

MIDDLESEX MERIT TABLE

AN OFFICIAL MIDDLESEX COUNTY RFU COMPETITION

www.MiddlesexRugby.com

1. NAME

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

2. ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 The Merit Table shall be managed and supervised by the Middlesex County Rugby Football Union (MCRFU) who shall appoint an Organiser (the Organiser) to administer the Merit Table and to whom MCRFU may delegate such powers as it deems appropriate.
- 2.2 The Organiser shall administer the Merit Table 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 rules, 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 rules, as he deems necessary in order to run an efficient and fair competition, provided only that no rules may be changed, other than in exceptional circumstances, once the competition has started.
- 2.4 The Merit Table shall consist of five 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 Merit Table.
- 3.2 All Eligible Clubs shall be invited to participate in the Merit Table and by accepting such invitation and commencing a match in the Merit Table shall agree to be bound by these rules.
- 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 2009/10 season. In the case of a team being excluded or withdrawing from the Merit Table 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 Quarter Final (Division Five only), 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 Merit Table will be divided into Five Divisions comprising teams from the Eligible Clubs.
- 5.2 No club may have more than one team in each division of the Merit Table.
- 5.3 Each team in each Division will play each other team in that Division twice, once at home and once away, except that in Division Five each team will play the other teams once only, 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 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 6 Points. The offending team will receive no Points.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 All league matches will be played between 1st September 2009 and 20th March 2010 (27th February for Division Five) and the final table of each division shall be the table as at the 21st March 2010 (28th February 2010 for Division Five) irrespective of the number of league matches played.
- 5.9 The position in the final table shall be determined by Points awarded.
- 5.10 If Points awarded are equal then the team having the better difference between points scored and those conceded shall take the higher position.
- 5.11 If the teams can still not be separated then the team having scored the most points shall take the higher position.
- 5.12 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 competitions for each Division comprising in Division Five Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and a Final and in the other Divisions (one to four) Semi Finals and a Final.

6. QUARTER FINAL MATCHES (DIVISION FIVE ONLY)

- 6.1 In Division Five the Quarter Final matches will be played on 6th March 2010 and shall be between the first and eighth placed teams in the final table (Match 1), the second and seventh placed teams, (Match 2), the third and sixth placed teams (Match 3) and the fourth and fifth placed teams (Match 4).
- 6.2 The Quarter Final matches referred to above shall be held (unless the organiser decides otherwise) at the grounds of the teams that finished highest in the final table.

7. SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL MATCHES

- 7.1 Other than in Division Five, the Semi-Final matches shall be between the first and fourth placed teams in the final table and the second and third placed teams.
- 7.2 In Division Five one Semi-Final match will be between the winners Match 1 and Match 4 (see Rule 6.1) and the other Semi Final the winners of Match 2 and Match 3 (see Rule 6.1).
- 7.3 The Semi Final matches shall be held on 27th March 2010 and (unless the organiser decides otherwise) at the grounds of the teams that finished highest in the final table.
- 7.4 The Final match of each Division shall be played at Wasps Twyford Avenue Ground on Saturday 10th April 2010 between the winners of the Semi-Final matches of that Division.

8. DRAWN MATCHES IN THE KNOCK OUT STAGES**8.1 Quarter Finals and Semi Finals**

- a. If at the end of normal time in a Quarter Final or Semi 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 team that has scored the most tries shall go forward into the next round.
- c. If this does not produce a result, the team that has scored the most goals from tries goes forward into the next round.
- d. If this does not produce a result, the away team shall go forward into the next round.

8.2 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.

9. WINNER OF THE MIDDLESEX MERIT TABLE TROPHY

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

10. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- 10.1 The winners of the Division Two, Three, Four and Five finals shall be promoted.
- 10.2 The bottom clubs in the final tables of Divisions One, Two, Three and Four shall be relegated.

11. FIXTURES

- 11.1 The Organiser shall draw up the fixtures for the season which will take place on Saturday afternoons unless the Organiser agrees otherwise.
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 The home team shall be responsible for organising the referee and paying his expenses.
- 11.5 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").
- 11.6 In the event of the LSRFUR being unable to appoint a referee the home team shall be responsible for providing a competent referee.
- 11.7 The home team shall be responsible for informing the referee of these rules.
- 11.8 If in the opinion of the referee there is a colour clash the home team shall change its shirts.

- 11.9 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.
- 11.10 All other arrangements shall be made as for usual club fixtures.

12 ABANDONED MATCHES

- 12.1 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 5.6 above.
- b. In the event of the abandonment of a Quarter Final, 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.

- 12.2 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.

13. UNPLAYABLE PITCHES

- 13.1 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
- 13.2 If a league match is postponed then the provisions of Rule 5.6 apply.
- 13.3 In the event of the postponement of a Quarter Final, 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.

14. NOTIFICATION OF RESULT/POSTPNEMENT

The home team is responsible for notifying the Organiser of the result or of the postponement of the 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.

15. REPLACEMENTS

- 15.1 In league matches and Division 5 Quarter Final 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.
- 15.2 Teams will be allowed a maximum of five replacements for the Semi-Final and Final matches.
- 15.3 In Semi-Final and Final matches teams must have five players in their team capable of playing in the front row.
- 15.4 In 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.

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 In the case of a temporary blood injury to a front row forward causing uncontested scrums no player will be removed. If after 15 minutes the injured player is unable to return and uncontested scrums have to continue then the team will be required to remove a player and continue with a maximum of fourteen players.
- 16.5 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 Rule 15 provided that it has no more than fourteen players on the field at any one time.
- 16.6 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 rules by writing to the Organiser. 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.
- 17.2 The Organiser may consult with whosoever he wishes in arriving at his decision.
- 17.3 The Organiser must inform the club of his decision in writing within fourteen days of receiving their appeal or explain the reason for the delay and give a new deadline when the Club may expect his decision.
- 17.4 Once the Organiser has reached his decision and informed the Club in writing a further appeal can be made by the club 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.

- 17.5 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).

End