

# Worcestershire & Herefordshire R.F.U.

## Worcester & Hereford RFU Merit Tables Newsletter

### Division Update 2005-6

Dear Club Official/Fixture Secretary.

Further to the letter in May, which outlined last season's tables, and the new divisions for 2005-6, there was an update in the participants of next season – just as the County General Purposes AGM was beginning!. Either due to your presence at that meeting, phone calls from me the night after, or as a result of conversations with other fixture secretaries, I believe that all clubs are now aware that Redditch 3rds have decided not to take part in the Merit tables for the forthcoming season, and have been replaced by Chaddesley Corbett 2nds, who have confirmed they wanted to join: the latter had previously shown an interest, but we had not received any confirmation prior to the previous publication.

This letter is just a quick formal confirmation to officially publish the revised set-up. It also gives the opportunity to re-confirm the guidelines, especially useful where club officials may recently have changed.

### 2005-2006 Season:

#### 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  
Chaddesley Corbett 2nds  
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.

At this stage, we already have a potential 2 further clubs for next season. We will try to confirm their participation as soon as possible, as this would imply a change in divisional structure.

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. Our target would be to inform you therefore in a mid-season update, around Christmas/New Year.

Hopefully, for the new season, and inspite of the late change above, you are all progressing fixtures very well, and are near complete.

Can I also ask that, as fixture lists are indeed 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. A thank you to those who have already sent them in.

### **League/Fixture Guidelines:**

As stated several times 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 2<sup>nd</sup> team fixture was called off, but the 3<sup>rd</sup>s still played. Normal convention would be that the 3<sup>rd</sup>s should fulfil the 2<sup>nd</sup>s fixture in such circumstances. However, we know there were occasions where the 3<sup>rd</sup>s were genuine, and the 2<sup>nd</sup>s was ‘merged’ into a 1<sup>st</sup> team league game, effectively playing as an A team. In some of those cases, stepping the 3<sup>rd</sup>s 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.

At this stage I should like to remind you that 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 below.

Enjoy your summer breaks and good luck for the new season.

Best Regards

Trevor Humphrey(also on behalf of Rob Bray)

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