

Worcestershire & Herefordshire R.F.U.

Worcester & Hereford RFU Merit Tables Newsletter

Dear Club Official/Fixture Secretary.

The book is now closed on the 2003-2004 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-hfdrsrfu.co.uk.

Div 1

Team	p	w	l	d	f	a	diff	pts	
Evesham II	16	13	2	0	353	143	210	26	81.3%
Kidderminster II	16	9	6	0	359	203	156	18	56.3%
Hereford II	16	9	4	0	294	187	107	18	56.3%
Luctonians III	16	9	7	0	301	285	16	18	56.3%
Old Halesonians II	16	8	6	0	163	147	16	16	50.0%
Pershore II	16	6	8	0	228	222	6	12	37.5%
Droitwich II	16	5	8	0	200	232	-32	10	31.3%
Ledbury II	16	4	12	0	138	405	-267	8	25.0%
Malvern III	16	0	11	0	48	287	-239	0	0.0%

Div 2

Team	p	w	l	d	f	a	diff	pts	
Univ. Coll. Worcester II	18	15	0	0	603	82	521	30	83.33%
Redditch II	18	13	5	0	357	260	97	26	72.22%
Stourbridge IV	18	10	6	0	437	258	179	20	55.56%
Bromsgrove III	18	10	8	0	372	305	67	20	55.56%
Worcester Wanderers II	18	10	8	0	328	308	20	20	55.56%
Hereford III	18	9	9	0	342	209	133	18	50.00%
Stourport II	18	9	9	0	251	412	-161	18	50.00%
Bromyard II	18	5	12	0	177	317	-140	10	27.78%
Tenbury II	18	3	13	0	144	319	-175	6	16.67%
Upton-on-Severn II	18	1	17	0	91	601	493	2	5.56%

Div 3

Team	p	w	l	d	f	a	diff	pts	
Old Halesonians III	14	13	1	0	408	122	286	26	92.86%
Dudley Kings. IV	14	10	4	0	259	176	83	20	71.43%
Droitwich III	14	9	3	0	210	114	96	18	64.29%
Pershore III	14	9	5	0	317	250	67	18	64.29%
Bromsgrove IV	14	4	9	1	213	220	-7	9	28.57%
Kidderminster III	14	3	11	0	141	262	-121	6	21.43%
Ledbury III	14	3	10	0	140	372	-232	6	21.43%
Evesham III	14	2	10	1	151	316	-165	5	14.29%
Malvern IV	void - withdrew 2.2.05								
Luctonians IV	void - withdrew 2.2.05								

18.5.05

* games not re-arranged /or results not furnished

As we stated at the beginning of the season, it is 2-up, 2-down for the promotion and relegation.

Our congratulations therefore to Evesham, University College of Worcester and Old Halesonians for their respective divisional wins, and also to Redditch 2nds and Dudley Kingswinford 4ths who are also promoted.

Our commiserations also to Ledbury 2nds and Malvern 3rds, relegated from Division 1, and to Tenbury 2nds and Upton 2nds, relegated from Division 2. We wish all 4 teams better luck next season.

The above status takes account of all games played, where results have been received, and any unfulfilled games, where a result can be determined by forfeiture of the fixture. These are seen in the W, L and D columns. For anything else, the game is determined as void, as stated above. This is so that teams who have fulfilled the fixtures are not adversely impacted by results attributed to games never played. All real results, forfeits and voids are accounted for in the 'played' quantity.

In summary, we are quite pleased with the season, and most feedback was good and very enthusiastic, although, as with the season before, 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.

2005-2006 Season:

As a result of the final standings above, I have already mentioned the promotions & relegations above.

We were sorry to lose both Malvern 4ths and Luctonians 4ths during the season, who were struggling to get sufficient players to fulfil their fixtures. At this stage, neither side is attempting to rejoin for next season.

However, we do have 2 new additions:

Both Redditch 3rds and King's Norton 2nds have expressed an interest in joining, and they are therefore added into Division 3 for the coming season.

The new divisions are therefore confirmed as follows:

Division 1:

Evesham 2nds
Hereford 2nds
Kidderminster 2nds
Luctonians 3rds
Old Halesonians 2nds
Persore 2nds
Droitwich 2nds
Uni. Coll. Worcester 2nds
Redditch 2nds

Division 2:

Ledbury 2nds
Malvern 3rds
Worcester Wanderers 2nds
Stourbridge Greyhounds
Bromsgrove 3rds
Stourport 2nds
Hereford 3rds
Bromyard 2nds
Old Halesonians 3rds
Dudley Kingswinford 4ths

Division 3:

Tenbury 2nds
Upton-on-Severn 2nds
Droitwich 3rds
Persore 3rds
Bromsgrove 4ths
Kidderminster 3rds
Ledbury 3rds
Evesham 3rds
Redditch 3rds
King's Norton 2nds

The divisions remain larger than the original planned 8 teams. 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, and still allow enough flexibility to plan other social/friendly/traditional fixtures during the season. A division of 10, however, is considered the maximum, so if we generate further interest in the future, we would need to adjust the sizes of the leagues.

In such a case, we would make sure that you are all given as much notice as possible, so that you are all fully aware of what you 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.

We also had instances last year 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 (Tenbury borrowed 7 in one game last year! But at least the game got played, and the other 22 players did not lose out!)

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)

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