

Competition Rules 2024

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DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these Rules, the following definitions shall apply:

"Affiliated Union" means a body so named in, or admitted pursuant to, the Rugby. Australia Constitution as being an affiliated union.

"Association" means an organisation that administers a group of clubs for the purposes of governance and regulatory requirements with respect to competitions, events, tournaments and rugby programs.

"Clearance" means the requirement for a currently registered player wishing to register at another Club on the same registration type during the season.

"Codes, Policies and Procedures" means the codes, policies and procedures of Rugby Australia

"Insurer" means the insurance provider of the Australian Rugby Insurance Plan.

"International Union" means a Rugby Union, Rugby Club, or other body based in a foreign nation and affiliated with the National Rugby Union of that nation.

"Competition" means any match played as part of either (i) a structured competition or series including a trial match, a friendly match, or representative match involving a Rugby Body; or (ii) a Sanctioned Event.

"Competition Manager" is the person deemed responsible by the Union for the day to day operational management of the competition.

"Event Organiser" means an organisation authorised to conduct Rugby Union programs, events, tournaments, and/or matches in Australia, pursuant to the Rugby Australia *Event Sanctioning Guidelines*,

"Judiciary" is the Sub Committee as appointed by the Union.

"Laws of the Game" mean the laws of Rugby as published by World Rugby, including any variations authorised by World Rugby or Rugby Australia.

"Management Committee" is the committee appointed by the Union to oversee the management of the competition.

"Member Union" means a Member Union in membership of the Queensland Country Rugby Union.

"Participant" means a Player, match official, selector, coach, trainer, manager, team official, or an individual involved in the organisation, administration or promotion of Rugby including a director, officer or employee of a Rugby Body.

"Player" means a player of the game of Rugby.



"QCRU" means the Queensland Country Rugby Union

"QRU" means the Queensland Rugby Union

"Registered" means a Player and/or non-playing Participant who has completed effective registration and paid all applicable fees and levies.

"Regulation(s)" means the World Rugby and Rugby Australia Regulations, as amended from time to time.

"REGION / SUB UNION" means is the affiliate / body that is a participant of the competition

"Rugby" means rugby union football.

"Rugby Australia" or "Rugby AU" means Rugby Australia Ltd.

"Rugby Body" means Rugby Australia, any Member Union or Affiliated Union of Rugby Australia, or any Rugby Union, Club or other body in membership with or affiliated with Rugby Australia, a Member Union or an Affiliated Union.

"Rugby Club" or "Club" means any club affiliated with a Member Union or an affiliated Rugby Body, that is a participant of the competition.

"Rugby Xplorer" means Rugby Australia's online registration and competition management system.

"Rules" means the National Model Competition Rules and the Competition Rules of the Specific Union.

"Sanctioned Event" means an event, tournament, and/or matches conducted by an authorised Event Organiser that have received formal approval.

"Specific Union" means the governing body of the competition.

"WR" means World Rugby.



1 PREAMBLE

These Rules set out the minimum standards and procedures that apply to Competitions conducted under the jurisdiction of Rugby Australia and its Member Unions.

This Competition, as with all competitions played under the auspices of QUEENSLAND RUGBY UNION (QRU), is a community competition.

All Participants in the Competition are to be made aware of the <u>WR Playing Charter</u>; which includes the:

- (a) <u>Principles of the Game</u>
- (b) <u>Principles of the Laws</u>

All Participants are to be made aware that by virtue of the acceptance of a team into this competition the match organiser e.g. QCRU participating Member Unions, Invitees and their respective Participants subject themselves and agree to be bound by the Rules of the Competition.

2 LAWS OF THE GAME

All games will be played in terms of the <u>WR Laws of the Game</u>, including any of the following variations:

Under 19 Variations

(a) <u>Rugby AU Under 19 Variations</u>

Rugby AU Kids Pathway U6 to U12

10-a-side Variations

7-a-side Variations

Rugby AU Touch 7s Laws

Rugby AU Veteran Rugby Laws

3 GOVERNANCE OF THE COMPETITION

All matches in the Competition shall be played in accordance with the <u>WR Regulations of the</u> <u>Game</u> and Rugby Australia Regulations, Codes and Policies etc. (see section 4 below). In addition, Rugby AU publishes '<u>Game Management Guidelines</u>' annually that have been prepared to assist Unions in the administration and playing of the game in domestic competitions within Australia.



RUGBY AUSTRALIA CODES AND POLICIES

The effective governance and administration of rugby requires adherence to a wide range of codes and policies around safety & welfare, integrity, inclusion, member protection & child safety and privacy etc. Therefore, all matches shall be played in accordance with all <u>Rugby AU</u> <u>Codes, Policies and Procedures</u>:

Safety & Welfare

Rugby must be as safe, inclusive, and fair as possible. Rugby Australia has several policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring that rugby is safe to play and is enjoyable for all participants. Concussion Management.

- a. Serious Injuries.
- b. Welfare Initiatives.
- c. Player Dispensation.
- d. Match Day Safety; and
- e. First Aid medical.

Child Safety

Rugby Australia is committed to ensuring that rugby is a safe environment for children and young people.

- 1. Child Safe Framework and Guidelines.
- 2. Reporting.
- 3. Working with Children Checks.

Integrity

Rugby Australia's Codes, Policies and Procedures have been developed to provide a safe, fair and inclusive sporting environment for all rugby participants in Australia. This includes the following:

- a. *Australian Rugby Disciplinary Rules* these have been developed to ensure a consistent approach to foul play, citing and judicial hearings. (please follow the attached Sheet)
 - 1. Link Disciplinary Rules
- b. *Anti-Doping Code* all participants are bound by the Anti-Doping Code and must be aware of the requirements.
- c. Supplement Policy.
- d. *Code of Conduct* provides a set of standards that everyone involved in rugby is required to comply with to ensure that the image and integrity of the sport is protected. The Code also outlines the procedures for reporting, complaint handling and investigations of any alleged breaches;
- e. *Medical Policy* provides information on the use of medications, medical procedures and measures to protect the health and welfare for semi- professional and professional players;
- f. Member Protection Policy ensures that all Participants feel included and safe in rugby; and
- g. *Anti-Corruption and Betting Policy* applies to all Participants and they need to be aware of its requirements.
- h. Additionally, the following documents are included as part of these Competition Rules:
 - (i) Inclusion Policy;



- (ii) Safety and Participation Policy;
- (iii) Registration Regulations.
- (iv) Registration Terms and Conditions; and
- (v) Smart Rugby Policy.
- i. Any concerns that arise as a result of an alleged breach of any of the above provisions can be reported at <u>Reporting a Concern</u>.

5 NATIONAL STANDARD COMPETITION RULES

Registration and Match Day – Rugby Xplorer

- **a.** It is a requirement of Rugby Australia that all Players, Non-Playing Members and Match Officials are registered via Rugby Australia's <u>Rugby Xplorer System</u>;
- **b.** It is a requirement of Rugby Australia that the Rugby Xplorer Competition Management System (CMS) is also used for all sub-Union Competition matches, both Senior and Junior.

Draw

- **a.** The Competition will be conducted in accordance with a schedule of matches drawn up by the Management Committee prior to the start of the playing season and varied as necessary from time to time.
- b. Where possible, all matches in all competitions are to be played in an ascending order i.e. lowest to highest. In the event of matches in the same round being played on different days e.g. rescheduled matches due to wet weather, the selection of players must be the same as if all matches in the same round were being played on the same day

Match Team Lists, Scoring and Stats

a. It is the responsibility of both teams to ensure that:

- (i) All players and team officials (where required by the Competition) must be selected in their respective team list for the match;
- (ii) All details of point scorers are to be recorded;
- (iii) All players who have either been temporarily suspended (yellow card), sent from the field of play (red card) or have a suspected concussion (blue card) must have all their details recorded;
- (iv) All movements of players following an injury (blood or otherwise) or for tactical reasons shall be recorded (where required by the Competition);
- (v) The match day scoring, and stats can be entered by ONE team manager for BOTH teams, or EACH team manager for their OWN team. It is also permissible to have an independently appointed ground manager that does the scoring for both teams.
- (vi) The referee is to confirm the result of the match by confirming this on the Match Day App in the presence of both teams; and
- (vii) All Teams must enter the team list, scoring and stats of all matches online via the Match Day App. PLEASE NOTE: Competitions reserve the right to require this information earlier than this timeline if necessary.
- (viii) For the purposes of selection for a Queensland Country Team, a list of all players by position/ jersey designation x 2 sheets of paper must be produced to the Coaches & or Selectors no later than 20 mins before the commencement of play.



- **b.** Information entered must include:
 - (i) All players' details including substitutes, i.e. Full numbering visible.
 - a. Team Officials' details
 - b. Result of the match;
 - c. Point scorers;
 - d. Tries;
 - e. Conversions;
 - f. Penalties;
 - g. Drop Goals;
 - h. Penalty tries;
 - i. All players temporarily suspended (yellow card);
 - j. All players sent from the field of play (red card);
 - k. Players who have a suspected concussion (blue card).
- c. Information entered may include:
- (i) Player's movements for injury (blood or otherwise) or tactical reasons.

PLEASE NOTE: Teams failing to follow the procedures are liable to receive penalties in relation to Competition points.

d. Competition Points may also be deducted as determined and documented by the Union for the competition, e.g., a player not added to the team list that played in a match.

Forfeits

- Each match forfeited by a Team will be regarded as having been won by the opposing Team on the day on which the match, but for such a forfeit, would have been played. The penalty for a forfeit will be the loss of Competition points, up to a maximum of two, no points for, and the awarding of twenty- eight match points against.
- **b.** A Team that forfeits two games in the same grade will be issued a *Show Cause Notice* to explain the reasons why its team should remain in that grade.
- **c.** In the case of a Team withdrawing a team(s) from the Competition, match points ("for and against") in all matches of such team(s) shall not be counted and any Competition points shall be cancelled.
- **d.** The Management Committee may impose further penalties on Clubs for withdrawing teams from the Competition.

Postponed / Abandoned Matches

- a. If the venue of a match or matches is unavailable for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the home club to advise the Competition Manager immediately that the ground is considered unplayable or doubtful of being playable. The Management Committee, after consultation with the clubs involved, shall direct how the abandoned match will be dealt with.
- b. In the event of a match having to be abandoned for any reason beyond the control of the match officials, the following procedure shall apply:
 - 1. Where a match has been abandoned during the first half, the result may be declared as a draw and no points for or against will be awarded, or the match may be replayed at a time and venue as determined by the Competition



Manager in his/her absolute discretion.

- 2. Where a match has been abandoned during half time or during the second half, the result at the time of the abandonment will be the final result.
- c. In the event of a match having to be abandoned for any reason involving unacceptable behaviour on the part of players or any other persons, or any other similar reason, the Management Committee shall determine if any penalties will be imposed on the competing teams.
- It should be noted that any such action taken under these Rules shall not prevent (and may run in parallel with) other action that is deemed necessary under the Disciplinary Rules, Code of Conduct or other relevant WR or Rugby Australia regulations, codes, policies or rules etc.

Playing Field

- (a) Host Unions hosting matches played under these rules shall comply with the <u>RA Medical and First Aid Requirements</u>
- (b) With respect to medical requirements, both teams are responsible for ensuring that matches are not played if the all the requirements relating to medical care are not in place. Reference should be made to the *Rugby Australia Medical and Safety Recommendations* for further information.
- (c) For all Competition matches the host club shall be responsible for ensuring that the field of play is correctly marked in accordance with the WR Laws of the Game.
- (d) Goal Posts
 - 1. All Goal posts within the playing enclosure must be padded.
- (e) Playing Enclosure
 - 1. Entry to the playing enclosure must be restricted by a fence, barricade or rope at a minimum of five meters, where practicable, from the playing area perimeter.
 - 2. Persons authorised to enter the Playing Enclosure ("authorised persons") are as follows:
 - I. Medically Qualified Persons/Sports Trainer maximum two per team
 - II. The Teams
 - III. Appointed match officials
 - IV. Ground Marshalls
 - V. Water carriers maximum two per team (three allowed in 7s)
 - VI. A maximum of 4 ball persons
 - 3. All Authorised Persons permitted to enter the playing enclosure must have some distinguishing mark/bib e.g. high vis vest.
 - (f) Technical Zones where Competition matches require technical





zones, two will be provided within the playing enclosure on the same side of the pitch, on either side of the halfway line and outside the field of play.

- 4. Personnel permitted in the technical zone differs between the XVs and 7s game format.
 - XVs Maximum of four persons are allowed in the technical zone. Each team is allowed two medically qualified persons and two water carriers.
 - II. 7s maximum of ten persons allowed in the technical zone. Each team is allowed a coach, team manager, medical person and five reserve players. One additional person who is either a medical or a coaching member of the team and whose responsibility has previously been notified to the ground marshal.
- 5. Roles of personnel in the technical zones.
 - I. Medical personnel may enter the field of play in accordance with the Laws of the Game at any time a player is injured.
 - II. Water may only be taken on the field during stoppages in play for injuries in the playing area and when a try has been scored.
 - III. The water carriers are not permitted in the playing area during penalty kicks at goal.
 - IV. The water carriers must always remain in the technical zone unless they enter the playing area to provide water or when ONE person enters to provide a kicking tee to the kicker for a penalty kick.
 - V. The water carriers must keep the water bottles and carriers with them, and not left in an untidy state within the technical zone.
 - VI. Players may come to the touchline adjacent to the technical zone to receive water.
 - VII. Water bottles must not be thrown on the field of play.
- 6. Personnel outside the technical zone
 - I. The replacement bench and the location of the coaches should, wherever possible, be outside the playing enclosure (except in the 7s game format).
 - II. If replacements want to warm up and there is no area available outside the playing enclosure, they may warm up in the opposition in-goal area but must not use balls in their warmup.

Restrictions for authorised persons

- I. A sports trainer is a person from each team who is responsible for immediately attending to a player who appears to be injured, and who provides water to the players.
- II. Authorised persons do not include a coach or team manager with the following exceptions:
 - a. Where the nominated coach or team manager is required to fulfil one of the listed roles in paragraph 5.8(e)2. No coaching or technical instruction can take place while fulfilling one of the listed roles.



b. Where the nominated coach or team manager is part of a Kids Pathway U6-U9 match.

Authorised Persons

- (a) Process
 - 1. It is intended that the Club nominates persons to become. "Authorised Persons".
 - I. No one other than the Authorised Persons shall be permitted in the playing enclosure during a match.
 - II. An Authorised Person (except Ball Persons) must satisfy the minimum accreditation requirements appropriate to their role.
 - III. All Authorised Persons entering the playing enclosure must be registered on Rugby Xplorer – their details may be checked on Rugby Xplorer.
 - IV. The home team shall appoint a ground marshal who shall ensure that this requirement is complied with, and the ground marshal shall report any breach to the Match Committee.
 - V. Authorised Persons must conduct themselves in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct for and, as part of the accreditation process, they will be required to sign an acknowledgement that they will adhere to the expected standards of conduct.



Schedule of Penalties

- (a) A first breach of any of the Competition Rule may include any or all of the following:
 - 1. Warning.
 - 2. Loss of Competition points;
 - 3. Issue of a Show Cause Notice;
 - 4. Monetary Fine; and
 - 5. Expulsion from the Competition.
- (b) A second or subsequent breach of the Competition Rules may include any or all the following:
 - 1. Warning;
 - 2. Loss of Competition point(s);
 - 3. Issue of a Show Cause Notice;
 - 4. Monetary Fine; and
 - 5. Expulsion from the Competition

Protests

- (a) All protests must be made in writing and signed by either the club President or club Secretary;
- (b) Protests must be received by the Competition Manager by the close of business on the number of business day/s I suggest No more than 3 working Days after the alleged breach of the Competition Rules;
- (c) All protests must specify the particular Competition Rule that has been allegedly breached.
- (d) All witness statements must be tendered on a signed statutory declaration form.
- (e) The decision on the protests shall be determined by the Competition Manager and such decision will be notified to the parties by no later than close of business on the number of business day/s I suggest No more than 3 working Days after the alleged breach of the Competition Rules.
- (f) The Competition Manager shall determine if a club has breached the competition rules on the civil standard of proof (i.e. more likely than not). The Competition Manager will then recommend to the Management Committee the penalties that should be imposed. The Management Committee shall make the final determination in this regard.
- (g) If the club is not satisfied with this decision, it has the right to appeal to the Union Judicial Committee. Appeals from the decision of the Management Committee must be received by the Competition Manager by no later than close of business on the number of business days I suggest No more than 3working Days after the decision of the Management Committee is advised to the relevant club. The Judicial Committee shall be entitled to consider whether or not a breach of the Rules has occurred and/or the appropriateness of the penalty and shall have the discretion to vary the decision if they see fit and impose any other penalty as set on in the Rules. The Judicial Committee has the sole discretion as to how it will deal with any appeal.



Extension of Time

(a) Notwithstanding any of the time limits stated in these Rules, the Competition Manager may in special circumstances exercise their sole discretion to allow reasonable extensions of time if considered to be in the interests of justice to do so.

Disqualified, unqualified or suspended person/s

(a) it shall be the responsibility of each Region/Team to ensure that no disqualified, unqualified or suspended person(s) take part in any match.

Impact of COVID-19: Competition Rules

(a) Competition Managers are encouraged to implement the Game On Principles within their Competition Rules in the event matches are impacted by COVID- 19.

LAW AND REGULATION CLARIFICATIONS

6 LAW AND REGULATION CLARIFICATIONS

Law 3 - Number of Players – The Team (number of replacement / substitute players).

Rolling Replacements - World Rugby Law 3.34 is mandatory across all domestic rugby played in Australia:

- (a) Unlimited rolling replacements applies to all rugby aged U16s and below.
- (b) Rolling replacements, with a maximum of 12 movements, applies to all Senior Rugby Sides.
- (c) Replacements due to blood injury, concussion, or injury due to foul play do not count in the designated number of movements.
- (d) Law 3.27 i.e. Temporary Replacement Head Injury Assessment (HIA), **DOES NOT APPLY AT ANY LEVEL.**
- (e) N.B. Unions may submit a request to the Law Advisory Group to play standard Law 3 (at any level of the game). Requests must be submitted on the Local Law Submission form.

Uncontested Scrums

 It is recognised that on occasion and due to circumstances, such as unavailability of players starting the match, or that an injury or incident during a match may make contested scrums not possible. Therefore, the following Laws are applicable:

I. Law 3.13 – 3.20 (inclusive)

N.B. Law 3.17 does not apply to those Competitions that do not nominate the number of players or nominate 15 players.

- (b) If circumstances determine that the match should have uncontested scrums, Member Unions may determine whether any penalties are to be imposed in relation to that match and may have regard to the penalties referred to in paragraph 5.11 above.
- (c) World Rugby Law 3.16 allows Rugby Australia to implement, at its discretion, a mechanism to discourage uncontested scrums by having a team play short



of players if they cause uncontested scrums. **Note**. This is not applicable to Kids Pathway laws. Any Union or Affiliate planning to implement this Law must use the approved language set out below in their Competition Rules:

- (d) There must be sufficient players to play in the front row to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement hooker is required, and on the first occasion that a replacement prop forward is required, the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums.
- (e) Should a team not be able to meet this obligation for any reason during a game, or should a team not have three suitably trained front row players to commence a game with contested scrums, then the team concerned must play with one player fewer than would otherwise be allowed.
- (f) If, subsequently, a qualified front rower becomes available so that scrums can be contested then that player will be allowed onto the field and the team may return to the appropriate complement of players.
- (g) If neither team has suitably trained front row players to start a game with contested scrums, the above arrangements do not apply to the game, even if qualified front rowers subsequently become available.

Regulation 4 – Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement

- (a) International Clearance
 - (i) The international Player Clearances Policy within Rugby is set out in WR Regulation 4.6.1 and provides:
 - 1. A Player leaving their current Union to play in another Union shall not be registered or eligible to participate in competitions organised, recognised or sanctioned by that new Union until they have an endorsed International Clearance.
 - 2. Therefore, Players wishing to play within another International Union are required to complete the Rugby Australia <u>International Clearance Form</u>.
 - 3. For or Incoming International Clearances (i.e. Players arriving in Australia), please contact the Union you are currently registered with to understand their International Clearance process and obtain, complete and return their current application form.
 - (b) Domestic Clearance

This relates to club-to-club player movements for currently registered players. It is a requirement for a currently registered Player registering in the same season to another club for the same or different registration type. Restricted at XVs, 10s, 7s and Veterans registration types in competition rugby only. The player cannot register unless clearance approval is granted by their 'from' Club and Association



SPECIFIC UNION REQUIREMENTS

- **7** SPECIFIC UNION REQUIREMENTS
- 7.1 Number of Players
 - a. Each team may carry a squad of 25 players across the tournament and is able to select 25 players for each match which include the provisions set out in 6 (b) of these Tournament Rules.
- 7.2 Match Balls
 - a. Size 5 match balls will be supplied by the QCRU.
- 7.3 Draw
 - a. The competition will be conducted in accordance with a schedule of matches drawn up by the management committee prior to the start of the playing season and varied as necessary from time to time.
- 7.4 Competition Points
 - a. Points for a win four (4)
 - b. Points for a draw- two (2)
 - c. Points for loss by seven points or less One (1)
 - d. Points for scoring three (3) tries or more than three (3) tries than your opponent One (1)
- 7.5 Duration of Matches
 - a. All matches are to be played in accordance with the laws of the game, specifically Law 5 and the appropriate Under 19 variations and Juniors.

Grade	Time	Injury Time	Half Time (on Field)
Senior Men Senior Women	2 x 40 minutes 2 x 40 minutes	Yes	5 minutes
U19 Men U18 Women	2 x 40 minutes 2 x 40 minutes	No	5 minutes
U13B U14B U16B	1 x 25 minutes 1 x 20 minutes ** teams have 2 games	No	5 minutes
U14G U16G	1 x 30 minutes 1 x 30 minutes	No	5 minutes

- b. Any team not prepared to commence a match within five (5) Minutes after the designated kick off time shall forfeit the match (as determined by the referee).
- 7.6 Eligibility of Players and Coaches/Team Officials
 - a. To participate in the QCRU Championships the following provisions must be met
 - I. Players who have played 3 or more premier grade games in the Queensland Premier Rugby or Shute Shield completion in the 12 months prior to competition can apply for dispensation in writing to the Country Rugby Union board.
 - II. Players must be registered to a sub union affiliated to Queensland Country Rugby Union.
 - III. Queensland Country Rugby Union representative teams will be selected from players



representing the 3 affiliated Queensland Country Rugby Union regions at the Championship.

- IV. The Players that have been selected for the Queensland Country Barbarians Team will also be available for selection for Queensland Country Teams.
- V. Central Queensland, North Queensland and South Queensland are responsible for the selection criteria and process in their regions.

7.7 Competition

- a. The participating teams: for the 2024 Queensland Country Championships are as follows.
 - 1. North Queensland (NQ)
 - 2. Central Queensland (CQ)
 - 3. South Queensland (SQ)
 - 4. Queensland Country Barbarians (QCRUB)
 - 5. Gold Coast
 - 6. Darling Downs
 - 7. Sunshine Coast
- 7.8 Approval and Amendments
 - a. All Approval, Amendment and Notification of the Competition Rules will be communicated via email to all Members Unions at time of change in status. Match Team lists, Scoring & Stats
 - b. Print and confirm the team lists with each Team Manager on Rugby Xplorer. Team Managers are to update (if necessary) and sign these team lists 1 hour prior to kick-off and then distribute (in hard copy or via radio) to: Match Officials
 - 1. Ground announcers.
 - 2. Media box
 - 3. Host broadcaster (for televised games only)
 - 4. Citing Commissioner
 - 5. Doping Control Officer Operations staff (Match Manager to keep originals)
 - 6. Relevant Queensland Country Selection Officials
- 7.9 Ladder Position sorting Options
 - a. The competition tables will be sorted by Points Ratio i.e., Total Number of Points/Matches Played.
 - b. In the event of two or more teams being equal on points ratio for any position the higher placed team will be determined on the following basis:
 - 1. Basis of the best ratio of points scored for and against; then if not resolved.
 - 2. The team that has scored the most number of tries in competition rounds; then if not resolved.
 - 3. The matter shall be determined by a toss of a coin.
- 7.10 Extension of Time
 - a. Notwithstanding any of the time limits stated in these rules, the COMPETITION MANAGER may in special circumstances exercise his discretion to allow reasonable extensions of time.
 - b. In the event of two or more teams being equal on points ratio for any position the higher placed team will be determined on the following basis:



- 1. Basis of the best ratio of points scored for and against; then if not resolved;
- 2. The team that has scored the most number of tries in competition rounds; then if not resolved;
- 3. The matter shall be determined by a toss of a coin.