

St Joseph's College National Schools Rugby Festival Rules

All games are played in accordance with ERFSSU Laws.

1. In the preliminary phases of the competition, competing schools will be drawn into groups of four, although the organisers seed pools taking into account geography and previous record.

2. Each team will play every other team within their own group: two points being awarded for a win and one point for a draw. The two teams with the highest number of points in each group will qualify. Should two or more teams finish their group matched with the same number of league points, the team scoring the greater number of tries will qualify. If still equal, the team with the best points' difference between points scored and points conceded will qualify. If still equal, the greater number of goals from tries will qualify. If still equal, the greater number of dropped goals will qualify. Should two or more sides still be equal, the decision will be reached on the basis of the games between those sides using the above criteria. Should the match between these sides have ended in a draw, then the side that scored first shall qualify as the higher placed. Should this match have ended 0-0 then the toss of a coin shall decide the issue

There will be four pools of four teams, i.e. each team plays three games on the first day. The top two teams in each group qualify for the Cup competition and the remaining two go forward to the Plate competition.

The qualifiers form two further groups of four teams, playing three games each, and the top team from each group will go forward to the Cup final. The eight non-qualifiers will enter a Plate competition and will form two further groups of four teams, playing three games each. The top team from each group will go forward to the Plate final.

3. The duration of all matches on Saturday shall be 30 minutes – 15 minutes each way with a three-minute interval at half time. The duration of all Cup games on Sunday shall be 25 minutes – twelve-and-a-half minutes each way with a three-minute interval at half time. The duration of all Plate games on Sunday shall be 25 minutes – twelve-and-a-half minutes each way with a half time interval. RFU guidelines dictate that U19 players should play no more than 90 minutes in a day. It will be the sole responsibility of the coaching staff of each school to ensure these guidelines are adhered to. The Laws of the Game of Rugby Union Football shall be applied.
4. The duration of the Plate final shall be 30 minutes - 15 minutes each way with a half time interval. Should the teams be level at the end of normal time, extra time will not be played. The tie shall be decided by:

- If equal:
1. The side scoring most tries is the winner
- If equal:
2. The side scoring the first try is the winner
 3. The side scoring first is the winner
 4. Should the tie end at 0-0 the finalists shall be declared joint winners



The duration of the Cup final shall be 30 minutes – 15 minutes each way with a half time interval. Should the teams be level at the end of normal time, extra time will not be played. The tie shall be decided by:

1. The side scoring most tries is the winner
- If equal:
2. The side scoring the first try is the winner
- If equal:
3. The side scoring first is the winner
 4. Should the tie end at 0-0 the finalists shall be declared joint winners
5. Schools will be required to certify that all nominated players are full time students attending the school for which they are nominated. The age group definition for the Tournament is in line with the RFU 'Age Grades and Applicable Variations', under the age group ruling that all players must be Under 18. Please note that following feedback, there will be a return to the strict U18 categorisation of this Festival and as such all players should have been born on or after 1st September 2001. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that the correct process has been followed for any U16 players 'playing up'.
 6. Replacements may be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game of Rugby Union Football. We would like to highlight that there is an expectation that teams participating in this Festival adhere to the 'Half Game Policy' and that we have been asked to provide feedback on this following the event.
 7. Should a team be forced to go to uncontested scrums during a match at any time within the tournament they will have to reduce to 14 players for the remainder of that match. This will be done by removing a backline player from the field of play. That is, the scrum on both sides will still remain an uncontested eight-man scrum. If a team must go uncontested from the start of a match, the above will apply for the whole duration of that game.
 8. Any player receiving a Yellow card will be temporarily sent-off for four minutes in the 30-minute games and three minutes in the 25-minute games. Any player sent off the field of play will not be allowed to take further part in the competition, and will be reported back to his Head Teacher for review of whether further sanction is appropriate, or not. The team may start the next game in the tournament with a full complement of players.
 9. Each school will advise the organisers of their colours at the time of entry. An alternative set of jerseys must be available and, in the event of a clash of colours, the team named second in the programme shall be required to change. The referee will make any decision with regard to the clash of colours.
 10. It is the responsibility of each school to ascertain their playing commitments throughout the tournament, and to be present at the pitch where they are due to play 10 minutes before the advertised kick off time. Failure to observe this rule could result in forfeiture of the match in the qualifying series.
 11. Any matter arising from these rules shall be referred to the Tournament referee whose decision shall be final.
 12. The organisers reserve the right, in the event of inclement weather or for any other reason, to alter the format of the competition and/or the programme. Clarification and instructions in such case will be issued by the Tournament Control.
 13. These rules supersede any previous ones issued.

