

1. THE COMPETITION

- 1.1 The Lancashire Junior Rugby Challenge is administered by the Junior Competitions Committee of the Lancashire County RFU and its Secretary through the Mini and Junior Committee (the Organisers).
- 1.2 The Junior Rugby Challenge is designed to encourage the maximum interest in the development of Rugby Union played in clubs throughout Lancashire. The aim is to encourage 'More People. More Teams and More Enjoyment' in rugby.
- 1.3 The competition structure is to be known as the Junior Rugby Challenge.
- 1.4 Every endeavour will be made by the Organisers to ensure that the competition structure, announcement of fixtures, reporting of matches and recording of results are referred to by the above name in all articles, publications, handbooks, journals and websites, together with whatever logo or other device the Organisers, in conjunction with any sponsors, shall deem it appropriate to use.
- 1.5 All participating clubs are expected to follow the same guidelines when referring to the Junior Rugby Challenge structure in their locality in newspapers, web sites or other publicity, fixture lists, advertising, match results and reports.
- 1.6 Trophies will be awarded to the Cup, Plate, Vase and, where appropriate, Bowl winners in each age group. It is the responsibility of the winning club to return the trophy to the Organisers, cleaned and engraved, not later than 4 weeks prior to the date of the Plate and Vase finals as specified in the Lancashire Playing Calendar.

2. COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Entry to the Junior Rugby Challenge is open to Under-14s through to Under-16s for all clubs that are members of Lancashire County RFU.
- 2.2 All players taking part in the Junior Rugby Challenge must be under their respective age at 24.00hrs on 31 August of the relevant year.
- 2.3 **Every player MUST be both a signed up member of their club and also registered with the Lancashire County RFU through the Young Player Registration Scheme before taking part in any Challenge match.**

Lancashire County RFU and the Competition Organisers expect all participating clubs to adhere to the [Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice](#)

- 2.4 RFU Young Player Registration forms must be completed and entered on GMS by the clubs registration officer for every squad member.
- 2.5 Players **MUST NOT** play in more than one match on any challenge date.
- 2.6 Any player who takes part in any round of the competition for one Club and thereafter transfers to another club is prohibited from playing for his new club in any further Challenge matches. Where the Organisers become aware of any breach of this rule they may, at their discretion, award the match in question to the non-offending team.
- 2.7 A player may play up one age grade provided that dispensation has been granted by the Lancashire RFU as detailed in [RFU Regulation 15 – Age Grade Rugby](#) a copy of which is appended to this document. A copy of the completed dispensation form must be carried at all times by the player's coach/manager.

3. Challenge Organisation

- 3.1 The Junior Rugby Challenge shall consist of two stages: a Pool Stage followed by a Knock-out Stage
- 3.2 Pool Stage
 - 3.2.1 Four Qualifying Pools (Q. Pools) are established at each of the three age groups (Under-14, Under-15, Under-16) into which all entrants are placed based on their performance in the previous season or by such other means as the Organisers consider appropriate. The method of seeding and the conduct of any draw will be at the discretion of the Organisers,
 - 3.2.2 Clubs will play each other within each Q. Pool on a 'Home or Away basis as determined by the Organisers on specified days (see 4.1.1 below). If a Q Pool match is to be cancelled by the 'home club', the match will be played 'away' if circumstances allow it. If circumstances do not allow the transfer of venue both sides will gain the points for a 'No Result'.
 - 3.2.3 Points will be awarded based on the results of Q. Pool matches as follows:
 - (i) Win: 5 points
 - (ii) Draw: 3 points

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- (iii) Loss with a Bonus Point (for margin of 10 points or less): 2 points
 - (iv) Loss: 1 point
 - (v) Match not played: 2 points to both sides
 - (vi) Failure to play: 0 points.
- 3.2.4 Penalties (Point Deductions) will be applied as follows:
- (i) Failure to supply RFU numbers on the Match Report Form: 0.25 points per player (max 2:pts)
 - (ii) Failure, by the Winning side or home drawing side, to return the completed, signed Match Report Form by email: 2 points
 - (iii) Publishing, or allowing to be Published, a match score with a margin of more than 30 points: up to 2 points at the discretion of the Organisers
- 3.2.5 The overall position in the Q. Pools will be determined by:
- (i) points accumulated based on the match result of each game (including bonus points gained or penalty points deducted), adjusted for any side not fulfilling their fixtures.
 - (ii) Scored points difference (points for less against) subject to 30-point margin, adjusted for a side not fulfilling fixtures,
 - (iii) If teams remained tied, the result between the two sides and finally, if the matter is still unresolved the total tries, then conversions, then drop goals, then penalties.
 - (iv) If still tied, the Organisers shall determine the respective positions by the way of a tossed coin.
- 3.2.6 The higher placed side will gain a home draw in the next stage of the tournament (Quarter Final) stage.
- 3.2.7 At the end of the Q. Pools stage twenty four teams having been seeded into pools will advance to the three competitions (see 3.3.2 below) depending on their pool and position in the pool. Any side trying to take an unfair advantage of their position to enter a different knock out competition may be disqualified from the whole competition.

3.3 Knock-out Stage

- 3.3.1 The Knock-out Stage shall consist of a Cup, Plate and Vase competition for each age group. Seeding of clubs into these competitions shall be at the discretion of the Organisers.
- 3.3.2 A Bowl competition will be run where there are sufficient teams (over the 24) in that age group.
- 3.3.3 A Development Cup will be run for teams knocked out at QF Stages. The Organisers will make a draw for the Development Cup, Plate and Vase matches depending on the number of teams going forward into the Development competition.
- 3.3.4 In the event of a draw at full time, no extra time may be played in any match. The result shall be decided:
- (i) by the team scoring the most tries, or
 - (ii) if still equal. the team scoring the most conversions will progress, or
 - (iii) if still equal, the team scoring the most penalties will progress. or
 - (iv) if still equal, the visiting team shall be declared the winner.
 - (v) In any Final, in the event of a draw at full-time after applying i, ii and iii above, the trophy will be shared jointly.
- 3.3.5 The venue and date for the Finals Day of the Challenge Cup and County Plate and County Vase Competitions will be agreed by the Organisers and notified to clubs during the season.
- 3.3.6 Quarter and Semi Final matches must be played on the dates specified by the Organisers unless re-arranged to a later date by the Organisers because of bad weather (see 4.1.1 below). Where it is necessary to re-arrange a match it may be reversed by the Organisers to the 'Away' ground, with the original Home team still being recognised as the Home team in all respects.
- 3.3.7 Except in exceptional circumstances, any team failing to fulfil a scheduled knockout stage fixture may be removed from the Challenge and the opposing team will be judged to have won that round of the Challenge and progress to the next round.

4. Conduct of Competition Matches

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Competition matches must be played on the dates specified at the beginning of the season in the Lancashire Structured Season and the fixture list, with no alternative dates being allowed, subject to very exceptional circumstances. Where a club feels that such exceptional circumstances apply, application should be made to the Organisers for specific authority to re-arrange the fixture.
- 4.1.2 If the Organisers determine that any side deliberately fails to play, or fails to continue to play, a fixture for whatever reason, all points from that match shall be forfeited.
- 4.1.3 In the event of adverse weather conditions on the day of the match, the referee's decision as to the starting of the match or its continuation shall be final.
- 4.1.4 All matches, other than the Final, will cease after reaching a **30 point margin**, and reformed development games are encouraged. A development game will involve both teams making sure that fringe players are more prominent wherever possible, mixing and evening the teams up, players playing out of position, etc, recognising that the front row rules must still be observed.

4.2 Player Identification

- 4.2.1 All players or their coaches must be in possession of a valid RFU Registration card issued under the RFU Young Player Registration Scheme, incorporating a photograph of the player, the players club, and the date of birth along with the players RFU Number.
- 4.2.2 Team managers, coaches or administrators are required as part of the pre-match routine to carefully inspect the registration cards of their opponents. A challenge on a player must be made at the time of the match and not afterwards.

- 4.2.3 Notwithstanding the provisions in 4.2.2 above, during or immediately after a competition match all registration cards should be made available for inspection by opposing coaches, managers or administrators and the Organisers or other County officials.
- 4.2.4 Except in exceptional circumstances, a team failing to produce a correct, valid registration card (or sheet containing multiple cards) for each player before a match may forfeit the match and any other further participation or that season.
- 4.2.5 In the case of player injury or unavailability, Challenge matches may be played using 'uncontested scrums' should at any time a side be unable to field an experienced or trained front row. The match referee MUST be informed before kick-off of a player shortage and the match report form noted accordingly.
- 4.3 Match Reporting
- 4.3.1 Match Report Forms must be fully completed on the day of the game.
- 4.3.2 The following details should be completed before the start of the match:
- (i) Home Team, Away Team, Age Group, Match Number (by reference to published fixtures list) and the breakdown of the full match result.
 - (ii) The full squad, both starting and replacements, with the RFU registration number (last 4 digits will suffice). All front row players (see 4.6.4 below) shall be identified as such and noted on the Match Report Form prior to kick-off.
 - (iii) The names of both Coaches or managers responsible for completion.
 - (iv) The details of the match official in charge of the game.
- 4.3.3 Following the match the analysis of the score shall be added for both teams against each player, with red and yellow cards indicated.
- 4.3.4 The result should be emailed to the address given on the Match Report Form by 6pm Monday following the match. The Match Report Form(s) must be attached to this e-mail in PDF format.

- 4.3.5 Both managers/Coaches of each team are responsible for texting the result to the number specified on the Match Report Form no later than 6pm on the day of the match.
- 4.3.6 Failure to report a result as described in 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 above will incur a penalty. During the Pool Stage the penalty will be 2 points. During the Knock-out Stage the penalty may be forfeiture of the match at the discretion of the Organisers.
- 4.4 Playing Strip - Colours
- 4.4.1 In the event of a clash 'The Home Team' will change their playing strip.
- 4.5 Referees and Discipline
- 4.5.1 The Organisers recognise that there may not be sufficient Society Referees to officiate at all fixtures throughout the Q. Pool stages. It is good practice to seek Society Referees for the Quarter Final and Semi Final stages in all ages although due to the shortage of referees this cannot be made an absolute rule. Home teams should seek help from away teams if they are having difficulty in finding Society referees for Quarter Finals and Semi Finals. Where no Society referee is available a referee holding the Entry Level Referee Certificate will be acceptable.
- 4.5.2 The responsibility for arranging the referee for all matches lies with the home club. If it is not possible for the home club to appoint a Society Referee or an accredited Foundation Referee the opposition must be notified at least 24 hours in advance of the game and given opportunity to supply a referee.
- 4.5.3 The obligation to provide a suitable alternative official remains with the home club.
- 4.5.4 A player sent off during a game by a match official must be notified on the Match Report Form and will be subject to any punishment imposed by the player's club.
- 4.5.5 The Organisers may request from a non-society match official, whose contact details must be added to the MATCH Report Form, a report of any sending off, the responsibility for this contact being ultimately with the home club.

- 4.5.6 Clubs are expected to provide a responsible person to act as touch judge or assistant referee (TJ) in all matches and to assist the referee in matters affecting the touchline only. Referees are requested to take the advice of a club TJ only on decisions relating to the touch line or the kicking of a conversion or penalty at posts.

4.6 Playing Regulations

- 4.6.1 Teams will be of 15-a-side with up to 7 replacements, to be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game (Law 3: Number of Players) as published by the IRB and the Age Grade Regulations as published by the RFU. All players named in the squad on the Match Report Form must play at least some part in the game¹ except on occasions when a player is taken ill just before the game or injured in the warm up.
- 4.6.2 On the grounds of safety, player development and fairness, if a team is unable to field a full team 15 players, the opposition will be restricted to that number (**minimum of 10**). The squad from which replacements may be drawn remains at 22.
- 4.6.3 All matches will allow the use of 'rolling substitutes' (the replacement of players during the match) providing permission has been sought from the Referee and the replacement takes place during a stoppage in play.
- 4.6.4 Every team must include on the pitch, at all times, players who are recognised and have trained as front row players, and are used to playing Loose Head, Hooker and Tight Head to enable the formation of a front row.
- 4.6.5 If a team names 20 or more players, it must have at least 6 players who can play in the front row to allow adequate cover. If not, it is the responsibility of the coach to advise the referee of the situation.
- 4.6.6 Where, through injury or otherwise, a side is unable to continue with recognised and trained front rows it is the responsibility of the coach to inform the referee. The match will continue with 'uncontested scrums'.

¹ In line with emerging RFU thinking, the Organisers would prefer that each named player should take part in at least half a game.

- 4.6.7 Match times and ball sizes are as follows:
- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| Under 14s | 25 minutes each way | Ball size 4 |
| Under 15s | 30 minutes each way | Ball size 5 |
| Under 16s | 35 minutes each way | Ball size 5 |
- 4.6.8 Following the spirit of age grade rugby, the maximum points difference to be recorded and reported by a club to the Organisers or any other party regarding any Competition fixture, other than the Final, shall be 30 points in accordance with rule 4.1.4 above.

5. General Conduct

- 5.1 The County and the Organisers take the gravest view of inappropriate conduct by players or spectators. It is the responsibility of each Club to control the behaviour of its players, coaches, managers, administrators and spectators and all clubs must be aware of, and uphold, the RFU's 'Fair Play' Codes of Conduct.
- 5.2 In the event of a report being received of a failure to observe acceptable conduct the Organisers shall take, on behalf of the County, any such action against the offending team as it considers appropriate including, but not limited to, ordering the re-playing of the match, awarding the match to the other side, or excluding the team from the remainder of the competition.
- 5.3 **NB. The County has the power to suspend or disband Mini and Junior sections.**

6. Interpretation of the Rules

- 6.1 Any appeal or dispute must be notified in writing to the Organisers within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match. Such notification must be given by the Mini and Junior Chairman as identified on the club's application to take part in the Challenge.
- 6.2 The decision of the Junior Rugby Challenge Committee shall be final and binding on all participants. All competition entrants accept this provision and accept that there shall be no further appeal, other than as stated in paragraph 6.4 below



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- 6.3 In the event that a matter cannot be resolved to a club's satisfaction, the Cup Competition Committee Secretary may require both clubs to state their respective positions in writing within such period as he deems reasonable, and following consultation with the Organisers will determine the outcome of the dispute.
- 6.4 No member of the Cup Competitions Committee, or if appropriate the Mini and Junior Committee, should rule on a matter where they are a member of either club involved.

RFU REGULATION 15 – AGE GRADE RUGBY

15.1 General

- 15.1.1 This Regulation 15 relates to youth rugby known as Age Grade rugby from the Under 6 (U6) to Under 18 (U18) age groups.
- 15.1.2 This Regulation 15 applies to both genders up to and including U11s, from which point there are specific regulations applicable to girls' rugby for the U12 to U18 age grades in relation to playing out of age grade and these are set out in Regulation 15.5 below. Regulation 15.5 overrides all others in relation to girls' rugby between U12 and U18.
- 15.1.3 This Regulation 15 relates to playing, training and all variations of rugby permitted within the relevant age grade.
- 15.1.4 This Regulation 15 is supported by the following documents:
- (a) Competition Menu, available and Competitive Playing Calendar, available at www.englishrugby.com/my-rugby/players/agegrade-rugby/competition-menu-calendar/
 - (b) Best Practice Guidance supported by a Code of Practice, available at www.englishrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance
 - (c) Safeguarding Policy, available at: www.englishrugby.com/governance/safeguarding/

15.2 Determining a player's Age Grade

- 15.2.1 A player's age grade is determined by their age at midnight on 31st August at the beginning of each Season and that age grade applies for the whole Season. At England U17 and U18 elite level only the player's age grade is determined by their age at midnight on 31st December of that Season.
- 15.2.2 Players must only play contact rugby with players of their own age grade unless in limited circumstances a player may be permitted to play outside their age grade as set out in these Regulations. An assessment should be carried out to assess whether a player may be permitted to play outside their age grade in accordance with these Regulations. Best practice as to how to carry out an assessment is set out in the Guidance available at www.englishrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance.

15.3 Playing with other Age Grades

- 15.3.1 Players in the U6 age grade and below are not permitted to participate in any types of matches, competitions, tournaments or festivals in any age grade. A player is only permitted to participate in matches, competitions, tournaments or festivals from U7s and above.
- 15.3.2 The following regulations apply to U7s and U8s:

- (a) A player in the U7 age grade and above is permitted to participate in matches, competitions, tournaments or festivals in line with the Competition Menu.
 - (b) U7s and U8s are not permitted to play contact rugby or play in the U9s age grade in any circumstances.
 - (c) U7s and U8s can train and play together if deemed appropriate by the Club or School.
- 15.3.3 The following age grades are permitted to participate together in contact rugby training (which includes playing contact internal training matches):
- (a) U9s and U10s; and
 - (b) U10s and U11s; and
 - (c) U11s and U12s; and
 - (d) U12s and U13s.

Note: This is not playing up an age grade; this is only to enable clubs/schools to occasionally allow these teams to train together and should not be used to enable players to play out of age grade with the incorrect age grade for any length of time.

- 15.3.4 In respect of Schools and Clubs with an insufficient number of players, U10s can train and play with U9s, U11s can train and play with U10s, U12s can train and play with U11s, and U13s can train and play with U12s, subject to satisfying the following conditions:
- (a) the School or Club does not have a sufficient number of players to make up a team in the single age grade; and
 - (b) the School's County Schools Union or the Club's Constituent Body provides written approval (such approval to be valid for up to one season only); and
 - (c) no more than half the players on the pitch at any time can be from the older age grade; and
 - (d) the team plays to the rules of the younger age grade; and
 - (e) the provisions of Regulation 15.5 are applied in relation the U12 and U13s girls.
- 15.3.5 U12s to U15s can train and play up one age grade if recommended by the player's Club or School provided that:
- (a) in each case an appropriate assessment is carried out. Best practice on carrying out an appropriate assessment is set out in the Guidance www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance; and

- (b) in respect of Club rugby, approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player; and
 - (c) in respect of Schools' rugby, approval is obtained from the School's Head Teacher.
- 15.3.6 U16s and U17s can train and play up one age grade (including in the front row of the scrum) or two age grades (but not including in the front row of contested scrums if an U16 player is playing 15 a-side rugby), if recommended by the player's Club or School provided that:
- (a) an appropriate assessment is carried out. Best practice on carrying out an appropriate assessment is set out in the Guidance www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance; and
 - (b) in respect of Club rugby, approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player; and
 - (c) in respect of Schools' rugby, approval is obtained from the School's Head Teacher;
 - (d) the individual who has parental responsibility for the player or the School's Head Teacher (as applicable) is informed that it is possible that this dispensation may result in the player playing with and/or against one or more U19 players who are playing down in accordance with Regulation 15.4.3.
- 15.3.7 A male player can play adult contact and non-contact rugby, or train with other adults in contact and non-contact rugby, when they reach their seventeenth birthday provided:
- (a) they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults;
 - (b) the RFU's Playing Adult Rugby Form has been duly completed and signed; and
 - (c) the player does not train or play in the front row of the contested scrum. Once a player has reached the age of 18, the player may play in any position.
- 15.3.8 In respect of England Academy Players (as defined in RFU Regulation 1):
- (a) an U16 England Academy Player can play up two age grades in the front row of the scrum provided that in each case the prior written approval of the RFU Head of Regional Academies is obtained; and
 - (b) a 16 year old England Academy Player can play adult contact rugby, or train with other adults in contact rugby, if the written approval of the RFU Head of Regional Academies has been obtained; and
 - (c) a 17 year old England Academy Player can play adult rugby and train with adults (including in the front row of the scrum) if the written approval of the RFU Head of Regional Academies has been obtained. Such approval may be given for playing or training.

15.4 Restrictions on Playing Down

- 15.4.1 In respect of any matches, competitions, tournaments and festivals, the Club or School must inform match officials, organisers and the opposing team of all players playing down an age grade in a reasonable time prior to the fixture.
- 15.4.2 If a player is permitted to play down as set out in these Regulations, that permission is valid for up to one Season only and the player must remain in that lower age grade for the entire Season save that if appropriate the player is entitled to move back up into the original age grade provided the player does not play down in the lower age grade again during that Season.
- 15.4.3 U9s to U19s (inclusive) can only train and play down one age grade in exceptional circumstances (and subject to competition rules) if:
- (a) the player is in a younger academic year at School than the player's academic birth year; or
 - (b) the player's safety may be compromised due to their small stature in comparison to other players in the same age grade or due to a developmental or behavioural issue:

provided that in each case:

- (i) an assessment is carried out. Best practice as to how to carry out an assessment is set out in the Guidance available at www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance; and
 - (ii) in respect of Club rugby, approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player (as well as the approval of the Club's Safeguarding Officer or Youth Chairman/Secretary); and
 - (iii) in respect of Schools' rugby, the approval of the player's Head Teacher is obtained; and
 - (iv) for U13s and below, the approval of the Club's Constituent Body is obtained or, in respect of Schools' rugby, the approval of the player's Head Teacher is obtained; and
 - (v) if approval is given, the Club or School must notify the opposing teams at least 24 hours in advance of the game although an opposition's objection may not prevent the player from playing.
- 15.4.4 U9s to U19s can only train and play down two or more age grades in exceptional circumstances and only with the written approval of the RFU Legal and Governance Director to whom application must be made. Any requests for approval must be accompanied by such documentary evidence and/or signed statements as may be necessary or requested by the RFU Legal and Governance Director.

15.5 Girls' Rugby

- 15.5.1 This Regulation 15.5 sets out the specific regulations applicable to U12 to U18 girls' rugby in relation to playing out of age grade. The remainder of Regulation 15 shall continue to apply in relation to girls rugby save to the extent that it is varied by Regulation 15.5.
- 15.5.2 The U13 girls' age band is permitted to include U12s and U13s girls. U12 girls and above are not permitted to play mixed contact rugby.
- 15.5.3 The U15 girls' age band is permitted to include U14s and U15s.
- 15.5.4 The U18 girls' age band is permitted to include U16s, U17s and U18s.
- 15.5.5 A female player can play adult contact and non-contact rugby, or train with other adults in contact and non-contact rugby, when they reach their seventeenth birthday provided:
- they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults;
 - the RFU's Playing Adult Rugby Form has been duly completed and signed; and
 - the player does not train or play in the front row of the contested scrum. Once a player has reached the age of 18, the player may play in any position.

15.6 Season

- 15.6.1 In Age Grade rugby the Season shall be:

Season 2017-2018 will run from Saturday 2 September 2017 until Monday 7 May 2018

Season 2018-2019 will run from Saturday 1 September 2018 until Monday 6 May 2019

and for the purposes of this Regulation 15, the Season shall mean the Age Grade Season.

- 15.6.2 For the purposes of this Regulation, "Out of Season Activity" means:
- for U13 and below: (i) non-rugby based physical activity that develops and supports fundamental movement and core skills, examples of which are set out in www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance; concentrating on other sports and activities but no specific rugby activity; (ii) no Outgoing Tours at these ages; (iii) rugby/holiday camps are permitted provided they comply with the above and the requirements set out in RFU Regulation 15.8
 - for U14 to U18 (subject to Regulation 15.6.5):
 - After the first Bank Holiday Monday in May and until the end of May: (i) Rugby based non-contact training and

non-contact versions of rugby including tag and touch, further detail of which is set out in www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance; (ii) rugby/holiday camps are permitted provided they comply with the above and requirements set out in RFU Regulation 15.8; and (iii) if a competition match is abandoned or postponed due to adverse weather conditions, such match may be replayed up to and including the last May Bank Holiday Monday, at all times in accordance with Regulation 15.9.

- (ii) In June: No organised rugby-based activity; this is a month of rest;
- (iii) In July: As per May.
- (iv) In August: As per July, additionally (i) rugby-based contact training; (ii) in the two weeks immediately prior to the start of the Season, pre-season matches, festivals and skills revision training, guidance on which can be found at www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance.

15.6.3 Outside of the Season, U5s and U6s can participate in Out of Season Activity only (as set out in Regulation 15.6.2). During the Season, U5s and U6s can participate in training only but cannot participate in matches, competitions, tournaments and festivals.

15.6.4 Outside of the Season, U7s to U13s can participate in Out of Season Activity only (as defined in 15.6.2 above). During the Season, U7s to U13s can participate in competitive opportunities in addition to training and Out of Season Activity at all times in accordance with Regulation 15.9.

15.6.5 Outside of the Season, U14s to U18s can participate in Out of Season Activity only (as defined in 15.6.2 above). During the Season, U14s to U18s can participate in competitive opportunities in addition to training and Out of Season Activity at all times in accordance with Regulation 15.9.

15.6.6 Outgoing Tours at U14 and above are exempt from this Regulation.

15.7 Non-contact Rugby

During the Season players of all ages and both sexes may train and play together in non-competitive, non-contact rugby provided that:

- (a) the organiser and/or coach has assessed the session and/or match to be safe for all players;
- (b) under no circumstances is any element of contact rugby permitted and the training session and/or match should be conducted in accordance with the best practice principles set out in the Guidance available at www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance.

15.8 Rugby/Holiday Camps

Rugby/holiday camps are permitted for all age grades provided that:

- (a) the rugby/holiday camp and its activity programme are run in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Guidance available at www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance;
- (b) the Constituent Body in which the rugby/holiday camp is located is notified of the proposed rugby/holiday camp in advance;
- (c) any proposed activity is approved in writing by the Constituent Body; and
- (d) Regulation 15 is complied with in full.

15.9 Competition Menu and Competitive Playing Calendar

Competitive Activity

15.9.1 Anyone who organises any competitive activity for male and female players at U18 and below must ensure that such activity is run in accordance with the:

- (a) Competition Menu and the competition format of the specific age grade; and
- (b) Competitive Playing Calendar

which are available here www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/competition-menu-calendar/

In Season Approvals

15.9.2 Club, school and college-organised competitive activity may be played at any time during the Season and must have the written approval of the Club's Constituent Body, School's CSU or College's Union (ECRFU).

15.9.3 Organisers of competitive activity at county level, representative level or above (including domestic Union level where appropriate) must provide the competition programme to the RFU for written approval by 1 July in respect of the competition programme for the subsequent season.

Out of Season Approvals

15.9.4 Competitive activity may only be played outside of the Season provided:

- (a) the activity falls within the definition of Out of Season Activity; and
- (b) in respect of Club, School or College activity, written approval of the Club's Constituent Body, School's CSU, or College's Union (as applicable) has been obtained; or

- (c) in respect of county level, representative level or above, written approval of the RFU has been obtained.

National Festivals

- 15.9.5 National Schools' Festivals may only take place provided the written approval of ERSFU (and the hosting County Schools Union is notified) is obtained. Applications must be made in good time and by no later than three months prior to the date of the proposed National Schools' Festival.
- 15.9.6 National Clubs' Festivals may only take place provided the written approval of the hosting Constituent Body is obtained. Applications must be made in good time and by no later than three months prior to the date of the proposed National Clubs' Festival.

Note: For the purposes of Regulations 15.9.5 and 15.9.6 above a Festival is considered to be "National" if participating Clubs or Schools are drawn from more than just neighbouring Constituent Bodies and there are more than six entrants.

15.10 Tours

Age Grade rugby tours are subject to the requirements set out in Regulation 10 and should be conducted in accordance with the best practice outlined in the RFU Tour Policy available on www.englishrugby.com/governance/gamesupport/rugby-tours.

15.11 Rules of Play

- 15.11.1 Players and Match Officials must comply with the World Rugby Laws of the Games, subject to any permitted Law Variations set out in Appendices of Regulation 15 and such other Law trials and variations as the RFU may adopt.
- 15.11.2 Rules of Play for non-contact rugby matches are available on www.laws.worldrugby.org/

15.12 Pitch and Ball Size

- 15.12.1 The maximum pitch and ball sizes in respect of each age grade are set out in the Rules of Play for that age grade.
- 15.12.2 Reduced pitch sizes are acceptable if agreed between the referee and coaches, and the smaller pitches are risk assessed.
- 15.12.3 Adjacent pitches should to the extent possible be no closer than 5 metres.

15.13 Clothing

- 15.13.1 Players' studs and clothing during training and matches must comply with World Rugby Regulatory requirements (including World Rugby Law 4 and World Rugby Regulation 12) which are available on www.worldrugby.org.

- 15.13.2 Age grade players are permitted to wear base layers provided they comply with the World Rugby Regulatory requirements which are available on www.worldrugby.org/
- 15.13.3 Players of all age grades are permitted to wear spectacles, glasses or specifically designed sports goggles in all forms of non-contact rugby. Players are not permitted to wear spectacles, glasses or specifically designed sports goggles in any form of contact rugby.

Note: For information about the RFU goggles trial, please see RFU Goggles Trial Update at www.englandrugby.com/governance/regulations/

15.14 Duration of Matches, Coaching and Training Sessions

- 15.14.1 All players, match officials, schools and Clubs must ensure that no player plays more than 35 matches per Season and in respect of all matches and festivals, plays no more than the maximum playing times set out in the table below:

| Age Grade | Maximum minutes each half | Maximum minutes per day |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| U7/U8 | 10 | 50 |
| U9/U10 | 15 | 60 |
| U11/U12 | 20 | 70 |
| U13/U14 | 25 | 80 |
| U15 | 30 | 90 |
| U16+ | 35 | 90 |

Further guidance as playing times and durations for single fixtures, festivals, tournaments and coaching and training sessions are set out in the Guidance available at www.englandrugby.com/Regulation15Guidance.

- 15.14.2 No extra time is permitted in any match except that added for injury time.
- 15.14.3 Matches must be brought to an end if:
- at Under 7s to Under 12s the try difference rises to more than six; or
 - at Under 13s to Under 18s the points difference is more than 50 points unless both teams are in agreement to continue.

15.15 Player Eligibility and Player Registration

- 15.15.1 Each Club must ensure all its Age Grade players are registered as a youth players by completing the RFU Youth Player Registration Form and are registered on the RFU's data system within 45 days of their first joining the Club.
- 15.15.2 Constituent Bodies and/or event organisers may require Registration cards and copies of any special dispensations issued to be taken to each Club match or festival. Team managers must produce these documents for inspection by the opposition or Match Officials if requested.

- 15.15.3 Subject to competition regulations, a player may qualify to represent an Age Grade representative team in a Constituent Body for that season if the player meets one of the following criteria:
- (a) he/she attends a School affiliated to that Constituent Body;
 - (b) he/she resides in that Constituent Body for any part of that season;
 - (c) he/she was born in that Constituent Body;
 - (d) he/she is a registered playing member of a Club affiliated to that Constituent Body;
 - (e) he/she played for that Constituent Body in a representative fixture the previous season.
- 15.15.4 Membership of a Constituent Body's Developing Player Programme (DPP)/ Elite Player Development Group (EPDG) or an Academy does not entitle a Player to play for that Constituent Body if the Player does not satisfy one of the previous criteria.
- 15.15.5 Where a Player has not been selected for a Constituent Body the Divisional Chairman of Selectors may allow the Player to play for another Constituent Body for which the Player is not qualified if it is in the interests of the Player's development.

15.16 Discipline

Disciplinary matters relating to Age Grade rugby shall follow the procedures set out in Appendix 6 of RFU Regulation 19.

15.17 Competition Regulations

There are specific competition regulations relating to the following Age Grade competitions and these regulations are available upon request from the RFU Rugby Events & Competitions Department:

- (a) U15s and U18s Schools Cup
- (b) AASE League
- (c) National U18s Cup
- (d) U18 Academy
- (e) Schools Champions Trophy
- (f) National U15 Girls Cup
- (g) National U18 Girls Cup
- (h) National Girls 7s U18 and U15

UNDER 14s RULES OF PLAY (Transitional Contact) – BOYS ONLY

Players and match officials must ensure that the applicable Rules of Play and RFU Regulation 15 www.englishrugby.com/governance/regulations are observed when playing rugby at Under 14.

These Under 14s Rules of Play set out below are mandatory for clubs and schools, and replace the previous Under 14s Rules of Play in their entirety.

Any terms defined in these Rules shall have the meanings set out in the World Rugby Laws of the Game.

The key elements of the Under 14s Rules of Play are:

- Team numbers: a maximum of 15-a-side
- Maximum pitch size: 100 metres x 70 metres
- Ball Size: 4
- Maximum minutes each half: 25
- Contested 8 man scrum – the No.8 can pick up the ball from the back of the scrum
- Introduction of the uncontested lineout
- Sin Bin: 5 minutes

1. General:

- a) The object of the game is to score a try by placing the ball with a downward pressure on or behind the opponents' goal line. A penalty try will be awarded if a try would probably have been scored but for foul or prohibited play by the defending team.
- b) Only infringements that affect the oppositions' play should be penalised. If there is no effect, advantage should be played wherever it is safe to do so.

2. Teams:

- a) Under 14 Rugby is played between teams of equal numbers of players, containing a maximum of fifteen players from each team on the pitch at any one time.
- b) Eight of the players on each team will be forwards and form the scrum, with the remaining players forming the back line.
- c) Rolling substitutions are permitted and substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is dead and always with the referee's permission.
- d) Coaches are not permitted on the pitch when the game is in play and the referee is encouraged to advise and guide the teams and players.

3. Pitch Size:

- a) The maximum pitch size is 100 metres by 70 metres, plus 5 metres for each in-goal area, representing a full size pitch
- b) The referee and coaches may agree to reduce the pitch sizes provided that they agree it is safe to do so.
- c) Adjacent pitches should be no closer than 5 metres.

4. Starts and Restarts:

- a) A drop kick from the centre of the half way line will be used to start each half of the match, and for all restarts after a score. After a score, the opponents of the team who scored will kick to the opposing team.
- b) The kicker's team must be behind the ball until it has been kicked and the non-kicking team must be at least 10 metres back from the half way line.
- c) If the ball does not travel 10 metres but is first played by an opponent, play continues.
- d) If the ball does not travel 10 metres or is played by the kicking team before reaching 10 metres or is kicked directly into touch, the non-kicking team will have the choice of;
 - i. A throw in to a scrum at the centre of the half way line.
 - ii. The kick to be re-taken.
 - iii. A throw in from touch.
 - iv. Accept the kick.
- e) Where players of the kicking team are in front of the ball at the kick-off the non-kicking team shall have a throw in to a scrum on the half way line.
- f) If from the kick-off the ball is kicked into the in-goal, without having touched or been touched by a player and is then immediately touched down or made dead, or the ball goes into touch in goal, the non-kicking team has the choice of:
 - i. A throw in to a scrum by the non-kicking team at the centre of the half way line.
 - ii. The kick to be re-taken.

5. Free kick:

- a) Following the below offences a free kick will be awarded to the non-offending team:

- i. In the event that a ball carrier uses the ‘squeezeball’ technique.
 - ii. If a player voluntarily falls on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in their possession or voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them, or near them.
- b) A free kick is a kick from hand. This can either be a tap by the player to themselves, or a kick to gain ground. The opponents must be 10 metres back, towards their own goal line and cannot start moving until the ball has been played.

6. Penalties:

- a) Following the below offences, a penalty will be awarded to the non-offending team:
- i. Foul play.
 - ii. Offside.
 - iii. When a tackler makes contact above the armpits.
 - iv. When a player prevents an opponent from passing the ball immediately after a tackle.
- b) When opponents are within 10 metres of the mark when a penalty kick is taken.

7. Passing:

The ball may only be passed sideways or backwards. If the ball is handed to another player who is in front of the ball carrier or passed or knocked forwards towards the opponents’ dead ball line then a scrum is awarded to the non-offending team, unless advantage occurs to the non-offending team. In order to keep the game flowing, referees should play advantage wherever it is safe to do so.

8. The Tackle, Maul and Ruck:

- a) A “Tackle” occurs when the ball carrier is held by one or more opponents and is brought to ground. A ball carrier who is not held is not a tackled player and a tackle has not taken place. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and bring that player to ground, and who also go to ground, are known as tacklers. Opposition players who hold the ball carrier and do not go to ground are not tacklers. The tackle must include the use of arms. Where the ball carrier is taken to ground, the referee will call “Tackle-Release”.
- b) A “maul” begins when a player carrying the ball is held by one or more opponents and one of the ball carrier’s team mates bind on the ball carrier. A maul therefore consists, when it begins, of at least

three players, all on their feet; the ball carrier and one player from each team. All the players involved must be caught in or bound to the maul and must be on their feet and moving towards a goal line. Open play has ended.

- c) A “ruck” is a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground. Open play has ended. Players are rucking when they are in a ruck and using their feet to try to win or keep possession of the ball, without being guilty of foul play.
- d) Only the ball carrier can be tackled.
- e) The tackler must grasp the ball carrier below the armpits, on the shirt, shorts or around the legs.
- f) When the ball carrier grounds the ball on or over the opponents’ goal line, a try will be awarded.
- g) When the ball carrier is held in contact and remains on their feet they may continue to progress forward. Once forward momentum has been stopped, the ball must be played away from the contact area.
- h) When the ball carrier is not taken to ground, the tackler may contest the ball by grabbing it.
- i) When the ball carrier is taken to ground, the tackler must immediately release the ball carrier and must get to their feet as soon as possible before they are permitted to contest the ball or block the pass.
- j) If the ball carrier is taken to ground and the referee calls “Tackle-Release”, the ball carrier must pass the ball immediately, roll away or place the ball towards their own team.
- k) When a maul is formed and forward momentum is lost the ball must be made available within 5 seconds. The referee should call “Use it” and the ball should be moved away from the contact area. If neither team can pass the ball away, a scrum should be awarded to the team not in possession when the maul began.
- l) When the tackle is made and the ball carrier is on the ground, supporting players may:
 - i. rip the ball from the ball carrier; or
 - ii. pick up the ball and run or pass away from the contact area; or
 - iii. if a ruck is not formed, pick up the ball and run; or
 - iv. join to form a ruck but must do so from their own side (i.e. from the direction of their own goal line) and drive over the ball, in an attempt to take their immediate opponents away from the ball.

- m) If l)iv. above has taken place, the next arriving player can pass the ball to another player or run with it.
- n) When the ball has been clearly won by a team at a ruck and the ball is available to be played the referee will call “Use it” after which the ball must be played within 5 seconds. If the ball is not played within 5 seconds the referee will award a scrum and the team not in possession of the ball at the ruck is awarded the throw-in.
- o) Support players must not stand either side and in close proximity to the ball carrier to prevent defenders from making the next tackle.

9. **Kicking:**

- a) Kicking the ball when it is on the ground is allowed (known as a “fly-hack”).
- b) Drop goals are permitted.
- c) If the ball is kicked from outside of the 22 metre line directly into touch, a free pass is awarded to the opposing team who last touched the ball in line with where the ball was kicked and 10 metres in from the touchline unless they elect to take a quick throw in in compliance with 9(d).
- d) Where the kick goes into touch the non-kicking team has the option to take a quick throw in preference to the lineout unless it has been touched by a spectator (including coaches/replacements). It must be the same ball that was kicked into touch. For a quick throw-in, the player may be anywhere outside the field of play between the line of touch and the player’s goal line. If the ball is brought back into the field of play, or players from the kicking team are in close proximity before the throw can be taken the referee should award a free-kick in accordance with the rules above.
- e) After a try is scored, the scorers attempt to score a goal by taking a kick at goal; this also applies to a penalty try. This kick is a conversion kick: a conversion kick can be a place kick or a drop kick in line where the try was scored. If a penalty try has been awarded, the kick is taken directly between the posts.

10. **Actions Inside the 22 Metre Line (the “22”):**

- a) If the ball is kicked from within the 22 by the defending team and goes directly into touch, a lineout will be awarded to the non-kicking team 10 metres in from where the ball crossed the touchline unless it has been passed back into the “22” and there has been no subsequent ruck, maul, or the ball had touched an opposition player, in which case a restart will be from where the ball was kicked. Alternatively, the opposing team may elect to take a quick throw-in in compliance with 9(d).
- b) A drop out “22” will be awarded:

- i. when the ball is kicked into in-goal by the attacking team and grounded by a defender; or
- ii. when the ball is kicked, sent or carried into in-goal by the attacking team and the ball touches or crosses the in-goal touchline or dead ball line.

11. **Ball to Ground:**

- a) Players must play rugby on their feet, with the ball in hand.
- b) If the ball goes to ground, players should be encouraged to pick it up. If they dive to recover the ball they must either get up with the ball, pass the ball or release it immediately and be allowed to do so by the opposition.
- c) If the ball is lost forward, a scrum is awarded to the non-offending team unless advantage occurs.
- d) If the ball is passed other than forward and goes to ground, play will continue and either team may pick up the ball. If the ball rolls into touch, a lineout will be awarded level with where it crossed the line to an opponent of the player who last played or touched the ball before it went into touch.

12. **Scrum:**

- a) A scrum will be awarded for:
 - i. a forward pass; or
 - ii. a knock on; or
 - iii. where the ball does not emerge from a maul or ruck; or
 - iv. when the ball becomes unplayable.
- b) The scrum will consist of eight confident and competent players from each team, i.e. a prop on either side of the hooker forming the front row, two locks forming the second row, and three players forming the back row.
- c) The referee will call “Crouch” and then “Bind”. The front rows crouch and using their outside arm each prop must bind onto the body or side of their opponent and the second rows crouch and bind onto the prop in front of them.
- d) Following a pause, the referee calls “Set” only when the front rows are ready. The front rows may then engage.
- e) If a team cannot field such suitably willing and trained players because:

- i. they are not available; or
 - ii. a player in one of those eight positions is injured or has been sent off for Foul Play and no suitably trained replacement is available then the referee must order uncontested scrums.
- g) Front rows must not charge at each other. If they start to set too close together and with their necks and backs bent, the scrum must be stopped and the scrum reformed. Props' body positions must be parallel to the touchline, their head and shoulders must be no lower than the hips and there must be no downward pressure exerted. Shoulders must always be above the level of the hips.

Note: Referees and coaches MUST be aware of the following: If the scrum collapses, the whistle must immediately be blown and the appropriate sanction awarded or the scrum reset. If a player is persistently involved in collapsing or illegal binding, they must not take any further part in the scrum or if a player's lack of technique or strength is a danger then they must be replaced. All players, including replacements, should be suitably trained and experienced.

- h) The scrum half can pass the ball or run from the base of the scrum
- i) The back line of both teams must remain 5 metres behind the scrum until the ball emerges or the opposing scrum half lifts the ball from the ground.
- j) The non ball winning scrum half may start directly alongside their opponent. However, they must not move beyond the middle line of the scrum until the ball has emerged from the scrum.
- k) If a scrum is awarded within 5 metres of the goal line, the scrum is to be taken at a mark such that the middle line of the scrum is 5 metres from the goal line. In this case, the backs of the defending team must stay on or behind the goal line until the scrum is completed.

Note to referees: Referees should pay particular attention to ensure that the scrum half throwing the ball into the scrum is not "feeding" their own players: the scrum half must hold the ball with both hands, with its major axis parallel to the ground/the touchline, midway between his knees and ankles. The scrum half must release the ball from outside the tunnel so that it lands midway between the two front rows and beyond the width of the nearer props' shoulders.

- l) The No. 8 is permitted to pick up the ball from the back of the scrum.

13. Offside:

- a) In general play, anyone who is in front of a team mate who has played the ball is liable to sanction unless they return to an onside position (i.e. behind the team mate who played the ball).

- b) At the tackle, offside occurs at the time of the tackle where the offside line is the hindmost part of the tackled player and tackler. All the other players from the defending team must retire towards their own goal line until they are behind the hindmost part of the tackled player and tackler.
- c) At the maul, the offside lines are at the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the maul.
- d) At the ruck, the offside lines are at the hindmost foot of the hindmost player in the ruck.
- e) At the scrum, a player is offside if they are less than 5 metres from the scrum before the ball is out of the scrum, unless the player is the scrum half or participating in the scrum.
- f) At the lineout, a player is offside if they are less than 10 metres from the lineout before the lineout is over, unless the player is the receiver or hooker.
- g) When kicking, a player is offside if they are not behind the ball when it is kicked or within 10 metres of an opponent waiting to play the ball (or the place where the ball will land).

14. **Infringements:**

- a) The tackler can only make contact with the ball carrier below the armpits.
- b) No player shall use the technique known or referred to as “Squeezeball” and no person involved in the teaching or coaching of rugby may teach or coach to encourage the use of the “Squeezeball” technique.

Note: “Squeezeball” is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents, usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushing the ball back between the legs.

- c) No player shall voluntarily fall on or over a player lying on the ground with the ball in their possession or voluntarily fall on or over players lying on the ground with the ball between them, or near them.
- d) Foul play

Note to referee: No advantage shall be played:

A player is assumed to have fallen voluntarily unless the referee is absolutely certain the fall was accidental.

In the very rare instances when the fall is accidental, play must be stopped and a scrum awarded to the team previously in possession.

The object is to keep players on their feet and to prevent them from falling to the ground, thus removing a dangerous area of play. This will create proper rucks and mauls through encouraging players from each team to remain on their feet.

15. The Lineout:

- a) The lineout will be awarded from the touchline level with where the ball crossed the line, to the opponents of the player who touched the ball before it went into touch.
- b) The ball must be thrown down the middle of the channel. If the throw is not straight, a lineout will be awarded to the opposing team. If this throw is not straight, a scrum will be awarded to the (team originally awarded the line out) on the 15m line.
- c) The lineout will be uncontested by up to 13 players from each team
- d) No lifting or supporting of any kind is allowed.
- e) Players not involved in the lineout must remain 10 metres behind the mark and must do so until invited forward by the referee.
- f) The lineout ends when the ball or a player carrying it leaves the lineout or the ball goes beyond the 15m or into the 5m channel.

- 16.** If a player is temporarily suspended in an Age Grade match, the duration of time in the Sin Bin shall be 5 minutes.

U15-U18 Variations to the World Rugby Laws of the Game - BOYS ONLY

Players and Match Officials must ensure that the World Rugby Laws of Game (including the World Rugby Under 19 Law Variations) and any such law variations set out below (and/or otherwise agreed by the RFU) are observed when playing boys rugby at U15 to U18 in England, which are mandatory for clubs and schools.

RFU Regulation 15 (www.englandrugby.com/governance/regulations/) must also be complied with at all times.

Any terms defined in these Rules shall have the meanings set out in the World Rugby Laws of the Game.

Law Variations applicable to all age grades between U15 and U18**1. Ball and Pitch Sizes:**

Ball size: U15, U16, U17 and U18 – ball size 5

Pitch Size: as set out in World Rugby Law 1

2. Substitutions and Replacements:

Rolling substitutions are permitted and substituted players can be re-used at any time. Substitutions can only take place when the ball is dead and always with the referee's knowledge.

There is no limit on the number of replacements that a team may have, even if competing teams have unequal number, unless otherwise specified by separate regulations specific to a competition.

3. Squeezeball:

No player shall use the technique known or referred to as “Squeezeball” and no person involved in the teaching or coaching of rugby may teach or coach to encourage the use the “Squeezeball” technique.

Note: “Squeezeball” is a technique where the ball carrier goes to ground, head forward (touching or close to the ground), irrespective of immediate contact with opponents, usually keeping parallel to the touchline, holding and protecting the ball close to the chest and, when on the ground, pushing the ball back between the legs.

4. Sin Bin:

If a player is temporarily suspended in an Age Grade match, the duration of time in the Sin Bin shall be as set out below:

- U15 – 6 minutes
- U16, U17 and U18 – 7 minutes

Additional Law Variations applicable to U15 only

The variations below shall also apply at U15:

5. The Scrum:

- a) There is no 'turnover' law. If scrums are reset for wheeling beyond 45 degrees the throw-in is to the side in possession at the time it is wheeled beyond 45 degrees.
- b) The scrum-half not throwing the ball into the scrum must not move beyond the middle line of the scrum until the ball has emerged from the scrum or an opponent has lifted the ball from the ground. In the event of a strike against the head, the scrum-half who has thrown the ball into the scrum is similarly restricted in not following the ball.
Sanction: Penalty Kick.

6. Law 19 Line-Out:

- (a) The lineout will be uncontested.
- (b) Lifting and supporting is permitted at this age group, i.e. a player may bind to a jumper until he has returned to the ground.