



DEVON CUP COMPETITIONS 2026/27

Contents

Introduction	2
Administration	2
Competition Format and General Regulations	2
Devon Senior Cup.....	3
Devon Senior Shield	3
Devon Intermediate Cup	4
Devon Intermediate Shield.....	4
Devon Junior Cup	5
Second Team Cup.....	6
Second Team Shield	6
Cup Regulations.....	7
Appendix 1: RFU Player Movement Between Adult Male XVs	11



Devon Rugby Cup Competitions 2026/27

Introduction

Following agreement at the Clubs Competitions Meeting held at Newton Abbot in July, relevant Devon League fixtures will also count towards the Devon Rugby Cup competitions for the 2026/27 season. The aim is to improve participation and competitiveness, increase revenue opportunities for clubs and support greater fixture completion.

Administration

The Devon RFU competitions committee will administer the competitions. One of the members of this committee shall act as competitions chair and one member shall act as each competition's coordinator. The committee shall have full powers of adjudicating on all matters relating to the competitions. Any appeal against their decisions must be lodged with the Hon. Secretary of the Devon RFU within 48 hours of the decision in question. All appeals must be accompanied by an administration fee of £50 payable to Devon RFU Ltd which shall be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

Competition Format and General Regulations

- Each competition will be completed within the relevant league structure.
- A separate Devon Competition League table will be created and published on the Devon RFU website.
- Applicable league competition regulations will apply to qualifying league fixtures.
- Devon Cup regulations will apply to the semi-finals and finals.
- Each competition will be administered by a named member of the Devon RFU Competitions Sub-Committee, who will oversee completion of the competition.
- Dates for the semi-finals and finals will be reviewed and agreed around Christmas, taking account of fixtures and weather conditions.

- Where a club fails to honour a fixture, the club will receive a five-point deduction, and the opposition will be awarded a five-point walkover victory.
- Any disputes will be considered by the Devon RFU Competitions Sub-Committee.
- The use of first-team players in second-team fixtures will be monitored in accordance with the new ruling due to be issued by the RFU and SWROC. Further information will be communicated once confirmed.

Important: The Devon Intermediate Shield will operate under a different format from the other competitions.

Devon Senior Cup

Competition Level: Regional 1 - Level 5

Competition Coordinator: Chris Forster

Competing Teams:

- Brixham
- Exmouth
- Sidmouth
- Topsham

Semi-Finals

1st place v 4th place – 1st placed team at home

2nd place v 3rd place – 2nd placed team at home

Final

The final venue will be confirmed prior to the semi-finals.

Devon Senior Shield

Competition Level: Regional 2 - Level 6

Competition Coordinator: Chris Forster

Competing Teams:

- Crediton
- Okehampton
- Teignmouth

- Tiverton

Semi-Finals

1st place v 4th place – 1st placed team at home

2nd place v 3rd place – 2nd placed team at home

Final

The final venue will be confirmed prior to the semi-finals.

Devon Intermediate Cup

Competition Level: Counties 1 - Level 7

Competition Coordinator: Joel Caddy

Competing Teams:

- Barnstaple 2nd XV
- Cullompton
- Devonport 2nd XV
- Kingsbridge
- Newton Abbot
- Paignton
- Torquay

Semi-Finals

1st place v 4th place – 1st placed team at home

2nd place v 3rd place – 2nd placed team at home

Final

The final venue will be confirmed prior to the semi-finals.

Devon Intermediate Shield

Competition Level: Counties 2 - Level 8

Competition Coordinator: Ben Gatehouse

Unlike the other Devon Cup competitions, the Devon Intermediate Shield will operate using the Raeburn Shield method.

- The current holder puts the Shield on the line when playing a qualifying fixture.
- If the holder wins or draws, they retain the Shield.
- If the holder loses, the Shield passes to the winning club.
- The new holder then defends the Shield in their next qualifying fixture.

Honiton begin the 2026/27 season as holders of the Intermediate Shield following their success last season. Therefore, the first match in the Intermediate Shield will be **Honiton v Tavistock on Saturday 26th September**.

The Grand Final will be the last qualifying game of the season played by the current holders and their Devon opponents.

Competing Teams:

- Bideford
- Exeter Saracens
- Honiton
- OPM
- Plymstock Albion Oaks
- South Molton
- Tavistock
- Withycombe

Devon Junior Cup

Competition Level:

Counties 3 - Level 9

Competition Coordinator:

Clinton Mill

Competing Teams:

North and East

- New Cross
- Exeter Athletic
- Exeter Engineers
- North Tawton
- Torrington
- Ilfracombe

South and West

- Old Techs
- Plymouth Arguam
- Plympton Victoria
- Salcombe
- Tamar Saracens
- Totnes
- Dartmouth

Semi-Finals

1st place North and East v 2nd place South and West – 1st placed North and East team at home

1st place South and West v 2nd place North and East - 1st placed South and West team at home

Final

The final venue will be decided by draw prior to the semi-finals.

Second Team Cup

Competition Level: Counties 2 - Level 8

Competition Coordinator: Ben Gatehouse

Competing Teams:

- Brixham – Level 8
- Crediton – Level 8
- Exmouth – Level 8
- Topsham – Level 8

Semi-Finals

1st place v 4th place – 1st placed team at home

2nd place v 3rd place - 2nd placed team at home

Final

The final venue will be confirmed prior to the semi-finals.

Second Team Shield

Competition Level: Counties 3 - Level 9

Competition Coordinator: Sarah Quicke

Competing Teams:

North and East

- Bideford
- Cullompton
- Newton Abbot
- Okehampton
- Sidmouth
- Tiverton

South and West

- Kingsbridge
- Paignton
- Plymstock Oaks
- Torquay

Semi-Finals

1st place North/East v 2nd place South and West – 1st placed North and East team at home

1st place South and West v 2nd place North and East - 1st placed South and West team at home

Final

The final venue will be decided by draw prior to the semi-finals.

Cup Regulations

REPLACEMENTS

All Cup games are played under the League regulations, with a maximum of **five replacements for Semi-Finals and seven in all Finals except for the Intermediate Shield which follows league regulations regarding replacements.**

During the semi- finals, **FOUR** players in the squad should be qualified to play in the FRONT ROW and for the finals this is increased to **FIVE**.

In the event that a team has no suitably qualified front-row replacement at the start of the game, then the offending team shall forfeit the game. If a team has complied with the regulation relating to front row forwards and runs out of replacements, the referee will order the game to be continued with non-contested scrums. In such cases, the offending team shall drop a player but must continue with eight players in the scrum.

SCORING

The same scoring system as per the English Clubs Championship shall apply.

RESULTS / MATCH RESULT CARDS

Results of ALL matches will be taken from match cards that will be issued by the Devon Competitions Administrator (If we can't get them onto GMS we will), **also the relevant Competition Administrator MUST be notified by 6pm on the day of the match.** It is the responsibility of the home team officials to report the correct result, including the number of tries scored by each team.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

All players must be bona fide members of the Club they represent and must be appropriately registered to that Club on the GMS database.

For rounds of the competition that are played concurrently with a League fixture, player eligibility and transfers shall be governed by the regulations applicable to that League competition.

For the Semi-Finals and Finals, a player shall only be eligible to represent a Club if they were registered to that Club at the applicable transfer deadline date. A player who, at that date, was registered to and had represented another Club during the current season shall not subsequently become eligible to represent a different Club in the Semi-Final or Final of this competition.

Any Club with any doubt concerning the eligibility of a player shall apply to the Devon RFU Competitions Sub-Committee for a decision. The decision of the Competitions Sub-Committee shall be binding on that Club.

WITHDRAWALS

At the discretion of the Devon RFU Competitions Sub Committee, any Club/team that withdraws from any Competition may not be eligible to compete in any of the Devon RFU Cup Competitions the following season.

SECOND TEAM COMPETITIONS.

The purpose of this Regulation is to protect the fairness, integrity and competitive balance of the Competition and to prevent Clubs from strengthening a Lower XV through the inappropriate movement of players who regularly represent a Higher XV.

For the Semi-Finals and Finals of the Competition, a Lower XV shall not include more than three (3) Higher XV Players.

For the purposes of this Regulation, a Higher XV Player shall be determined in accordance with the RFU guidance on Player Movement Between Adult Male XVs, reproduced at Appendix 1 to these Regulations.

Clubs are responsible for ensuring that their team selections comply with this Regulation and the guidance contained within Appendix 1. Clubs must not select or move players between their XVs for the purpose or effect of obtaining an unfair competitive advantage.

The Devon RFU Competitions Sub-Committee may review GMS records, Electronic Match Cards, player appearance records and any other relevant information when determining whether a Club has complied with this Regulation.

Where the Competitions Sub-Committee determines that a Club has breached this Regulation, the Club may be subject to sanction, which may include disqualification from the Competition, in accordance with these Regulations.

Where a Club is uncertain whether a proposed team selection complies with this Regulation, it should seek a ruling from the Devon RFU Competitions Sub-Committee before the fixture is played. Any such decision shall be binding on the Club.

COLOURS

In the event of clubs having clashing or similar colours, the away team must arrange to change its own colours.

REFEREES

For the league games the referee will be set as part of the league process, for the Semi- final and the Final, Devon Rugby Referees shall appoint a referee for matches in the competitions.

Please Note, for the finals, Clubs will be required to add their Cup fixtures onto GMS manually, this is how WhosTheRef pick up the games and appoint officials. If you do not add the games to GMS, then you may not have a referee appointed.

VENUE and conditions for hosting the FINALS.

These will be decided by a draw by the President of Devon RFU and the Competitions Committee.

To be able to host a Devon Final a Club **MUST** be able comply with the following;

- Able and willing to have a gate entry charge with a minimum of £5 entry and this will be an ALL-PAY game.
- Provide pre match and post-match (Players) hospitality to the two clubs, officials, players and the Devon RFU representative
- The club, MUST have no debt to the Devon RFU. The club MUST have submitted its annual financial report and accounts for the most recent year.

- **If a club does not comply with any of these requirements, the final WILL be switched to the opposing team, or an alternative venue WILL be found by Devon RFU**

FINANCE

The gate receipts for all the finals including income from the sale of programmes shall be divided equally between Devon RFU Ltd and the two participating clubs after deduction of charges for the match officials and the costs of producing a programme. The hosting club is responsible for the food costs.

- The secretary of the home club shall be responsible for submitting draft arrangements for the match to the competitions chair for approval by the sub-committee and within 14 days prior of the match being played.
- The Treasurer of the home club must submit to the Treasurer of DRFU a balance sheet showing all receipts, permitted expenditure and distribution of income, within 14 days of the final taking place. If this cannot be achieved, it is the responsibility of the home club Treasurer to Notify the Devon Treasurer and agree a new time-line.
- All finals. cup matches should be considered as ALL-PAY. If a Club does not have the facilities to enable a gate to be charged, the Devon RFU reserves the right to change the venue to an alternative ground where such facility is available.

DISPUTES

All objections regarding alleged breaches of the regulations must reach the relevant competitions administrator not later than 48 hours after the end of the match in question and must be in writing accompanied by an administration fee of £50 payable to the Devon Rugby Football Union Ltd. This fee will be returned if the objection is upheld.

LAWS

All matches shall be played under the Laws of the Game as published by the RFU and regulations contained therein or otherwise in force in respect of replacements and substitutions.

REVIEW -These rules will be reviewed by the committee at the termination of each competition.

Appendix 1: RFU Player Movement Between Adult Male XVs

1. Purpose

This Instruction is intended to preserve the fairness, integrity and competitive balance of RFU Men's League Competitions by ensuring that player movement between Adult Male XVs within the same Club is undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner.

All Clubs shall comply with RFU Regulation 6 and these National Administration Instructions.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Instruction:

Higher XV means any Adult Male XV of the same Club competing at a higher level of the RFU Men's League structure than the XV for which the player is selected.

Lower XV means any Adult Male XV of the same Club competing at a lower level of the RFU Men's League structure.

Electronic Match Card (EMC) means the official RFU Electronic Match Card submitted for a league fixture.

Front Row Player means a player who is suitably trained and experienced to play at prop or hooker in accordance with RFU Regulations and the World Rugby Laws of the Game.

Higher XV Player means any player who satisfies either of the following criteria:

a) Has been named in the Higher XV matchday squad (starting XV or replacements) on four or more of that team's previous seven league

Electronic Match Cards; or

b) Has been named in the matchday squad (starting XV or replacements) for 50% or more of the team's total of scheduled league fixtures during the current season.

3. Eligibility

A Lower XV shall not include more than three (3) Higher XV Players in any league fixture save for exceptions as agreed by the Competition League Secretary in accordance with section 4 below.

4. Exceptions

The Competition League Secretary may, at their sole discretion, approve the selection of more than three (3) Higher XV Players for a Lower XV where they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

In determining whether such exceptional circumstances exist, the Competition League Secretary may (but shall not be obliged to) have regard to some or all of the following considerations in their sole discretion:

- a) The Higher XV Player is returning from injury, illness, suspension, approved absence or another exceptional circumstance; and/or
- b) or the Higher XV Player is a suitably trained and experienced Front Row Player whose selection is necessary to ensure the fixture can be played safely and in accordance with RFU Regulation 6.

Where approval is sought on the grounds of front row cover, the Club shall limit the selection to the minimum number of Front Row Players reasonably required to satisfy the front row requirements of the fixture.

The Club shall notify the Competition League Secretary as soon as reasonably practicable (and in any event, prior to the relevant fixture) of any request made under this Section and, where requested, provide evidence supporting the circumstances giving rise to the request.

Any approval granted under this Section shall apply only to the specific fixture for which it is given unless otherwise confirmed in writing by the Competition Organiser.

5 Teams selected on merit

A Club with more than one team competing in the Men's Leagues must always adhere to the principle of selection on merit for each of its sides.

Where a Club has fixtures for its Higher XV on the same day or weekend as their Lower XV and can demonstrate that all selections have been made on merit, the League Secretary may, at their sole discretion, disapply the restrictions in section 3 in respect of any Lower XV playing on that same day or weekend.

However, where the League Secretary has a reasonable belief that selection has not been based on merit, they may investigate any suspected breach of this Instruction and may request player appearance records, availability information, injury status, and any other relevant information from the club. Where the

League Secretary is satisfied that a breach has occurred, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 7 of this Instruction.

6. Club Responsibilities

Clubs shall not select, move or withhold players between XVs in a manner that has the purpose or effect of obtaining an unfair competitive advantage or which otherwise undermines the integrity of the Competition.

The Competition League Secretary may request such information as is reasonably required to determine compliance with this Instruction, including previous Electronic Match Cards and any other relevant evidence.

7. Breaches and Sanctions

Where the Competition League Secretary determines that a Club has failed to comply with this Instruction, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with RFU Regulations and the applicable Competition Rules.

Should a breach be found by a League Secretary then the entry point for sanction will be either the reversal of the match result or a deduction of 5 league points, depending on the result of the match.

The League secretary may also consider mitigating circumstances and this could result in a suspension of any points deduction, a warning or any other proportionate sanction.

The normal right of review by the Regional Organising Committee (ROC) will apply.

Chris Forster

Chair of Devon Competitions

August 2026

