

Kinsale Rugby 7's Tournament Rules 2026

The competition will have a distinct tournament structure depending upon number of teams entered. Please refer to the separate competition specific information for further details.

1. Pool Stage Matches

The first round of games will be played in pools on a round robin basis. For composition of pools please see competition specific information. Following the pool round there will be knock-out rounds.

1.1 Play will consist of matches between teams in the same pool on a round-robin basis. Pool matches will be seven (7) minutes each way with a one (1) minute half-time break.

1.2 All Pool Matches carry the following points:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a draw
- 0 points for a loss

1.3 In the event of two or more teams being equal on competition points for any position in the pool table the higher placed team will be determined using the following sequence:

- A. If two teams are involved and have played each other, 'the head-to-head' the winning team will take the higher position. If more than two teams have equal points this rule will not apply.
- B. The margin of points scored for and against a team in all pool matches shall be considered. The team with the highest positive margin of points shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie remains unsolved then;
- C. The team that scores the most points in all pool matches shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie remains unsolved then;
- D. The team that concedes the least points in all pool matches shall be ranked higher in the pool table. In the event that the tie still remains unresolved then;
- E. If teams are still tied after all the above, the winner will be decided by the toss of a coin between the Managers of the teams concerned.

2. Knock Out Stage Matches

Following the completion of the pool play there will be knock-out finals stages. The draw will be based upon the team positions in the pool tables. For details on the knockout stages please see the competition specific information.

2.1 All quarterfinals, semi-finals and the final will be played on a knock out basis.

2.2 All quarter finals and semi-finals games will be seven (7) minutes each way with a one (1) minute halftime break.

2.3 The Elite Finals will be ten (10) minutes each way with a two (2) minute halftime break.

2.4 In the event of a match being drawn at the end of normal time (in the knock-out stages) the winner will be decided on the following basis:

- The team which scored the most tries wins, if that doesn't resolve then;

- The team that scored the first try wins.

2.5 In the case of the Elite Mens and Ladies Open finals, in the event of a tie at full time extra time will be played in five (5) minute periods until a winner is determined. There will be an interval of 1 minute after full time has been declared then extra time play shall commence. The first team to score (The 'Golden Score' rule) will immediately be declared the winner and play will cease. After each five (5) minute period of extra time, teams will change ends, without stoppage, and resume play.

2.6 A score disputed after the match has finished must be brought to the attention of Match Control, prior to the commencement of their next game or within 15 minutes of match completion whichever is soonest. A committee of the Referee, team captains and match control officials will determine the correct result and their decision is final.

2.7 All teams are required to be at the allocated field and ready to start 5 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time and make themselves known to the pitch marshals at the pitch. Any team not present at kick-off time will forfeit the match. A score of 20 points to nil will be applied in favour of the offended team. If neither team shows for the match, a score of 0-0 will be recorded and 1 point awarded to each team.

2.8. Should a game not kick-off on time for reasons other than the no-show of one of the participants (usually due to injury time in a previous match), Match Control will have the option to shorten the match to enable it to finish on time.

3. Rules of the Tournament and Variations

3.1 The rules of the Tournament, including their interpretation, are matters for the Disputes Committee. The Kinsale 7's Tournament Director will appoint a Disputes Committee to arbitrate on all matters concerning the rules of the Tournament. The Disputes Committee will be convened only if an official complaint is registered with the Tournament Manager. If the complaint is with reference to a specific event, it must be raised within 15 minutes of the event. Any other matters arising that are not covered by the rules, or ambiguity of these rules, the Committee shall make a ruling after interpreting the rules in the best interests of the game. Its decision shall be final, without appeal. The Disputes Committee will be 5 people with at least 3 to be present for a dispute hearing to be held.

3.2 All the matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game of Rugby Football (as published by the IRB including all 7-a-side variations) and the rulings therein, together with all by-laws and directives of the IRFU, IRB and the Kinsale 7's.

3.3. At the Kinsale 7s, conversions *must* be taken on the field of play.

4. Abandonment

4.1 If a team refuses to play or abandons a match in progress without the prior consent of the referee, that team will forfeit the match and be excluded from further participation in the competition. Appeals under special circumstances may be considered by the Disputes Committee who may allow the team to continue participation in the competition.

4.2 If the referee or a tournament official abandons a match:

- a) At halftime or any time in the second half, the score will stand.
- b) During the first half, the result will be declared a draw unless the match is a knock-out or final stage competition in which case the score will stand.
- c) Due to conduct of a team, while the other opposing team will be awarded the match, and the future participation of that team in the tournament will be decided by the Disputes Committee.

5. Declaration of Squads, Teams and Requirements

5.1 Team squads will consist of a maximum of twelve (12) eligible players.

5.2 Unregistered players are ineligible to play.

5.3 A player, having been registered in a team, may join another team in the same competition or higher (by skill level) as a substitute only if that team is playing in matches up to but not including the Quarter Finals. The Players original team must be out of the competition before the player can change teams.

5.4 Each squad must complete a Team Sheet (online in advance, from the Team Pack or available from Match Control) and lodge it with Match Control at least 15 minutes prior to their first match. If a team plays in more than one competition, a new team sheet will be required for each competition, or otherwise the most recent team sheet will stand.

5.5 Once the competition has commenced, if a player is injured such that he/she cannot continue in the tournament, and the team is **not** participating in a quarter final, semi-final or final, that player may be substituted with a player from another team which must be out of the competition. The Team Manager must register the replacement player via the amendment of their team sheet. The team sheet must be amended with the name of the new player, and the name of the team of which he had previously been a member. The revised team sheet must be lodged with Match Control no later than 20 minutes before the scheduled time for commencement of their next game. Any player changes on squads must be cleared by Match Control.

5.6 Injured players who are replaced must have their names deleted from the original Team Registration form and replaced with the name of the approved replacement player.

5.7 Once a player has been eliminated through injury and his/her name deleted from the Team Registration form, that player can take no further part in the Tournament, and cannot be re-instated at a later date or time.

5.6 In the event of a front row player being injured the referee shall call Uncontested Scrums for any following scrum until either, the injured player is able to continue OR the injured player is replaced. For any injuries, the time will not be stopped unless it is determined by medical professionals, or in their absence, the referee, that the injury is serious.

5.8 Head injury and suspected concussion. Any player who has lost consciousness on the pitch, or appears to be dazed or confused after a knock to the head must be immediately replaced and be seen by the on-site doctor for assessment. This player may only return to play with the doctor's permission. The referee's decision to remove a player from the pitch is final in all cases.

6. Discipline and Field Control

6.1 Only players, the referee, assistant referees, medics may enter the field of play during a match. Others must stay behind the roped area or within the bounds of the technical area. Maximum 3 people inside the technical area and all other players must stand outside the pitch if tech zone available.

6.2 The Tournament Director and Security staff may handle ejections due to misconduct on-site.

6.3 Players and supporters will at all times respect boundaries and staff instructions.

7. Understanding the Laws

7.1 All players are expected to have a basic understanding of the laws of the game of Rugby Union and have physical competency and fitness to play the game.

7.2 All players must hold valid medical insurance covering them to play rugby. Personal injury insurance is also recommended.

7.3. All players must be paid up members of a Union recognised rugby club and must be 18yrs old or over.

8. Substitutions, Replacements and Stoppages

8.1 All and replacements during a match, including but not limited to blood replacements, shall be made in accordance with the IRB Law 3 and the Seven-a-side variations.

8.2 Up to 12 players may be named on the team sheet, 7 on the field and 5 rolling substitutes.

8.3 The new player may only enter when the outgoing player crosses the touchline.

8.4 The Tournament accepts no liability for injuries sustained during the course of the tournament.

9. Yellow and Red Cards

9.1 For persistent or deliberate fouls or other infringement the referee may issue a Yellow Card to dismiss a player to the Sin Bin for a period of two (2) minutes.

9.2 Should the referee consider the infringement to be more serious, a player may be issued a Red Card, will be dismissed from the field of play, take no further part in the current match and will receive an automatic one match ban. A player in receipt of a red card may not be substituted and the team must play with 6 players for the remainder of the match.

9.3 Red cards will be reported to match control by the issuing referee and the Tournament Director reserves the right to then hold a disciplinary hearing. The decision of this hearing will determine any further participation by the offending player in the Tournament.

9.4 Any disputes regarding the treatment of players who are the recipients of red cards or yellow cards will be decided by the disciplinary committee formed by the Tournament Director. The decision of the disciplinary committee is final with no appeals allowed.

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