

MIDDLESEX MERIT TABLE

AN OFFICIAL MIDDLESEX COUNTY RFU COMPETITION

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2011/2012 REGULATIONS

1. NAME

The merit table shall be known as the Middlesex Merit Table (MMT).

2. ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 The MMT shall be managed and supervised by the Middlesex County Rugby Football Union (MCRFU) who shall appoint an Organiser (the Organiser) to administer the MMT and to whom MCRFU may delegate such powers as it deems appropriate.
- 2.2 The Organiser shall administer the MMT and make such decisions as he deems appropriate to run an efficient and fair competition provided only that any such decision must not be contrary to these regulations, the rules and regulations of the MCRFU, the rules and regulations of the Rugby Football Union or the Laws of the Game.
- 2.3 The Organiser shall have the power to alter or amend these regulations, as he deems necessary in order to run an efficient and fair competition, provided only that no regulations may be changed, other than in exceptional circumstances, once the competition has started.
- 2.4 The MMT shall consist of six divisions followed by a knock out competition for the leading placed teams in each division to establish a winner of the division.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF CLUBS

- 3.1 Only Clubs which are members of MCRFU (Eligible Clubs) may participate in the MMT.
- 3.2 All Eligible Clubs shall be invited to participate in the MMT and by accepting such invitation and commencing a match in the MMT shall agree to be bound by these regulations.
- 3.3 If a team fails to honour four or more fixtures then the Organiser may in his absolute discretion exclude that team from the competition for the remainder of 2011/12 season. In the case of a team being excluded or withdrawing from the MMT all its results shall be expunged.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

- 4.1 There is no restriction on player selection. However teams are expected to select only bona fide members of their club.
- 4.2 A team may only select players for the Semi-Final and Final matches who have already played for that team in the competition. In exceptional circumstances the Organiser in his absolute discretion may waive this rule on a player-by-player basis, but the Organiser must be asked in writing and permission granted at least 24 hours before the match is played. Breach of this rule may lead to forfeiture of the match.

5. STRUCTURE

- 5.1 The MMT will be divided into Six Divisions comprising teams from the Eligible Clubs.
- 5.2 No club may have more than one team in each division of the MMT.

- 5.3 Other than in Division 6, each team in each Division will play each other team in that Division twice, once at home and once away to establish the position of each team in that Division (league matches).
- 5.4 Six merit table points (Points) shall be awarded for a win, four Points for a draw and two Points for a loss.
- 5.5 A further point shall be awarded to any team that wins its game by 25 points or more or that loses its game by 10 points or less.
- 5.6 In the event of any team failing to fulfil a league match, other than for a postponement due to the pitch being unplayable, adverse weather conditions or other reason acceptable to the Organiser it shall forfeit the match. The non-offending team shall be deemed to have won the match 25:0 and shall be awarded 7 Points. The offending team will receive no Points.
- 5.7 If a league match is not played due to the pitch being unplayable or adverse weather conditions the match shall be deemed to have been drawn 0:0, unless both clubs notify the Organiser within 48 hours that they wish to replay the match, inform the Organiser at that time of the agreed replay date and the Organiser has no objection.
- 5.8 In league matches extra time shall not be played. In the event of the scores being equal at the end of normal time the match shall be deemed a draw.
- 5.9 All league matches will be played between 1st September 2011 and 26th March 2012 and the final table of each division shall be the table as at the 26th March 2012 irrespective of the number of league matches played.
- 5.10 The position in the final table shall be determined by Points awarded.
- 5.11 If Points awarded are equal then the team having the better difference between points scored and those conceded shall take the higher position.
- 5.12 If the teams can still not be separated then the team having scored the most points shall take the higher position.
- 5.13 Following the establishment of the position of each of the teams in the final table of each Division the winners of each Division shall be determined by a knock out competition for each Division comprising Semi Finals and a Final.

6. QUARTER-FINAL, SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL MATCHES

- 6.1 The Quarter-Final matches (applies to Division 6 only) shall be played between the first and eighth placed teams in the final table (tie 1), the second and seventh placed teams (tie 2), the third and sixth placed teams (tie 3) and the fourth and fifth placed teams (tie 4) on the 3rd March 2012 at the grounds of the teams that finished highest in the final table (unless the organiser decides otherwise).
- 6.2 In Divisions 1 to 5 the Semi-Final matches shall be between the first and fourth placed teams in the final table and the second and third placed teams on 24th March 2012 at the grounds of the teams that finished highest in the final table (unless the organiser decides otherwise).
- 6.3 In Division 6 the Semi-Final matches shall be between the winners of tie 1 and tie 4 and the winners of tie 2 and tie 4. The games shall be played at the grounds of the teams that finished highest in the final table (unless the organiser decided otherwise).
- 6.4 The Final match of each Division shall be played at Wasps Twyford Avenue Ground on 14th April 2012 between the winners of the Semi-Final matches of that Division.

7. DRAWN MATCHES IN THE KNOCK OUT STAGES

7.1 Quarter-Final and Semi-Final Matches

- a. If at the end of normal time in a Quarter-Final or Semi-Final match the scores are level, there shall be a five-minute break. After this break, the teams will change ends and there shall be a period of extra time between the teams of 10 minutes each way, with a one-minute interval.
- b. If the scores are then still level, the team that has scored the most tries shall go forward.
- c. If this does not produce a result, the team that has scored the most goals from tries goes forward.
- d. If this does not produce a result, the away team shall go forward.

7.2 The Final

- a. If at the end of normal time in a Final the scores are level, there shall be a five-minute break. After this break, the teams will change ends and there shall be a period of extra time between the teams of 10 minutes each way, with a one-minute interval.
- b. If the scores are then still level the teams will change ends and 'sudden death' will be played. Play will continue with the teams changing ends every ten minutes. The team scoring first during 'sudden death' will be deemed the winner.

8. WINNER OF THE MIDDLESEX MERIT TABLE TROPHY

The winner of the Middlesex Merit Table Trophy shall be the winner of the Division One Final.

9. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- 9.1 The winners of the Division Two, Three, Four, Five and Six finals shall be promoted.
- 9.2 The bottom club in the final tables of Divisions One, Two, Three, Four and Five shall be relegated.

10. FIXTURES

- 10.1 The Organiser shall draw up the fixtures for the season which will take place on Saturday afternoons unless the Organiser agrees otherwise.
- 10.2 Participating clubs may, with the agreement of their opponents, rearrange any of their league matches provided the Organiser is notified and has no objection to the re arranged date.
- 10.3 In the event of a dispute between clubs as to when a match should be played the match shall be played on the date originally specified by the Organiser, or any other reasonable date that the Organiser deems suitable.
- 10.4 The home team shall be responsible for organising the referee and paying his expenses.
- 10.5 Other than in the Final matches, the home team shall use its best endeavours to secure the services of a referee from the London Society of Rugby Football Union Referees ("LSRFUR").
- 10.6 In the event of the LSRFUR being unable to appoint a referee the home team shall be responsible for providing a competent referee.
- 10.7 The home team shall be responsible for informing the referee of these Regulations.
- 10.8 If in the opinion of the referee there is a colour clash the home team shall change its shirts.

10.9 The Organiser's permission must be obtained for any league match to be played at a ground, which is not the home ground of either of the teams involved. The Organiser's permission will not be withheld unless he believes that the choice of venue unreasonably disadvantages the away team.

10.10 All other arrangements shall be made as for usual club fixtures.

11. ABANDONED MATCHES

11.1 Weather Conditions (which shall be deemed to include bad light in the sole opinion of the referee)

Less than 50 Minutes Played

- a. If weather conditions result in a league match being abandoned with less than fifty minutes having been played, then the match will be subject to the provisions of regulation 5.7 above.
- b. In the event of the abandonment of a Quarter-Final (Division 6 only) Semi Final or Final then both teams will use their best endeavours to ensure that the match is played at the earliest possible date. If the teams cannot agree, the match shall be played at time, date and venue as specified by the Organiser.

50 or more Minutes Played

- c. If a match is abandoned because of Weather Conditions when fifty or more minutes have been played, then the score at the moment of abandonment shall stand and be deemed the final score in the match. The Referee's decision as to the necessity for abandonment and the number of minutes played at the moment of abandonment shall be final.

11.2 Other Reasons

If the Referee finds it necessary to abandon a match for any reason other than weather conditions, then, irrespective of the number of minutes played, the result of that match shall be reviewed and determined by the Organiser who may order the match to be replayed and/or impose such other sanction as he deems appropriate.

12. UNPLAYABLE PITCHES

12.1 A match shall be postponed if either captain regards the pitch as unplayable. The referee's opinion may be sought, but it is the captains' decision whether to play the match or not. If the captains cannot agree then the match shall not be played and the matter shall be reported, by the home team, to the Organiser

12.2 If a league match is postponed then the provisions of regulation 5.7 apply.

12.3 In the event of the postponement of a Quarter-Final (Division 6 only), Semi Final or Final then both teams will use their best endeavours to ensure that the match is played at the earliest possible date. If the teams cannot agree the match shall be played at time, date and venue as specified by the Organiser.

13. NOTIFICATION OF RESULT/POSTPONEMENT

The home team is responsible for notifying the Organiser of the result or of the postponement of the league match by 9.00pm on the evening of the match. Failure to report the result or the postponement by the due time shall, except in exceptional circumstances, automatically lead to the deduction of one merit table point from the home team.

14. REPLACEMENTS

- 14.1 In league matches, the teams will agree on the number of replacements before the commencement of the match. Teams are encouraged to agree the number of replacements when confirming the fixture. In the event that the teams cannot agree, there will be a maximum of three replacements.
- 14.2 Teams will be allowed a maximum of five replacements for the Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final matches.
- 14.3 In Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final matches teams must have five players in their team capable of playing in the front row.
- 14.4 In Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final matches teams are required to be able to replace any position in the front row on the first two occasions that replacements are required, excepting that they will not be required to replace any front row position twice.

15. ROLLING SUBSTITUTIONS

- 15.1 Each team shall be permitted not more than eight Player Interchanges in each league match. In the Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final matches each team shall be permitted not more than ten Player Interchanges.
- 15.2 After eight Player Interchanges (ten in the Quarter-Final, Semi-Final and Final matches) have been made no other replacements, substitutions or Player Interchanges will be permitted for any reason including injuries and in the event that a player is injured the team will play with one less player and with uncontested scrums in the event that this involves a front row player and the game cannot continue safely with contested scrums.
- 15.3 Player Interchanges replace the "blood bin". If a player has an open wound and thus has to leave the field, and the team has used all of its interchanges, that player may not be replaced and the team shall continue with a maximum of fourteen players. The player is permitted to return once the wound has been treated and the bleeding stopped.
- 15.4 Player Interchanges may only occur during a stoppage in play and with the knowledge of the Referee who is entitled in his sole opinion to refuse to allow or postpone a Player Interchange if he believes either that the Player Interchange would prevent the opposition from restarting the game quickly or where a player has been injured or that it would not be safe for the replacement player who has been previously injured to play in the match.
- 15.5 A player who is a replacement shall not be entitled to take a kick at goal until a passage of play has taken place since he has taken the field of play.
- 15.6 A player who suffers two injuries in a match which has necessitated his being replaced on each occasion is not permitted to act as a replacement following his second injury.
- 15.7 Under dispensation provided to Unions by the International Rugby Board, where these rolling substitutions regulations conflict with the Laws of the Game these Regulation shall take precedence.

16. UNCONTESTED SCRUMS

- 16.1 If a team opts for uncontested scrums prior to the start of the match that team will be required to remove a player from the field and play with not more than fourteen players unless that team brings on a player which allows the scrums to be contested in which case they will be allowed to field not more than fifteen players and the player coming on shall not be counted as one of their substitutions.
- 16.2 If a team is unable to contest any scrum (either by its own decision or as a result of a decision by the referee) after the start of the match that team will be required to remove a player from the field and continue with not more than fourteen players.

- 16.3 If a team is able to resume contested scrums then the removed player may return.
- 16.4 Whilst a team has been reduced by one player due to its inability to contest the scrum that team will be allowed to make substitutions in accordance with Regulation 14 and 15 provided that it has no more than fourteen players on the field at any one time.
- 16.5 If a team is unable to contest the scrum due to having a front row player either temporarily or permanently excluded that team will not have to remove an additional player and will continue with a maximum of fourteen players.

17. APPEALS

- 17.1 A club can make an appeal under these regulations by writing to the Organiser.
- 17.2 If the appeal concerns a particular match then the appeal must be made within seven days of the playing or postponement of the match concerned. In any other circumstances the appeal must be made as soon as possible.
- 17.3 The Organiser may consult with whosoever he wishes in arriving at his decision.
- 17.4 The Organiser must inform the club of his decision in writing within fourteen days of receiving the appeal or explain the reason for the delay and give a new deadline when the Club may expect his decision.
- 17.5 Once the Organiser has reached his decision and informed the Club in writing a further appeal can be made by the club writing to the Competitions Committee of the MCRFU ("the Appeal Committee"). Such appeal must be made in writing to the Secretary of MCRFU within seven days of receiving the written notification of the decision from the Organiser together with a payment of twenty-five pounds, which shall be refundable if the appeal is successful. No appeal shall be considered without the payment of the fee.
- 17.6 The Appeal Committee may adopt such procedure as it deems appropriate save that the decision will be based upon written submissions only (and there will be no personal hearings unless the Appeal Committee determines exceptionally otherwise).

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