

RFU HALF GAME RULE 2019/20 – SANCTION TABLE

Classification of Breach	Description of Classification	Sanction
Warning	The first instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game	Warning issued to the Club and Coach/ person responsible for the team. Requirement to keep accurate records for all future Age-grade matches. Warning recorded by the CBAGDS.
Low Level Breach	The second instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game	Formal warning issued to the Club and Coach/ person responsible for the team. Suspension of the coach/ person responsible for the team. (possibly suspended) Warning recorded by the CBAGDS. NAGDS notified.
Mid-Level Breach	The third instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game	Suspension of the Coach/ person responsible for the team. Points deducted from the 1 st Team (possibly suspended) Age Grade Rugby Manager Notified
Top End Breach	The 4 th instance in the current season that at least 1 player has not played half a game. Evidence that a coach/ person responsible have deliberately colluded with the other team to not play players for at least half a game	Suspension of the coach/ person responsible for the team Points deducted from the 1 st Team equating to 4 wins. RFU Discipline Department notified
Cup competition Breach	At least 1 player does not play at least a half of a match in a knock out cup competition.	If the team won the match, team removed from the Cup competition for the current season. If the team lost the match, sanction guidelines aggravated by at least 1 level. RFU Age Grade Rugby Manager Notified

FAQ's

How should the sanction table be interpreted?

- The sanction table sets out the entry points, it will be for each CB to decide on the potential mitigating and aggravating factors.
- It should be recognised that this is the first season of the regulation and best to adopt a common-sense approach to the sanctioning process.

Is a club required to record the amount of playing time for all players?

There is no requirement for a club to keep records, however, many will do as a model of best practise. If a club has already received a warning, they may want to consider the need to record all game time, should it be relied upon in any future cases. The CB can instruct a club to keep records.

What is the burden of proof?

As with all RFU cases the burden of proof is the balance of probabilities and any club is innocent until proven guilty. Any party bringing a complaint will need to provide evidence to support their claims.

Who can make a complaint?

Each CB can decide how they want to handle any whistleblowing/ complaints in relation to the half game rule. During the Road Shows it was suggested that some CB's may require a senior member of any club to file the complaint and would not accept complaints that were not endorsed by the club. This would therefore be similar to a citing process where the club has to support the complaint. I will leave it to each CB to determine what requirements they will put in place or if they want to review each complaint on a case by case basis.

What if a parent makes a complaint against their own team?

If a complaint is received from a parent against their own team, you will need to assess the evidence presented and ask the club for representations. If a breach of the rules is identified then you can use the sanction table outlined.

What if a team leave some of their squad at home and only bring limited substitutes?

The whole half game principle has been put in place for the benefit of all children playing the game. It has been very well received across the game and CB sincerely hope all clubs will support the new principle. PLEASE NOTE, the remit for any disciplinary concerns will relate only to those players who were in the match day squad. Any complaints regarding players who have been left out the match day squad are an internal matter for the club concerned and not for CB.

Can a club be warned more than once?

As CB's you will know your clubs better than the RFU and I am happy for you to use your discretion. If you are issuing any warning to a club you may stipulate that education on the half game rule be circulated to all age group coaches and therefore it may be hard for a club to argue that a coach was unaware of the rules.

Must the game time be continuous?

No, the game time can be spread over a number of interchanges if wanted.

Does this apply to all age-grade games?

15.12.1 Other than set out in Regulation 15.12.2, all clubs, teams, schools and colleges must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least half of the Available Playing Time. This requirement is mandatory across the entire age grade game and in respect of all contact and non-contact age grade matches, including 7 a-side matches and festivals/tournament matches.

How do calculate what the available playing time is?

15.12.3 'Available Playing Time' means the total amount of playing time available to a team on any particular day. Where a team is participating in multiple matches in one day, the total available playing time will be the total number of minutes across all matches played by the team on that day; and in all cases (a) includes playing time spent off the pitch due to a temporary injury or yellow card and (b) excludes playing time that would have been available had a match not be abandoned or shortened due to bona fide reasons or in accordance with Regulation 15.11.3.

What are the valid reasons for not applying the half game rule?

15.12.4 Regulation 15.12.1 will not apply in the event that a player is permanently removed from the match:

- (a) due to an injury incurred during the match;
- (b) as a result of a bona fide risk of injury; or
- (c) as a result of a red card or in the event of the referee requesting that a player be permanently removed from the match

Where can I direct people who want more information on the Rule and the principles behind it?

The following link gives further information and resources

<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/half-game>

Regulation 15 is available here;

<https://www.englandrugby.com/dxdam/08/0882fbc2-5069-4b69-b1f6-4dec9bf94385/Regulation%2015.pdf>

How can I publicise the Half Game Rule within my Club?

Resources that you can use to display the Half Game Rule within your clubs are in the RFU link above including a video you may find helpful.