Competitions Manager who shall discuss the situation with the Club and if necessary, arrange an inspection of the ground. Where there is doubt about the fitness of a ground and there is a reasonable prospect that with improved weather conditions the ground could be playable by kick off time, a decision on whether or not the pitch is playable shall be postponed until close to the kick off time. Matches may not be postponed on grounds that the safety of the players might be prejudiced unless with the additional approval of the match referee.
- 13.3 The determination of the fitness of the ground shall be the responsibility of the NCC, whose decision shall be final.
- 13.4 In the event of a match having to be postponed, it shall be the responsibility of the home Club to inform (a) their opponents, (b) the referee and touch judges (c) the NCC as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in the home Club being liable for all or part of the expenses of their opponents and match officials shall kick off at 5pm on Saturday (unless otherwise determined by the NCC).
- 13.5 Subject to the provisions of regulation 13.2 above where doubt exists as to the fitness of a ground, the home Club shall make early contact with the visiting Club as to its travel arrangements etc., in order that contact can be made prior to a Club commencing its journey.
- 13.6 Where it is known prior to a League match that a pitch is unlikely to be playable, the home Club shall find a suitable alternative venue. Clubs must show they have made a genuine effort in obtaining another venue, even if this is a distance from their own club. The emphasis must be on getting the match played and all reasonable endeavours must be demonstrated in doing so, to the satisfaction of the NCC.





## Player Registration and Eligibility

### 14 Registration of Eligible Players

- 14.1 From the end of the season, and up until midnight on 15th June, players may transfer to another club without restriction, however players transferring before 15th June must notify their current club, in writing, of their intention to transfer, a minimum of 5 days before the transfer date deadline. The club whom the player is joining must also ensure that the player's previous club has been duly notified. Failure to comply with these requirements may invalidate a transfer.
- 14.2 From 15th June to midnight on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, any transfer request must be approved by both clubs on rugby connect.
- 14.3 Any player under the age of 20, (as of 15th June in any season), who transfers from a club to an AIL club between the end of the season and Midnight 23<sup>rd</sup> September, and who then changes their mind and wishes to return to their original club, may do so by completing the Change of Mind form and submitting it to their Provincial Branch. A school leaver, who is not a member of a club, and who transfers to an AIL club between the end of the season and Midnight 23<sup>rd</sup> September and who then changes their mind will be allowed to nominate a non-AIL club on the transfer form. They will be able to transfer to the non- AIL club by completing and submitting the Change of Mind form. Any Change of Mind form must be submitted by 30th November of the year of joining the AIL club.
- 14.4 On or before midnight on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, each Club playing in the League shall submit to the Union a list of its eligible playing members who are registered with the appropriate Branch, complete with registration numbers. A person shall be registered as a playing member with one Club only. This list must be accompanied by signed participation agreement form to play in the League which can be found at the back of these regulations. (Appendix 2)

The list may be amended to include;

- 14.5.1 Players registered for the first time.
- 14.5.2 Any player who attains the age of 18 during the season, shall be eligible to play in the League. If a player participating in their provincial U18/U18.5 competition seeks to play AIL when she turns 18, it must first be notified in writing to the IRFU Women's Coordinator from the players' own club (and also the AIL club in the case of a dual status player), that they are satisfied the player has the experience to compete at AIL level. Preference should be given to playing for the U18/U18.5 team and no player may play two matches in a 48-hour period. This player must have played a minimum of 4 matches in the League/Cup before they are eligible to play in the knockout stages of the League/Cup. The 4-match minimum requirement applies to Dual Status registered players who are registered with a non-AIL club but does not apply to those players registered with a club that fields both an U18 team and an AIL team.
- 14.5.3 Special Dual Status players. Where a women's team no longer exists, a player can apply to the Rugby Competition Manager to be considered special dual status to allow them to play in the League/Cup. Where the player becomes a special dual status player, they must play a minimum of 4 games for the club before being eligible for the semi-final/final of the League or Cup-



14.5.4 Student players can register with both a student club (for student competitions only) and one other club side.

14.5.5 In exceptional circumstances the NCC may in their absolute discretion, on application in writing by the player supported by the consent in writing of both Clubs, agree to the player changing Clubs notwithstanding that the League has started, and that the player has already played in the competition subject to such application being presented or submitted prior to the 1st January.

14.5.6 Player must be 18 years of age to play adult rugby.

14.5.7 A player cannot start two matches within 48 hours.

14.5.8 In relation to 14.5.6 and 16.1, should a player be of National interest, they may be considered eligible for selection under special circumstances who otherwise would not meet the above criteria. This may include players under the age of 18 where the player is deemed to be of national interest. The IRFU policy relating to Players of National Interest must be adhered to in this regard.

#### **14.6 Eligibility of players**

The following are the registered players who are eligible to play in the League:

- I. A player who qualifies to play for Ireland under World Rugby Regulations.
- II. A player who holds a European Union **or** British passport **or** European Economic Area or Swiss passport.
- III. Any player not qualifying under (i) and (ii) above visiting Ireland or Northern Ireland on a minimum one year visa. This player must take up and remain in residence and be properly registered prior to midnight on the Tuesday immediately prior to the commencement of the League or Cup . For the purposes of interpretation, this player is classified as an **overseas player** and shall be nominated as such to the Rugby Competition Manager. In the WAIL, a club is permitted two overseas player.
- IV. In the case of (iii) a player who has resided for a minimum of one year in Ireland or Northern Ireland, they may then apply to the Rugby Competition Manager to be considered a non-overseas player.

14.5.9 A player or Club shall be entitled in writing to submit to the NCC any special circumstances she or it considers relevant to registration and/or eligibility. The submission shall be considered by the Chairperson of the NCC who shall be entitled in their absolute discretion to accept the registration and/or eligibility of such player provided the submission is made before 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The Chairperson may at their discretion refer it to the NCC but subject at all times to their right to exercise their absolute discretion.

### **15 Dual Status Players**

15.1 The term “dual status” refers to a player who although a bona fide registered playing member of another Club in Ireland may play for a Club in the League provided the following regulations are observed. A League Club shall be limited to selecting or playing not more than five such players in one season. Selection shall include players who are requested as players or substitutes for League matches.





- 15.2 Players can only play up the divisions. Players from higher division clubs shall not play for lower division clubs.
- 15.3 A League Club wishing to use the dual status principle shall follow the procedures set out below:
  - 15.3.1 A request shall be made to the Secretary of the player's Club on a match-by-match basis. The reason for the request should be clearly outlined on the DS form. When permission is obtained, an application shall be made in writing to the NCC at least forty-eight hours prior to each match in which they intend to play, enclosing the written permission of the non-League Club. Without such justification, requests may be denied.
  - 15.3.2 The name/s of dual status player/s shall be indicated on the League team sheet (D/S). Taking into account the electronic team sheets, if the player only exists as a guest player, as a last resort, managers should handwrite their name and IRFU PIN on the team sheet for the referee and opposition.
  - 15.3.3 Dual status players shall satisfy regulation 14 relating to player eligibility. This also includes overseas players that may be requested as DS players from lower leagues. An overseas player, as defined in regulation 14.6 (iii), may not play as a dual status player for a Club which has already registered their permitted maximum of two overseas player for that season.
  - 15.3.4 A player shall only be a dual status member of one League Club in any one season.
  - 15.3.5 A player cannot start two matches within 48 hours.
  - 15.3.6 A player must have played in a minimum of 4 matches for their Dual Status club before they are eligible to play in knock out stages of the League.

## 16 Youths

- 16.1 Youths who have **not** reached their 18th birthday are ineligible to participate in any form of adult contact (XV's or 7s) rugby including the League, and any subsidiary competitions.  
NOTE: See 14.5.7

## 17 Referees and Touch Judges

- 17.1 The Union's Referee Selection panel, together with the Provincial Branches Referee Society/Associations, shall select referees and touch judges for League matches.
- 17.2 One of the touch judges shall have been nominated as senior touch judge. In League and Cup matches Law 6.27 of the Laws of the Game regarding "flagging" by touch judges, shall apply.
- 17.3 In the event of the referee failing to turn up for a League match or being unable to continue to referee a match, the senior touch judge shall replace the referee, and the home Club shall appoint a suitable replacement touch judge, who should in any event be there to act as 4th official. In the event of only one Touch Judge turns up then the Home Club shall appoint a suitable person to act as Touch Judge. In the event of no Touch Judges being appointed by the Branch then each club shall appoint a suitable person to act as Touch Judge. In the event of this happening "flagging" by touch judges shall cease to operate.



- 17.4 When a League match is postponed or abandoned, it shall be played or replayed later in the season at the earliest appropriate date, such date to be decided by the National Competitions' Committee or its nominee. In circumstances where this is not possible, the National Competitions' Committee shall determine the outcome.
- 17.5 The home club shall nominate a 4th official prior to kick off. Match day documents must be handed to the referee post-match.
- 17.6 The referee after each match shall send to the Women's Coordinator (or upload to rugby connect) the detailed result of the match and the team lists for both Clubs along with the 4<sup>th</sup> Official Form. The name or names of players or replacements deemed to be "dual status" players shall be indicated as such on the team list.
- 17.7 Under Law 10 of the Laws of the Game the referee may caution an offending player that she will be sent off if she repeats the offence. This he/she will signify by producing a yellow card. Any complaint to a yellow card shall be notified by the player to the Rugby Competition Manager within one week of the date such yellow card was issued. If a player receives three yellow cards for foul play over a number of League matches in any given season, she shall be required to attend a meeting of the IRFU Disciplinary Committee at which she may receive a suspension.
- 18 Players Sent Off the Field of Play or Cited**
- 18.1 Players sent off or cautioned under these Regulations or cited in League matches shall be dealt with under Regulation 5 of the IRFU Regulations.  
<https://www.irishrugby.ie/irfu/laws-regulations/>
- 19 Conduct and Responsibility**
- 19.1 Clubs participating in the League are responsible and accountable for the conduct of their players, officials, members and supporters in attendance at League and Cup matches.
- 19.2 Clubs, players, officials, and members shall ensure that;
- 19.2.1 Matches are played in accordance with disciplined and sporting behaviour
- 19.2.2 None of the persons referred to in 19.1 engage in an act or acts of misconduct
- 19.3 For the purposes of the League misconduct shall mean conduct, behaviour or practices on or off the playing enclosure which may bring the game of rugby or the Union into disrepute or may be detrimental to the best interests of the Union or of the game in accordance with the Union Regulation 5.
- 19.4 Breaches of Regulation 19.1, 19.2 and 19.3 shall be dealt with under the Union's Regulation 5.
- 19.5 For the avoidance of doubt a Club or player may be sanctioned for misconduct even if a referee has already penalised one or more of its players for her or their conduct during a match.
- 19.6 Each participating Club shall be represented by registered members of the Club who are eligible pursuant to these regulations. Each Club shall play at full available strength in all matches unless some satisfactory reason is given.
- 19.7 No player may participate in the League while serving a disciplinary sanction imposed by the Union, by a Branch of the Union or by her Club.



## 20 Replacements and Substitutes

- 20.1 Clubs may tog out up to seven additional players, who may act as substitutes or replacements, subject to Law 3 of the Laws of the Game. A team should have five players who can play in front row positions, two of whom can play hooker and three of whom can play prop. For semi-finals and finals of the League, up to eight substitutes are permitted. Should a team choose to have eight replacements, six squad players must be designated as front row forwards, four being props.

For Guidance the following table indicates the numbers of suitably trained and experienced players for the front row when nominating different numbers of players:

Number of Players	Number of suitably trained & experienced players
15 or less	3 players who can play in the front row
16, 17 or 18	4 players who can play in the front row
19, 20, 21 or 22	5 players who can play in the front row
23	6 players who can play in the front row

- 20.2 Rolling substitution laws are applicable up to a maximum of 12 changes.
- 20.3 Scrums will become uncontested if either team cannot field a suitably trained front row or if the referee so orders.
- 20.4 A front row player whose departure has caused uncontested scrums **cannot be replaced**.
- Exception: If the front row players' departure was caused by foul play against them, they have left the field under Recognise and Remove (suspected concussion), or with a blood injury, then that player *may* be replaced.
- 20.5 Should a fixture start with uncontested scrums, the points for that fixture are conceded by the team who could not start with the number of suitably trained and experienced players in the front row.

## 21 Clash of Colours

- 21.1 In the event of a clash of colours, of which the referee is the sole judge, it shall be the responsibility of the home Club to change into a playing strip, which is significantly different in colours from the normal playing strip.

## 22 Team Sheets and List

- 22.1 Electronic team sheets (using the RugbyConnect system) will be in operation for the League.
- 22.2 Prior to the kick-off, each Club shall be required to submit to the referee and the opponent Club its list of starting players and replacements / substitutes, correctly numbered. This list shall include each player's registration number and shall be an electronic team sheet. A player shall wear the jersey whose number corresponds to her number on the team list. The name/s of dual status players and/or replacements / substitutes and players who can play in the front row positions must be indicated by a DS/P/H as appropriate for Prop and Hooker. Failure to comply with this regulation may be the subject of a complaint by the opposing team, or the National Competitions' Committee and shall be dealt with accordingly.

## 23 Playing Enclosure and Technical Zones

- 23.1 The playing enclosure shall be defined preferably by a fence, if not by ropes.



- 23.2 If there is a stand, seats shall be made available for replacements. Two technical zones shall be designated, both on the same side of the pitch, clearly marked in white paint, each nine metres long and three metres wide and not less than two metres from the touchline, one on either side of the halfway line, in which benches shall be placed and a zone shall be allocated to each team. The attendants and replacements shall remain seated within their zone. The referee has the authority to order them out of the playing enclosure if they fail to adhere to this requirement.
- 23.3 Ball team and a limited number of press photographers may also be permitted inside the enclosure.
- 23.4 Prior to kick-off both sets of replacements must be introduced and identified to the 4<sup>th</sup> Official. In the event that a club has more than 5 replacements toggled out for the pre-match warm-up, those that are not in the match-day squad are not permitted to have any contact with the Technical Zone Area without the express permission of the 4<sup>th</sup> Official. Replacements and substitutes shall enter the field of play from the technical zones and be introduced by the replacement touch-judge.
- 23.5 Each team shall nominate to the referee its medical officer, team attendant / physiotherapist and coach. A maximum of four people are permitted in the technical zone in addition to the nominated replacements. The coach cannot act as team attendant who is the only person permitted on the field during the match, and only to attend to an injured player with the exception of 23.7 below. Players requiring water or drinks shall come to the touch line. One of the three TZ personnel who is a nominated medical/physio attendant is permitted to roam along the opposite side line to the Technical Zone but must not interfere with play.
- 23.6 The four nominated personnel in the Technical Zone shall wear identifying bibs as supplied by the IRFU. The TZ manager shall wear a different colour bib and may not enter the field of play.
- 23.7 Each team shall nominate its medical officer who is permitted to attend an injured player when required.
- 23.8 Coaches are precluded from entering the playing enclosure (excluding the technical zone) during the course of a match except at half time when the coach may come on to the field to speak to his team.
- 23.9 Kicking tees may be used by individual kickers.
- 23.10 The home club shall supply touch judge flags.

## **24 Match Balls**

The 'Gilbert Barbarian' ball shall be the official match ball to be used in the League matches.

## **25 Post-Match Meal**

All clubs must provide a hot post-match meal for all home fixtures. Clubs in close proximity may liaise with one another if both decide to forgo this regulation.

## **26 Finance**

26.1 Gate receipts shall belong to the home Club, save in the case of the League Finals.

26.2 The away Club shall be responsible for its own travel and accommodation arrangements and expenses.



26.3 The home Club shall be responsible for all match expenses.

26.4 The Union shall provide financial assistance to Clubs participating in the League. The amount of such financial assistance shall be determined annually by the Union at its sole discretion

**27 Trophies**

Women's All Ireland League winner: Trophy and 30 medals.

**28 Applicable Law**

These regulations shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the Laws of the Republic of Ireland.

**29 Unforeseen Circumstances**

29.1 The NCC shall be entitled to make decisions on all matters not provided for in these regulations.

29.2 No proceedings pursuant to these regulations shall be quashed or held invalid by reason only of any defect, irregularity, omission or other technicality, provided there has been no miscarriage of justice

**30 Medical Provisions**

It is the responsibility of the home club to have a medical officer and qualified first aid persons in attendance at matches. It is strongly recommended that the medical officer is a qualified medical doctor working within their scope of practice. However, in cases where a medical doctor is not available to act as the medical officer on match day, a qualified first aid person may be nominated to act in this role. The qualified first-aid person should be: a Corú-registered (or equivalent) physiotherapist, a certified athletic therapist (ARTI or equivalent), a registered nurse, a paramedic or advanced paramedic. The qualified first-aid person should work within their own scope of practice at all times. It is recommended that designated personnel should be SAFE Rugby trained and present during all club rugby activities.

Teams are recommended to travel with a suitably qualified medical person in their support staff.

**31 League Sponsor**

Clubs participating in the League are responsible to ensure that the League Sponsor's Logo is worn on the right sleeve of the Club jersey when participating in any League match save and except where circumstances have arisen which precludes same, such circumstances to be approved by the Competitions Committee. Clubs shall also comply with IRFU guidelines around sponsorship signage.



## **SCHEDULE FOR PLAY-OFFS 2025/2026 (\*all dates subject to change)**

### **All Ireland League –**

The semi-final will be between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed teams at the end of the season. For the semi-finals, the venue shall be that of the higher ranked team.

Final Sunday 26th April 2026

The following shall apply in the above games if necessary.

- (i) If clubs are tied at full time, extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played.
- (ii) If still tied, the Club who has scored most tries shall be the winner
- (iii) If still tied, the team who scored the 1st try shall be the winner.

If no tries have been scored, the team that scored the first points in the match shall be the winner.

If the final is scoreless, penalty kicks shall be taken to decide the winner.

### **All Ireland League – Conference Cup**

Teams finishing the regular season in positions 5-8 will compete for the Conference Cup which will see the 5<sup>th</sup> placed team playing the 8<sup>th</sup> placed team and the 6<sup>th</sup> placed team playing the 7<sup>th</sup> placed team in two semifinals, the higher ranked team having home advantage.

### **All Ireland League – Promotion/Relegation**

There will be promotion and relegation at the end of the 25/26 season. One team will be promoted from the winners of the 25/26 Provincial Qualifying Leagues. This team will be determined by a playoff (semi-finals and finals) between the four provincial winners with the winner being promoted to the AIL Women's Division 26/27.

For the 2025/26 season, the dates of the Promotional Play off matches will be as follows:

Semi-finals – weekend of 29/30 March. Home club to be determined by a draw.

Finals – weekend of 5/ 6 April. The IRFU will host the finals at a neutral venue.

The Women's All Ireland League regulations shall apply to the Promotion Play offs. Clubs should pay particular attention to the regulations concerning player eligibility, dual status players, team numbers, match day protocols.

The team ranked lowest in the AIL Women's Division at the end of the 25/26 season will be relegated to the Provincial Leagues for the 26/27 season.

### **All Ireland Junior Cup**

The All-Ireland Junior Cup matches will take place as follows:

Junior Cup Quarter Final – Sunday 12 October 2025

Junior Cup Semi Final – Sunday 30 November 2025

Junior Cup Final – Sunday 18 January 2026





## APPENDIX 1

### **Club List of Eligible Players**

**Must be submitted by 23rd September prior to season commencing**

(\*add on extra rows as needed or send an alternative spreadsheet)

Players name and pin number is required for ALL those players playing in your club. There is no need to split players according to position or team they play with. Please do not include retired players. Please return by email to the IRFU Rugby Competition Manager.)

	<b>CLUB</b>	
	<b>SIGNED BY:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>No:</b>	<b>Player's Name</b>	<b>Pin Number</b>
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**APPENDIX 2** (to be submitted in RugbyConnect)

**Formal Acceptance by a Participating Club in Women's AIL**

\_\_\_\_\_ RFC ("the Club") accepts the invitation to take part in the Women's All Ireland League (WAIL) for the season 2025/2026 on the basis of the regulations governing the All Ireland League for this season a copy of which has been provided to the Club. The Club agrees with the Union as defined in the regulations, on its own behalf and on behalf of each member of its team, to observe all regulations and the decisions of the Union, the NCC, the Disciplinary Committee and the Committee of Appeal.

The Club agrees to be bound by the procedures set out in the regulations in respect of the regulations governing the Women's All Ireland League and any other regulations which relate to the WAIL.

The Club accepts that the Union or NCC shall have no liability to the Club arising from any negligence or failure by the Union or the NCC to ensure compliance with these regulations and/or any other regulations which relate to the League or in relation to any other failure in the administration or management of the League.

The Club accepts that the decisions of the Committee of Appeals are final and binding on all parties and shall not be appealed to or reviewed by a court of law.

The Club will ensure that each member of its team is made fully aware of the regulations before the commencement of the League and that each or any member of its team will comply with such regulations.

Should a home pitch be unplayable, clubs must show they have made a genuine effort in obtaining another venue, even if this is a distance from their own club. The emphasis must be on getting the match played and all reasonable endeavours must be demonstrated in doing so, to the satisfaction of the NCC.

**SIGNED for \_\_\_\_\_ R.F.C. for and on behalf of the Club and its Players**

**Name..... (Signature of duly authorised signatory)**

**Print ..... (in block letters)**

**Position in Club: ..... Date: .....**

**Witness Name: .....**

**Witness Signature .....**

**SIGNED on behalf of the Union:**

**Name..... (Signature of duly authorised signatory)**

**Position in Union: ..... Date: .....**

