

Worcestershire & Herefordshire R.F.U.

Worcester & Hereford RFU Merit Tables Newsletter

Dear Club Official/Fixture Secretary.

The book is now closed on the 2005-2006 Worcester and Hereford RFU Merit table season. Any results or statistics that remain unknown or games unplayed, are now treated as void matches (a 0-0 draw with no points awarded) and below you can see the final tables.

These are also available for view on the website: www.worcs-hfdrfu.co.uk.

Merit Table.....Division 1

Pos	Team Name	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
1	Evesham 2nd	16	12	1	3	315	175	140	25
2	Hereford 2nd	15	11	0	4	403	292	111	22
3	Old Halesonians 2nd	15	8	0	7	269	218	51	16
4	Kidderminster 2nd	16	8	0	8	276	299	-23	16
5	Pershore 2nd	15	6	1	8	242	295	-53	13
6	Uni. College Worcs	13	6	0	7	255	176	79	12
7	Luctonians 3rd	16	5	1	10	215	318	-103	11
8	Droitwich 2nd	15	5	1	9	176	309	-133	11
9	Redditch 2nd	15	5	0	10	216	285	-69	10

Merit Table.....Division 2

Pos	Team Name	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
1	O.Halesonians 3rd	18	15	1	2	443	126	317	31
2	Stourbridge G'hounds	17	11	1	5	408	197	211	23
3	Bromsgrove 3rd	15	10	0	5	386	264	122	20
4	Hereford 3rd	17	8	0	9	287	188	99	16
5	Dudley Kings 4th	17	7	1	9	229	277	-48	15
6	Worcs. Wand'rs 2nd	18	7	0	11	328	356	-28	14
7	Ledbury	18	7	0	11	261	393	-132	14
8	Malvern 3rd	17	6	1	10	168	461	-293	13
9	Stourport 2nd	17	6	0	11	248	344	-96	12
10	Bromyard 2nd	16	6	0	10	158	310	-152	12

Merit Table.....Division 3

Pos	Team Name	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Diff	Points
1	Kidderminster 3rd	18	17	0	1	481	98	383	34
2	Bromsgrove 4th	18	14	0	4	421	221	200	28
3	Kings Norton 2nd	18	11	2	5	451	183	268	24
4	Pershore 3rd	18	11	0	7	324	278	46	22
5	Evesham 3rd	17	9	0	8	321	310	11	18
6	Upton-on-Severn	18	8	0	10	205	302	-97	16
7	Droitwich 3rd	16	5	1	10	161	264	-103	11
8	Tenbury 2nd	17	5	1	11	190	377	-187	11
9	Chaddesley Corb.2nd	18	5	0	13	262	354	-92	10
10	Ledbury 3rd	16	0	0	16	28	457	-429	0

Our congratulations therefore to Evesham 2nds (a hat-trick) , Old Halesonians 3rds and Old Kidderminster 3rds for their respective divisional wins.

At the beginning of the season, we said we would be operating 2-up, 2-down for the promotion and relegation. However, to allow for the inclusion of Woodrush 2nds in next season's competition, we have adjusted the promotions to 3-up.

Further congratulations therefore to Stourbridge Greyhounds and Bromsgrove 3rds (Division2) and Bromsgrove 4ths and King's Norton 2nds (Division 3) who are also promoted.

Our commiserations also to Droitwich 2nds and Redditch 2nds, relegated from Division 1, and to Stourport 2nds and Bromyard 2nds, relegated from Division2.

We wish all 4 teams better luck next season.

In summary, we are quite pleased with the season, and most feedback was good and very enthusiastic, although, as with previous seasons, some issues have arisen, relating to fixture call-offs, which we have therefore tried to address in the section on guidelines below.

We appreciate all feedback given and would remind you that this can be done, a) by the message board on the website, b) by e-mail to the website (all of which are forwarded to me automatically), c) by telephone direct to Rob Bray or myself, d) by e-mail direct to either of us. Contact information is given at the end of this newsletter.

2006-2007 Season:

As a result of the final standings above, and the aforementioned promotions & relegations, as well as the addition of Woodrush 2nds, we are able to confirm the divisional line-ups for 2006-7 as follows:

Division 1:

Evesham 2nds
Hereford 2nds
Kidderminster 2nds
Luctonians 3rds
Old Halesonians 2nds
Persore 2nds
Stourbridge Greyhounds
Uni. Coll. Worcester 2nds
Bromsgrove 3rds
Old Halesonians 3rds

Division 2:

Ledbury 2nds
Malvern 3rds
Worcester Wanderers 2nds
Redditch 2nds
Kidderminster 3rds
King's Norton 2nds
Hereford 3rds
Bromsgrove 4ths
Droitwich 2nds
Dudley Kingswinford 4ths

Division 3:

Tenbury 2nds
Upton-on-Severn 2nds
Droitwich 3rds
Persore 3rds
Stourport 2nds
Bromyard 2nds
Ledbury 3rds
Evesham 3rds
Chaddesley Corbett 2nds
Woodrush 2nds

The divisions remain larger than the original planned 8 teams, and now sit at what we considered a maximum of 10. In general, this works ok, but does make it harder to re-arrange games if postponed. However, we feel the division sizes are still suitable, but by setting this maximum, we hope it still allows enough flexibility to plan other social/friendly/traditional fixtures during the season.

However, in order to be able to adjust the sizes of the leagues, should we generate further interest in the future, we plan to restructure to 4 divisions at the end of the coming season in readiness for 2007-8. This would be 2 divisions of 7 and 2 of 8 teams.

Exactly how this will be worked in terms of promotions/relegations will be worked out during the summer, and an update, along with a refresher of the guidelines will be sent out at the beginning of the season. This will be to ensure that all clubs are fully aware of what they are playing for.

As with the last 3 seasons, we are leaving it to Fixture secretaries to plan the games, and to timetable, as best fits them with their other fixtures, especially where clubs are already playing each other, eg. in the League. This has worked very well in the past, as a general rule, and we see no reason to change this.

For convenience, we would recommend, however, that, where possible, Merit table games are matched to League/Cup weekends, giving more freedom with 'Friendly' weekends. Where possible, we also suggest that you avoid the 'Winter months' in the middle of the season, so as to avoid the need for rearrangements.

If anybody has trouble in sorting these fixtures out, please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Rob Bray(Droitwich RFC) or myself, or contact us via the website, and we will assist in whatever way we can.

Can I also ask that, as fixture lists are completed, a copy is sent to Rob or myself, so that we can load to the website, and keep a record for monitoring results during the season.

League/Fixture Guidelines:

As before, the focus is on competitive, social rugby, more local fixtures, more guaranteed fixtures for lower sides, and an opportunity for clubs to develop their strength in depth.

For that reason, we do not set hard-and-fast laws, as with league or Cup rugby, but rather guidelines, designed to provide sufficient structure to the competition, without being too rigid.

These are listed below:

1. Merit league fixtures should take precedent over other fixtures.
2. Results should be communicated as soon as possible after the game.
3. Players do not need to be registered in order to play – this is to help where clubs wish to try out a new member, prior to registration.
4. If a team has to call off a fixture,

a. due to lack of player availability, then a 'default' victory of 14-0 is awarded to the opposition subject to the match being re-scheduled – the onus is therefore on the cancelling team to endeavour to get the match played. The number of games called off last year was disappointing, and I know as a fixture secretary the decision is never taken lightly. However, too many of these were late call-offs, several on Saturday morning – we appreciate that one-off/extenuating circumstances can happen, but we feel that clubs should have a good idea by Thursday night, so could at least warn the opposition, and should know for sure on Friday evening, still allowing the opposition therefore a chance of securing a friendly fixture via the pool. Please therefore try to respect this and help other clubs.

Although there were no known issues this season, in the past we have had instances where a 2nd team fixture was called off, but the 3rds still played. Normal convention would be that the 3rds should fulfil the 2nds fixture in such circumstances. However, we know there were occasions where the 3rds were genuine, and the 2nds was 'merged' into a 1st team league game, effectively playing as an A team. In some of those cases, stepping the 3rds up could have left some of them out of their depth – a concern if there are younger players involved. We don't want one-sided fixtures, but accept that this may sometimes happen. However, we do need to give safety the proper consideration. I would ask clubs to fulfil the higher fixture, and postpone the lower in such circumstances, UNLESS there would be a REAL risk to players. We would like to trust the clubs' honesty on this, so as not to be too strict, and leave it to the captains/fixture secretaries to agree the appropriate fixtures. However, if we feel a team does call off a game for a higher side, and subsequently wins the lower fixture by a disproportionate amount, we reserve the right to reverse the result.

b. due to unplayable pitches, we suggest that the first course of action is to reverse the fixture if that is possible. Secondly, some clubs may find it possible to play at a neighbouring club. The more likely event is that the game should be re-scheduled, which both clubs should endeavour to do. If the weather is at fault, and both clubs have made reasonable effort, then neither will forfeit.

5. Teams should start the game with an experienced front row, and therefore with contested scrums. In the event that, at the last minute, this is not possible, on agreement between both captains, the game can take place with uncontested scrums. The referee should obviously be advised.
6. A maximum of 5 replacements can be used, where player availability allows, and we advise front row cover where possible. Teams can, however, play without replacements, or anything up to 5, if player availability, or requirements in other teams dictate this
7. Similarly, if a team cannot quite raise a full complement of 15 players- ie. They have 12, 13, 14- on agreement between the two captains, they can play short – games should not be called off for this reason if the sides are happy to play. Also, if the captains agree, there is no problem with borrowing players

8. If a game does not take place, we will allow up to 8 weeks for a new date to be set(not necessarily played). If this cannot be done in the time scale, the forfeit of the fixture, or the 'void result' will stand. This is to avoid late chase-ups of games/results and/or frantic re-arrangements late in the season.

9. In the case of a disputed result or an issue over a particular game, myself and Rob, in consultation, will be judge of who forfeits the game, or any other impact. Due to our respective interest in Ledbury and Droitwich, we will not judge on our own clubs.

If we feel unhappy in making any particular decisions, we will refer to the Worcester and Hereford RFU Committee.

A copy of these guidelines will also be shared with the Referee's Societies.

If any of you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Rob or myself.

Best Regards

Trevor Humphrey(also on behalf of Rob Bray)

Contact info.:

Trevor Humphrey(Ledbury RFC)

8 Sunshine Close

Ledbury

Herefordshire

HR8 2DZ

Tel.: 01531 6357774

Mob.: 07808 987846

E-mail: Trevor.Humphrey@Xerox.com

Website: www.worcs-hfdfsrfu.co.uk , mail address: results@worcs-hfdfsrfu.co.uk

Rob Bray(Droitwich RFC)

6 Drovers Way,

Astwood Farm,

Worcester

WR3 8QD

Tel.: 01905 455258

E-mail: Robert@bray71.freeserve.co.uk