



NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RUGBY LEAGUE

2026 COMPETITION

BY-LAWS

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NEWCASTLE & HUNTER RUGBY LEAGUE COMPETITIONS BY-LAWS

This handbook incorporates the rules and By-Laws for all Newcastle & Hunter Rugby League (NHRL) Competitions for the Clubs participating. Newcastle & Hunter RL along with the NSWRL will determine the requirements in terms of teams entering a Competition.

This document will be a 'living' document. It will see additions and changes as the seasons pass, when new policies and procedures are introduced, or existing ones are amended. As such, it is recommended not to print and instead access when required online.

These By-Laws should be read in conjunction with the [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

Note: All correspondence regarding any NHRL Competition matter can be directed through the NHRL Administrator or NSWRL staff.

COMPETITION BY-LAWS 2026

COMPETITIONS

1. Age Groups

- 1.1. Tackle: Open Age
 - 1.1.1. Players must be seventeen (17) years of age before being allowed to play Senior International Open Age Rugby League
- 1.2. Blues Tag: Open Age
 - 1.2.1. The minimum age to participate in Open Age Blues Tag Competitions is 16. The player must be turning 16 in the calendar year to be eligible to participate.

2. Match Durations

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|
| 2.1 | Open Age Tackle | 2 x 40-minute halves |
| 2.2 | Open Age League Tag | 2 x 25-minute halves |
| 2.3 | Half-time in all competitions is 10 minutes whistle to whistle maximum. | |

3. Competition Points

- 3.1. Competition points are awarded as follows:
 - 3.1.1. Win = 2 points (also for a team receiving a forfeit)
 - 3.1.2. Draw = 1 points
 - 3.1.3. Loss = 0 points (also for a team receiving a forfeit)
 - 3.1.4. Bye = 2 points
 - 3.1.5. Abandoned = 1 points (foul play abandonment excluded)

4. Facilities

- 4.1. The NHRL, in collaboration with the NSWRL, reserves the right to deem a venue unfit to play and either move or postpone any matches if required.
- 4.2. It is to be noted that some local Community Rugby League venues have environments which may alter the rules of the game or bench/sin bin areas. These will be explained at each venue and are to be determined by the Ground Manager, Match Officials and NSWRL (approval is required from NHRL and NSWRL prior to commencement of season).
- 4.3. See [NRL League Preferred Facilities guidelines](#) for more information.

5. NHRL Logo Placement and Usage

- 5.1 To be eligible to participate in NHRL competitions, all on-field team apparel must display the NHRL logo in accordance with NHRL direction, in addition to the NSWRL logo.
- 5.2 The NHRL logo must be positioned on the chest of the playing jersey. The NSWRL logo must be positioned on the lower left hemline of the jersey.
- 5.3 From time to time, NHRL may enter into new sponsorship arrangements that require the placement of additional logos on playing and/or off-field apparel. Clubs must comply with any such direction issued by NHRL.
- 5.4 A breach of the NHRL logo and sponsorship requirements may result in the imposition of penalties, including fines and/or loss of competition points.

ADMINISTRATION

6. Team Nominations

- 6.1 Teams must nominate under a singular club entity. That is, separate teams cannot merge and play as a non-existent entity.
- 6.2 Clubs must submit team nominations to NSWRL by a determined date and time prior to the commencement of the competition using the correct nomination form (NSWRL supplied).
- 6.3 The NHRL, in collaboration with the NSWRL, reserve the right to add teams up until the completion of round three (3). Under exceptional circumstances, application for a team nomination after round three (3) may be submitted to the NHRL for consideration.
- 6.4 The NHRL reserve the right to place conditions of entry on all clubs wishing to nominate for any competition e.g. sponsorship requirements. These conditions will be outlined as part of the team nomination process.
- 6.5 The NHRL Board shall be entitled to refuse the entry application of any club to enter a competition at their discretion.
- 6.6 The NHRL Board shall be entitled to remove a club from a competition at their discretion.

7. Trial Sanctioning

- 7.1 Requests for trials must be approved by NSWRL and NHRL via submission through the [NSWRL Event Sanctioning Form](#).
- 7.2 It is the responsibility of the host club to apply for sanctioning of their trials.
- 7.3 Requests for trials must be lodged at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled time to allow for referee scheduling.
- 7.4 Clubs are encouraged to submit trial nominations at the beginning of the planning phase.
- 7.5 A trial will not be approved if the participating clubs have not registered a minimum number of registrations deemed required for the match/es to proceed. The minimum will generally be set as per the minimum number of players required to take the field as per the Laws of the Game.
- 7.6 Approval of trials will be dependent on referee and venue availability.
- 7.7 All trial matches must have team lists and match results submitted post-match to ensure compliance with the NSWRL Policies and Procedures and Laws of the Game.
- 7.8 Trial match results may be used as part of the grading process for the regular competition season.

8. Registrations

- 8.1 All players and team staff must register via MySideline with their participating club.
- 8.2 All returning players and team staff can participate as soon as registration is completed for the current season.
- 8.3 A player changing clubs cannot participate (including training) in any training, trials or competition matches until a clearance or permit has been fully approved within MySideline and the player has completed their registration with the new club.
- 8.4 A new player or team staff cannot participate in any competition until their pending registration has been approved by NSWRL.
 - 8.4.1 A pending registration will only be approved when it contains:
 - 8.4.1.1 An appropriate ID Photo.
 - 8.4.1.2 An ID verification document displaying Full Name and Date of Birth.
 - 8.4.1.3 Is not a duplicate of an existing profile.
 - 8.4.2 It is the responsibility of the club to notify NSWRL of any pending registrations that are ready for approval.

9. De-registration / Unassigning Players from a Team

- 9.1 If a player registers to a club and **DOES NOT** participate in any match, they may be de-registered.
- 9.2 A player **CANNOT** be de-registered from a club in the MySideline system if they have participated in a match however, they can be unassigned from that team. Players remain as registered participants for the remainder of the season.
- 9.3 All deregistrations requests must be received before June 30th.

10. Ladies League Tag

- 10.1 The Minimum Age to participate in Open Age Blues Tag Competitions is 16.
- 10.2 The player must be turning 16 in the calendar year to be eligible to participate.
- 10.3 All applications for a 16-year-old to play Open Age Ladies League Tag must be accompanied by a letter from a Senior Club Coach (SCC), local NRL Game Development Officer, or an appropriate NSWRL appointed representative, as a minimum requirement that outlines the player's ability to take part in an age group three years above their natural age group.

11. Player and Coach Payments

- 11.1 No club participating within the NHRL competitions shall provide, offer or facilitate any form of payment, financial incentive or material benefit to any player as a condition of, or reward for, participating in any competition match.
- 11.2 Clubs shall be entitled to pay their team's designated captain/coach a maximum amount of five thousand dollars (\$5000.00) per season.
- 11.3 Clubs found in breach of these rules may be subject to fines, loss of competition points or removal from the competition.

12. Player Clearances

- 12.1 NSWRL may refuse to grant a Transfer Permission in any of the following circumstances:
 - 12.1.1 If two (2) or more Transfer Permissions have already been granted in respect of Players, who played in the same team for the same Club in the last Season of Community Rugby League, to move to the same New Club for the next Season.
 - 12.1.2 If four (4) or more Transfer Permissions have already been granted in respect of Players, who played for any Club within the League concerned in the last Season of Community Rugby League, to move to the same age group in the same New Club for the next Season.
 - 12.1.3 The enforcement of these rules outlined in 10.1 are solely at the discretion of the Club.
- 12.2 A Clearance Review application can be made for any transfer requests that breach any rules stated under 8.1. A Clearance Review application must be made by the Destination Club and contain supporting documentation as evidence to support the reason for approval.
- 12.3 It is the responsibility of the Destination Club to advise the applicant of the requirements in changing Clubs.

13. Player Higher Level Competitions

- 13.1 Players who have participated in the Denton Engineering Cup competition in the current season are not permitted to play in Newcastle & Hunter RL Competitions unless written approval is obtained from the NHRL Board.
- 13.2 Players who participate in any higher-level Community Competition (Central Coast First Grade, Central Coast Reserve Grade or Newcastle RL Reserve Grade) or Representative Competition (Harold Matthews, Laurie Daley, SG Ball, Jersey Flegg), shall not be permitted to return and play in any Newcastle & Hunter Competitions on that same weekend.
- 13.3 Any player may play up in a higher division or competition (inclusive of all NHRL competitions) for a maximum of seven (7) games only, after which they must apply to and gain written approval from the League for a regrade prior to returning to participate in a lower division. Requests for a regrade must be submitted by 5pm on the Wednesday prior to the day of the match.
- 13.4 Any player may play down in a lower division or competition (inclusive of all NHRL competitions) for a maximum of three (3) games only, after which they must apply to and gain written approval from the League for a regrade prior to returning to participate in a lower division. Requests for a regrade must be submitted by 5pm on the Wednesday prior to the day of the match.
- 13.5 Where a club from the Newcastle Rugby League enters a team in a NHRL competition, a full list of players, up to a maximum of thirty (30), must be supplied to NSWRL prior to the commencement of Round 1. No player from outside that list will subsequently be eligible to play for that team in their nominated competition unless dispensation is given prior to their participation by the NHRL.
- 13.6 In all NHRL Competitions, when a higher-grade Team has a Bye, players can only participate for a lower grade team if they have previously participated for the same Team prior to the Bye. If they have never played for that Team, then they cannot play. This includes Teams from Newcastle RL competitions.
- 13.7 Similarly, should a higher-grade team forfeit, players can only participate for the lower grade team if they have previously participated for that lower grade team prior to that weekends forfeit.
- 13.8 Clubs found with players not complying with the above shall be deemed to have participated unqualified and may face fines, loss of competition points and/or forfeit the match in line with Section 1.5 Fines and Fees of the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual.

14. Grading / Re-Grading

- 14.1 Grading of teams will be determined by the NHRL Board in collaboration with the NSWRL staff.
- 14.2 Previous season results and player movement will be taken into consideration.
- 14.3 As a guideline, the premiers and minor premiers from the previous season will be considered for promotion to the higher division. The bottom two placed teams will subsequently be considered for relegation down a division should they so choose.
- 14.4 Clubs will have the ability to nominate a division however, this will only be a recommendation and cannot be guaranteed.
- 14.5 The NHRL Board, in collaboration with NSWRL staff, will have the ability to move teams from their current division at any stage before the commencement of Round 5.
- 14.6 Once the regrade period has been completed, no further requests will be considered.
- 14.7 Any team is regraded to a different division, their competition points will carry across along with for and against points.

15. Accreditation Requirements

- 15.1 Coaches must hold an appropriate accreditation as per the NRL National Coach Accreditation Scheme.
- 15.2 Sports Trainers must hold the appropriate accreditation for the role and team age group under the NRL On-Field Policy.
- 15.3 Any team found to have participated in a match with an unaccredited team staff member may face fines, suspensions or loss of competition points as determined by NHRL and NSWRL.
- 15.4 Clubs will be reminded at regular intervals throughout the season of any volunteers that do not meet the requirements as outlined by the NRL up until June 30. After this date, Squad Management will be locked in MySideline and unaccredited team staff removed from their team squads.
- 15.5 At all times, the NRL On-Field Policy must be complied with and minimum accreditation requirements need to be met by all teams before games can commence.
- 15.6 All Sports Trainers must comply with all aspects of the NRL On-Field Policy and related concussion management policies and procedures.
- 15.7 At all times, all Team Staff must comply with the direction of the Ground Manager/s and Match Officials.
- 15.8 At all times, all Team Staff should abide by the requirements of the NRL National Code of Conduct.
- 15.9 Only registered and appropriately accredited Team Staff are permitted to be inside the playing area.

16. Draws and Times

- 16.1 An annual season calendar, outlining dates of regular season and finals series rounds, will be distributed to all participating Clubs prior to the commencement of the season.
- 16.2 Draws will be created and managed by NSWRL.
- 16.3 Clubs will be allocated matches of which they will be required to allocate times and venues (deadlines will be set to ensure a forward draw is available).
- 16.4 Once dates and times for fixtures have been allocated, any requests for change will be required to be received by NSWRL staff at least twenty-eight (28) days prior to the current fixture date.

17. Forfeits

- 17.1 It is the responsibility of the Club to notify an intention to forfeit in writing to their scheduled opponent Club and the NSWRL at the earliest opportunity.
- 17.2 Teams that forfeit prior to 8:00pm on the Thursday before the weekend round of fixtures will be required to pay a forfeit fee of \$600.00 for an away fixture and \$200.00 for a home fixture. The forfeit fee will be used to offset claimed expenses incurred by the team receiving the forfeit.
- 17.3 Teams who forfeit after the stipulated time will be required to pay a forfeit fee of \$1000.00 for an away fixture and \$400.00 for a home fixture. The forfeit fee will be used to offset claimed expenses incurred by the team receiving the forfeit.
- 17.4 Any forfeit fines issued are payable to the NHRL within 7 days of the forfeit. If not paid the team will be forced to forfeit the following match. Proceeds will then be distributed to the clubs affected by the forfeit at the discretion of NHRL.
- 17.5 The result for a forfeited match will be set at 30-0.
- 17.6 All forfeits submitted will remain in effect if the match/round is later abandoned/washed out.
- 17.7 Any team that forfeits in the final three (3) rounds of the season and are final series contenders will need to show cause to the NHRL Board as to why they should not be disqualified from the competition.
- 17.8 Any team that forfeits two (2) times throughout the regular season will need to show cause to the NHRL Board as to why they should not be disqualified from the competition.
- 17.9 Any team that forfeits three (3) times throughout the regular season will be disqualified from the competition.
- 17.10 For finals eligibility purposes, all players listed in the Forfeit Receiving team's squad in MySideline will have the matches counted towards their participation. This team list must be submitted through MySideline Manager before the result of the match is finalised at 9am Monday.
- 17.11 See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for conditions around forfeits and minimum player numbers.

18. Fines

- 18.1 NSWRL and NHRL are the only entities permitted to issue fines for Rules and By-Law's breaches for clubs/teams playing in NHRL Competitions.
- 18.2 Payment is payable within seven (7) days of receiving the Fine Invoice. Non-payment will result in a forfeit by the offending team in the preceding competition match.
- 18.3 See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) in relation to fines schedule.

19. Video and Photography Policy

- 19.1 Any person, Club or Association wishing to take, make or record video footage or photographs must first seek and obtain the prior written permission of the NHRL and/or NSWRL.
- 19.2 It is Community Rugby League Policy to rely upon any video evidence which may have been captured either within the playing area or outside of the playing area for the purposes of any citings, match review or Code of Conduct matters. Should the League require a full unedited version of a video, that must be produced. Failure to provide this evidence when requested may result in fines and/or loss of competition points.
- 19.3 All clubs and teams must adhere to the NSWRL Video and Photography Policy. See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

20. Appeals and Protests (Competition Related)

- 20.1 In relation to NHRL Competition rules, Protests can be lodged when a club believes the rules and/or procedures have not been adhered to.
- 20.2 Only Clubs can lodge appeals, not individuals.
- 20.3 If a Club wishes to lodge a Protest, a \$500.00 fee applies (payable to NHRL). If the Protest is upheld, the \$500.00 fee will be refunded to the club lodging the Protest.
- 20.4 All Protests should be in writing and addressed to the NSWRL via email by 4.00pm on the Monday following the match.
- 20.5 In all finals series matches, a Protest will only be accepted if "intention to protest" is marked on the Official Match Sheet within 15 minutes of the completion of the match in question. The name of the Club and Team Official protesting must be included. Clubs will then need to outline the terms of the Protest as per 15.4.
- 20.6 The decision of a protest by the NHRL is final and binding and cannot be appealed against.

21. Code of Conduct and Judiciary Procedures

- 21.1 Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents or carers of players, coaches, officials and Club supporters.
- 21.2 All Judiciary, Code of Conduct and Appeal procedures are to be in line with [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and NRL Code of Conduct.
- 21.3 All NHRL Competition Code of Conduct and Judiciary incidents will be reviewed by the NSWRL Incident Review Committee.
- 21.4 The NSWRL Tough Love in League Policy will be implemented across all competitions. See section 5.4 Tough Love in League Policy under the [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
- 21.5 Breaches of the NRL Code of Conduct and Tough Love in League Policy may result in penalties, including but not limited to:
 - 21.5.1 Suspension of a match.
 - 21.5.2 Termination of a match (including potential forfeiture of competition points).
 - 21.5.3 Monetary fines.
 - 21.5.4 Loss of Competition Points
 - 21.5.5 Suspension of a participant on a temporary or permanent basis.
 - 21.5.6 Suspension of a Team or Club on a temporary or permanent basis.
- 21.6 The above penalties may be in addition to any penalty which may be imposed by a Judiciary Panel.
- 21.7 All Judiciary or Code of Conduct Hearings will be conducted online via platforms such as Zoom or any other technology as required.

GAME DAY RULES

22. Ground Managers

- 22.1 Home clubs are responsible for appointing Ground Managers to venues during matches.
- 22.2 Where necessary, a team may be required to provide a Ground Manager for Away matches in the event of disciplinary issues.
- 22.3 Ground Managers are responsible for:
 - 22.3.1 Ensuring sign on processes are adhered to.
 - 22.3.2 Results sheets are filled in correctly and in a timely manner after each match.
 - 22.3.3 General control of matches in accordance with [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
 - 22.3.4 Liaising with match officials.
 - 22.3.5 Enforcing correct trainer/manager/coach and spectator behaviour.
 - 22.3.6 Ensuring appropriate judiciary reports forms/sheets are available to the match officials and provided to all parties concerned in the event of an incident.
- 22.4 Ground Managers are required to be visible at all times during matches either at the officials table or on the sideline, wearing the NSWRL provided purple Ground Manager vest.
- 22.5 Ground Managers will be heavily involved in the enforcement of the NRL Code of Conduct for off-field concerns, in particular being aware of the Newcastle & Hunter RL Competition By-Laws and reporting of incidents.
- 22.6 NHRL Directors reserve the right to act as Ground Managers at any fixtures as required.

23. Sign on Sheets / Results Sheets

- 23.1 All clubs must use the International Single Team Sheet as generated by the MySideline database.
- 23.2 Each team is required to supply their own Team Sheet for game day.
- 23.3 The Ground Manager will be responsible for ensuring sign on sheets have been completed and verified as correct in a timely manner.
- 23.4 Both teams are required to go through the same process when signing on (this isn't to be different between home and away teams).
- 23.5 A player may sign on at any time during a match.
- 23.6 If a player does not sign on, they will NOT be deemed to have played in that match for finals eligibility purposes.
- 23.7 A player who takes part in a different grade to their primary team is required to be written on the sign on sheet if they have not been assigned via MySideline Manager beforehand. This player MUST be assigned to the match before it is Finalised.
- 23.8 Each team manager is responsible for ensuring all players that participated in the match have been assigned to the Team List within MySideline Manager. This should be completed before the match is finalised.
- 23.9 Each team manager is responsible for ensuring all team staff that participated in the match have been assigned to the Team List within MySideline Manager. This should be completed before the match is finalised.
- 23.10 Failure to accurately record player and team staff participation in a match may result in fines and/or forfeiture of the affected match.
- 23.11 All sin bins and send offs must be recorded on the team sheet and MySideline Manager.
- 23.12 The home team manager is responsible for ensuring final match results are entered via MySideline Manager.

24. Player/Team Staff Identification

- 24.1 A condition of Newcastle & Hunter RL Competitions is that a player or volunteer is NOT permitted to participate in a match without a digital player registration identification card being present. **NO CARD = NO PLAY.**
- 24.2 Digital Cards must be available and reviewed by the Ground Manager prior to the commencement of any competition match with all players/team staff to sign on accordingly.
- 24.3 Any issues with player/team staff identification must be submitted to NSWRL prior to 11am Monday following the match.
- 24.4 Teams found not complying with any of the above rules may be deemed to have participated unqualified and may face fines and/or forfeit the match in line with the [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
- 24.5 In the event Identification is unavailable due to exceptional circumstances, NSWRL should be contacted. If the circumstances were unforeseeable and it can be proven that registration on MySideline with an appropriate identification photo exists, no further action will be taken.

25. First Aid / Sports Trainers

- 25.1 All trainers are required to comply with the NRL On Field Policy, including the performance of duties specific to their designated role, such as the provision of water to players and the management of on-field injuries.
- 25.2 The NRL On Field Policy must be adhered to with respect to trainers.
- 25.3 As a minimum, a League Safe accreditation is required for any Team Staff to enter the field of play.
- 25.4 Each team must ensure that they have meet the minimum Sports Trainer requirements as per the NRL On Field Policy:
 - 25.4.1 Tackle - One (1) Level 1 Sports Trainer per team.
 - 25.4.2 Blues Tag – One (1) Level 1 Sports Trainer per match.
- 25.5 For any reason, if a team does not meet the minimum requirements as per the NRL On Field Policy, then the match MUST NOT commence.
- 25.6 Coaches and players cannot act as a trainer in any match.
- 25.7 Trainers must comply with any direction or instruction from the match officials or ground manager.
- 25.8 Trainers must not make argumentative, disparaging, derogatory or offensive comments to any Match Official or Ground Manager.
- 25.9 All trainers who enter the field of play must possess proof of accreditation (e.g. MySideline Digital Card) and have it available to the Ground Manager.
- 25.10 Trainers must not enter the field of play in the line of sight of a player or interfere with an opposition player.

26. Head Injury and Concussion Management

- 26.1 See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#), the [NRL Concussion Policy and Management Guidelines](#), and the [NRL On-Field Policy](#).
- 26.2 All players suspected of suffering a concussion must complete a [Medical Clearance Form](#) before being allowed to return to full contact training or match play.
- 26.3 Additional information and resources can be found on the [Play Rugby League Concussion Hub](#).

27. On Field Playing Apparel (Uniforms)

- 27.1 All clubs and teams must adhere to the NSWRL Licensing Program. See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for more information.
- 27.2 All on field playing apparel will be reviewed and approved by NHRL.
- 27.3 When team colours clash, the away team should arrange to play in a different set of jerseys.
- 27.4 All jerseys are to be clearly numbered with NO duplicates.

28. Time Keeping

- 28.1 The home team, in conjunction with the away team if they so wish, will be responsible for the keeping of match time.
- 28.2 If the away team does not nominate anyone for this purpose, they must accept the timekeeping of the home team.
- 28.3 All decisions of the official timekeeper shall be final and not open to review or appeal, unless the NHRL determines so in collaboration with the NSWRL.
- 28.4 In all cases, the referee will be the sole judge of when play shall cease after the half-time or full-time siren has sounded.
- 28.5 The referee may extend the match to award a penalty or to complete the play currently underway, at their discretion.

29. Time Off and Scheduled Time Delays

- 29.1 Time off for all circumstances allowed during the final ten (10) minutes of the second half of regular competition matches at the discretion of the referee.
- 29.2 Matches abandoned with less than the equivalent of one full half of match play being completed will be replayed at the first available scheduled Wash Out Round.
- 29.3 If a match cannot be replayed, the result will be recorded as 0-0 with one (1) competition point awarded to each team.
- 29.4 The result of matches abandoned after half time shall be recorded as the final score at the point of abandonment.
- 29.5 A team shall be allowed a maximum of 15 minutes after a match's scheduled starting time to take the field without any prior confirmation of delay. After 15 minutes the match will be deemed a forfeit.
- 29.6 The game times will remain as per a regular match despite the delay, with consideration around shortening half time break.
- 29.7 See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

30. Sideline Area / Bench Locations

- 30.1 Both the home and away team benches must be on the same side of the field.
- 30.2 Under no circumstances is “barracking” or abuse from the bench permitted. This also refers to advice or assistance to the match officials in relation to their performance or how they should carry out their duties.
- 30.3 Personnel on the bench may comprise only those people directly related to the conduct of the match itself e.g. A Maximum of:
 - 30.3.1.1 2x Coaches (1 Head Coach, 1 Assistant Coach),
 - 30.3.1.2 6x Reserve Players,
 - 30.3.1.3 3x Trainers (1x First Responder, 2x LeagueSafes) with a requirement to be clearly identified with a vest or shirt and have official identification.
 - 30.3.1.4 1x Team Manager
- 30.4 A maximum of six (6) team staff are permitted on the bench, inclusive of the Team Manager who may be seated at the score table.
- 30.5 Under no circumstances is a suspended player permitted inside the playing area or on the bench.
- 30.6 The Ground Manager may request any person on the bench to leave at any time.
- 30.7 Players and Team Staff on the bench must at all times remain at the bench allocated to their team (except for warm-ups).
- 30.8 No one besides the Ground Manager can approach the match officials.
- 30.9 Whilst Team Staff are not expected to sit during the entire match, they must not leave the immediate area surrounding their allocated bench or approach the field of play under any circumstances. Team Staff should be seated whilst not in an active role i.e. making an interchange.
- 30.10 No members of the general public are permitted within the playing area.

31. Interchange

- 31.1 The maximum number of players permitted per competition is as follows:
 - 31.2 Tackle: Up to a maximum of nineteen (19) players are allowed to participate in each match. This includes the starting thirteen (13) and up to six (6) reserves.
 - 31.3 Blues Tag: Up to a maximum of seventeen (17) players are allowed to participate in each match. This includes the starting eleven (11) and up to six (6) reserves.
- 31.4 Unlimited interchange will apply for all competitions.
- 31.5 Teams may only have the maximum number of players allowed to participate in each match, as outlined above, dressed for a match (i.e. where the maximum number of players is 19, a team cannot dress 20 players for a match).

32. Dismissed Players

Temporarily Dismissed Players (Sin Binned)

- 32.1 A player who is temporarily suspended (sin binned) must immediately retire from the playing field to the team's assigned dressing room until the period of temporary suspension has expired.
- 32.2 Time of suspension begins only when the referee restarts play or indicates time on (time is to be in accordance with actual playing time).
- 32.3 If more than one player is temporarily suspended in relation to the same incident, the period of temporary suspension commences at the same time and players will return to the field together.
- 32.4 When the temporary suspension expires, players must enter the field of play from an onside position.
- 32.5 Temporary suspension does not include time off and half time. The period of temporary suspension is the actual time that the ball is in play.
- 32.6 Periods of temporary suspension (sin bin) will be 10 minutes across all competitions.

Permanently Dismissed Players (Sent Off)

- 32.7 A player who is permanently dismissed (sent off) must immediately retire to the team's dressing room or an area outside of the playing area designated by the Ground Manager until they have changed out of their playing uniform.
- 32.8 After changing, the player must not re-enter the playing area under any circumstances and will be deemed as a spectator.
- 32.9 Ground Managers must ensure that any permanently dismissed players are made aware that a formal Notice of Charge will be issued the Tuesday following the match under the [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

33. Washout Policy

- 33.1 Every reasonable effort will be made by NHRL and NSWRL to minimise the impact of wet weather on competitions. This may include relocating matches to alternative or neutral venues to maximise the number of games played.
- 33.2 No changes to match venues or kick-off times will be made after 5:00pm on the Thursday preceding the scheduled round.
- 33.3 In extreme circumstances, NHRL reserves the right to abandon an entire round. Where a round is abandoned, no matches may take place under any circumstances.
- 33.4 Any matches unable to proceed as scheduled due to wet weather or ground closure will be rescheduled to the first available designated washout round where available.
- 33.5 When allocating matches to a scheduled washout round, priority will be given to the round with the highest number of postponed fixtures.
- 33.6 NHRL reserves the right to schedule mid-week fixtures for rounds partially affected by weather. Clubs involved in the affected match will be given the opportunity to mutually agree on a new date. If agreement is not reached within fourteen (14) days of the original fixture date, NHRL shall determine the rescheduled date at its discretion. Any fixture scheduled by NHRL under this clause is compulsory. Failure to fulfil the fixture will result in a forfeit.
 - 33.6.1 Where a weather-affected abandoned match falls within fourteen (14) days of the commencement of the Finals Series and cannot be rescheduled prior to Finals, NHRL reserves the right to record the match as a Wash Out Draw.
- 33.7 Any match that cannot proceed due to ground closure or washout will be recorded as a Wash Out Draw (0–0), with each team receiving one (1) competition point.
- 33.8 All teams scheduled for a Bye during a washed-out round will receive two (2) competition points.
- 33.9 Any forfeits submitted in a round affected by washouts shall stand and will not be rescheduled, even if the round is subsequently replayed.
- 33.10 Where a washed-out match involves a team that is subsequently regraded or withdrawn from the competition, the result shall be recorded as follows:
 - 33.10.1 If a team is regraded to a higher division, the match will be recorded as a 0–0 draw, with each team receiving one (1) competition point.
 - 33.10.2 If a team is regraded to a lower division or withdraws from the competition, the match will be recorded as a forfeit by the team exiting the competition.
- 33.11 Any match deemed a Wash Out Draw shall count towards Finals Series Qualifications, provided a team list has been submitted at the time the result is determined.
- 33.12 Any match deemed a Wash Out Draw shall count as a match served for any suspended participant.
- 33.13 In extreme circumstances, the NHRL retain the right to extend the season as required, in consultation with NSWRL and the affiliated Clubs.

34. Cancellation / Postponement / Abandonment of Matches

Emergency Circumstances

- 34.1 Emergency circumstances may include any circumstances deemed to be an emergency by the NHRL, in collaboration with the NSWRL, or stipulated in the [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
- 34.2 If any such occurrence arises, the procedure shall be as follows:
 - 34.2.1 In collaboration, the participating clubs, Match Officials and Ground Manager, shall make the final determination if the match will continue.
 - 34.2.2 If a match is to be delayed due to severe weather conditions, the Ground Manager, in conjunction with the Match Officials, will make a decision on the length of delay or cancellation.
 - 34.2.3 See [NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

Ground Changes / Deferred Games

- 34.3 If a change to the original scheduled venue is required, it must first be approved by NSWRL.
- 34.4 Any club requests for change will be required to be received by NSWRL staff at least twenty-eight (28) days prior to the current fixture date.
- 34.5 Any mass changes due to unforeseeable ground unavailability are required to be finalised and communicated by 5pm on the Thursday prior to the match (note: a small number of games may be moved in certain late notice circumstances due to unforeseeable reasons).
- 34.6 No venue or kick off time changes will be accepted past this point in time.
- 34.7 Abandoned matches (excluding foul play abandonments) will be attempted to be rescheduled under the same provisions outlined under the Washout Policy.
- 34.8 It is the Hosting Club's responsibility to ensure that the NSWRL and/or NHRL are notified of any abandoned matches that have occurred at the venue before 9am on the Monday following the match.

FINALS SERIES

35. Finals Series Structure

- 35.1 The format of the Competition Finals Series will be a five (5) team format played over four (4) consecutive weekends.

5 Team, 4 Week Format

Week 1

Game 1 (Qualifying Final) – 2nd v 3rd

Game 2 (Elimination Final) – 4th v 5th

Week 2

Game 3 (Major Semi Final) – 1st v Winner Game 1

Game 4 (Minor Semi Final) – Loser Game 1 v Winner Game 2

Week 3

Game 5 (Preliminary Final) – Loser Game 3 v Winner Game 4

Week 4

Game 4 (Grand Final) – Winner Game 3 v Winner Game 5

- 35.2 At all Finals matches, each participating Club must provide a Ground Manager to assist the League Staff on game day.

- 35.3 Where two or more teams finish on equal competition points at the conclusion of the regular season, final placings will be determined by For and Against differential.

35.3.1 If teams remain equal, placings will be determined by the highest average points For per match played (excluding Byes and Wash Out Draws).

35.3.2 If teams still remain equal, placings will be determined by the lowest average points Against per match played (excluding Byes and Wash Out Draws).

35.3.3 If teams are still equal, the individual match results between the tied teams will be taken into account to determine final placings.

35.3.4 If still equal, a play off match will be arranged to determine the final standings.

- 35.4 Any team breaching Competition By-Laws in any finals series match, regardless of their position, may be disqualified from the Competition.

- 35.5 If a team withdraws from any competition or is disqualified from any final's series match, any subsequent matches will be deemed a forfeit. No adjustment for previous matches will occur.

36. Finals Eligibility

- 36.1 The eligibility of a player to participate in any final series match (Semi Final, Final or Grand Final) will be determined based on the participants playing record on the completion of the regular rounds of competition.
- 36.2 In all competitions, the minimum number of matches required to qualify for a final's series will be four (4) with that team.
- 36.3 A player will qualify for finals in the team where they have played the majority of their matches during the regular season.
 - 36.3.1 Where a player has participated in the majority of matches in a higher division, they cannot play in a lower division. This is to include players who have participated in external competitions e.g. Newcastle Rugby League Reserve Grade.
 - 36.3.2 Where a player has participated in the majority of matches in a lower division, that player remains eligible to participate in a higher-grade competition within the same club.
 - 36.3.3 If matches played across competitions are even at the end of the regular season, the player will be eligible for both the higher and lower division.
- 36.4 In the case of a player not being able to play the required number of matches due to injury sustained during the season, such player may be permitted to take part in a play-off, semi-final, final or grand final provided:
 - 36.4.1 A doctor's certificate must be available covering the time the player was unable to play.
 - 36.4.2 The certificate must be received by the NSWRL no later than 5:00pm on the Wednesday prior to the last competition match.
- 36.5 If the player was registered late and there were limited matches available, then application can be made to the NHRL Board for review.
 - 36.5.1 If there were sufficient available rounds remaining for a player to qualify, then an application on limited available rounds will be denied.
 - 36.5.2 Applications must be received by the NSWRL no later than 5:00pm on the Wednesday prior to the last competition match.
- 36.6 No applications for Player Eligibility for Finals will be considered if received after the specified cut off time being 5:00pm on the Wednesday prior to the last competition match.
- 36.7 For Finals qualification purposes, matches forfeited by the opposition count towards the minimum regular competition matches required to qualify for the team RECEIVING the forfeit.
- 36.8 Playing unregistered or unqualified players in any Finals Series match will result in the match to be deemed a forfeit and the offending team being disqualified from the Finals with possible further breaches applied.
- 36.9 It is the responsibility of clubs to ensure that any player who participates in a final's series match has successfully met the minimum qualification requirements.

37. Loss of Time and Time Off (Finals)

- 37.1 In Semi-finals, Finals and Grand Finals, should thirty (30) continuous minutes of play be lost due to injury or for any other reason (foul play will be at the discretion of the NHRL Board and may result in the match being forfeited), the game will be terminated and be replayed at a venue and time determined by the NHRL Board in collaboration with the NSWRL and the participating clubs.
- 37.2 In all finals series matches, all time off shall be allowed in both halves at the discretion of the referee.

38. Drawn Matches and Extra Time (Finals)

- 38.1 In Semi-Final and Grand Final matches, if scores are equal at the conclusion of normal time, then a period of golden point extra time will follow in the form of two 10-minute periods (straight turnaround). If a team scores a try or kicks a goal/field goal at any stage within this extra time period, the referee will terminate the game with the team scoring the points declared the winner. If no points are scored at the conclusion of the 10-minute periods, the first scoring team will be declared the winner.

SITUATIONS NOT COVERED

39. Determinations

- 39.1 The Newcastle & Hunter RL determination shall be final should any situation arise that is not covered under these rules including making adjustments to these rules where applicable.
- 39.2 The NHRL retain the right to make adjustments to these Competition By-Laws at any time throughout the competition season as required.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Breach of Conditions to Team Entry Fines

First Offence	Minimum of \$500
Second Offence	Minimum of \$1000
Third Offence	Removal from the competition

Appendix 2

Missing Match Data Entry Fines Scheduled

First Offence	Warning
Second Offence	\$100
Third Offence	\$200
Subsequent Offences	Any continued offences will result in the fine amount continuing to double in reference to the prior indiscretion, as well as a potential loss to the offending team.