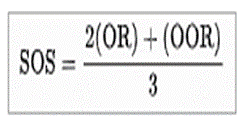
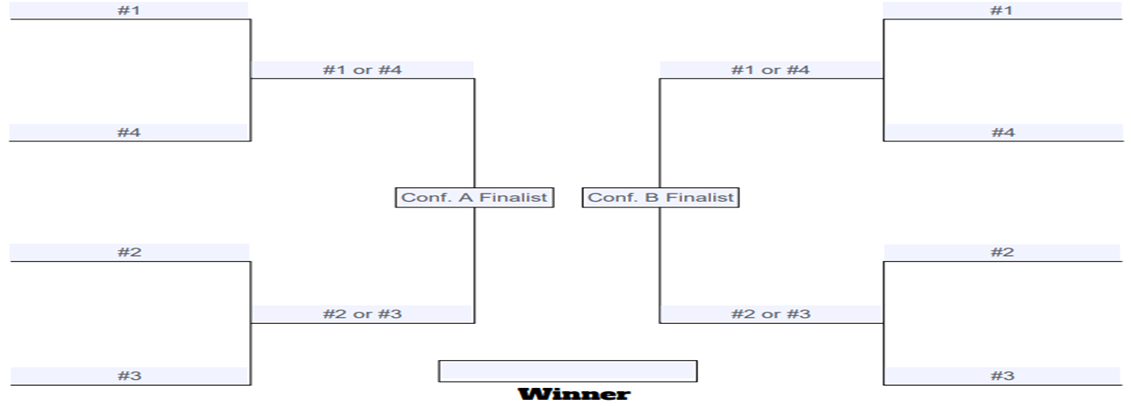
# **Roster & Salary Rules:**

1. **Salary:**
   1. All Champions League & Challenge League teams will have a salary cap of £8.6million (or €10 million).
   2. *All teams in the leagues below the European Rugby Association have a salary cap for the following:*
      1. Level-2 (i.e. RFU Championship & French D1-formerly D2) = £7million (or €8.7 million).
      2. Level-3 (i.e. National League 1 & European Rugby Development Association) = £4 million (or €4.6 million).
      3. All levels below Level-3 = £2.5 million (or €2.9 million).
2. Roster = All teams must have a roster of 35 players.
3. **Positions:** 
   1. Each team has 15 players on the field.
   2. There are 8 forwards in a team. Forwards are typically the larger, more physical positions on the pitch and are responsible for the scrum, line-out and mauls.
   3. There are 7 backs in a team. The backs provide more of the speed, agility and evasiveness required in many cases to score tries.
4. **Replacements & Substitutions:**
   1. During the match, players may be replaced (for injury) or substituted (for tactical reasons).
   2. A player who has been replaced may not rejoin play unless he was temporarily replaced to have bleeding controlled; a player who has been substituted may return temporarily, to replace a player who has a blood injury, or permanently, if he is replacing a front-row forward.
   3. In international matches, up to 7 replacements are allowed; in domestic or cross-border tournaments, at the discretion of the responsible national union(s), the number may be increased to 8, of whom three must be sufficiently trained and experienced to provide cover for the three front row positions.

# **Season Structure:**

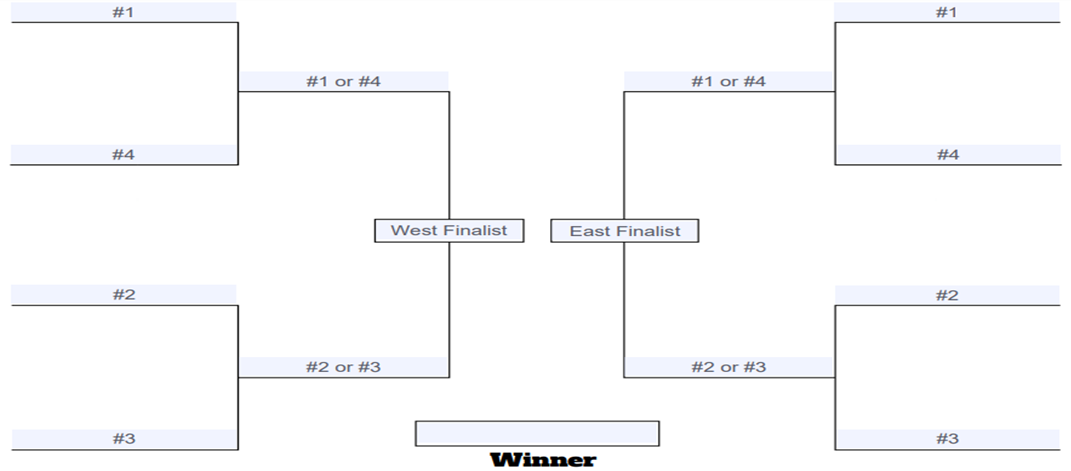
1. **Uniform Rules:**
   1. *Both teams must wear their dark color uniforms during games (similar to this* [*NAL Championship Game*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gMMdVxPCN4&feature=youtu.be)*) unless either of the following occurs (i.e. mandatory “Color Rush”):*
      1. The teams share similar colors.
      2. If someone is colorblind (i.e. teams with red or green uniforms will not participate).
      3. ERA Example: Harlequins vs Stade Français Paris.
   2. *If that is the case, the designated home team will wear their dark color uniforms and the away team will wear either of the following:*
      1. Their lighter color uniforms.
      2. An alternative darker color uniform.
2. **The preseason starts 1 month before the regular-season in which all teams train for the first couple of weeks, and then play 2 preseason games starting on the first Saturday of February (1h/1a):**
   1. *The Six Nations Championship (ERA) & Rugby Europe International Championships (ERDA) will start before the preseason & finish early on into the regular season:*
      1. All 6 countries in the Six Nations (England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Wales) will play each other once in a round-robin tournament.
      2. All countries in the Rugby Europe International Championships play all other teams in their respective division once in a round-robin tournament, with the possibility of being promoted or demoted to another division based on their performance each year.
      3. 2019 Example: February 1 to March 3.
3. **The regular-season starts on the third Friday of February and runs to the third Sunday in July with a month-long break in June for the international test window, where teams will lose players to the national teams:**
   1. During the international test window in June, all ERA Teams may play a max of 2 international friendlies against teams in SuperRugby, & Major League Rugby (MLR).
   2. The ERA Level-A (Champions League) & Level-B (Challenge League) regular seasons are 19-week seasons in which all teams play the other 9 teams in their division twice (1h/1a) with one bye week (18 games).
   3. The European Rugby Development Association (ERDA) regular season is a 17-week season in which all teams play the other 8 teams in their division twice (1h/1a) with one bye week (16 games).
   4. All leagues below the B-League must play at least 14 but not more than 18 games.
4. **A-League Makeup:**
   1. 6 English Teams
   2. 7 French Teams
   3. 7 Irish, Scottish, Welsh, & Italian Teams
   4. *Division Makeup:*
      1. 3 English Teams,
      2. 3-4 French Teams,
      3. 3-4 Irish, Scottish, Welsh, & Italian Teams
5. **B-League Makeup:**
   1. 6 English Teams
   2. 7 French Teams
   3. 5 Irish, Scottish, Welsh, & Italian Teams
   4. 2 European Rugby Development Association (ERDA) Teams
   5. *Division Makeup:*
      1. 3 English Teams
      2. 3-4 French Teams
      3. 2-3 Irish, Scottish, Welsh, & Italian Teams
      4. 1 ERDA Team
6. **ERDA League Makeup:**
   1. 1 team per country (outside of the main 6 nations).
   2. At least 8 teams per division.
7. **Bonus Points System:**
   1. 4 points for winning a game
   2. 2 points for drawing a game
   3. 0 points for losing a game
   4. 1 bonus point for losing by 7 points (or fewer) or in overtime.
   5. 1 bonus point for scoring 4 tries (or more).
   6. 1 bonus point for winning while scoring at least 3 more tries than the opponent.
   7. All teams are allowed no more than 2 bonus points per game.
   8. At the end of the regular season, the team with the best regular season record (i.e. highest point total) is awarded the ERA or ERDA Supporters' Shield (for those who don't know, it echoes the practice of the top European soccer leagues in which the team with the best record is the champion).
   9. *Tiebreaker criteria when competitors are level on points:*
      1. *The team that won the head-to-head match (if applicable) is ranked first:*
         1. For divisional rivals, this becomes the team with the higher aggregate score (i.e. the combined total score from both games).
         2. If this game was a draw, then the team with the more wins is ranked first.
      2. Points difference (PD) = is the number of points scored in all league matches minus the number of points conceded.
      3. Points For (PF) = is the total number of points scored by a team over the course of the regular-season.
      4. Points Against (PA) = is the number of points scored against them by their opponents over the course of the regular-season.
      5. Fewest disciplinary problems.
      6. Strength of schedule = two-third (66 2/3%) for the opponent's record and one-third (33 1/3%) for the opponents' opponents record.
      7. Points scored on the road.
      8. Difference for points scored on the road.
      9. Points scored at home.
      10. Difference for points scored at home.
      11. If still identical, then a playoff is required.
      12. Coin toss (two teams) or drawing of lots (three or more teams).
8. **The postseason for both Level-A & Level B Teams is an 8-team single-elimination tournament in which the top 4 teams from each division compete for the Champions Cup (Level-A) or the Challenge Cup (Level-B):**
   1. *The Champions League Grand Final must be held in the following stadiums in a 6-year cycle:*
      1. Twickenham Stadium in London, England *(82,000).*
      2. Stade de France in Saint-Denis, France *(81,338).*
      3. Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales *(74,500).*
      4. Stadio Olimpico in Rome, Italy *(73,000).*
      5. Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh, Scotland *(67,800).*
      6. Aviva Stadium in Dublin, Ireland *(51,700).*
   2. *The Challenge League Grand Final can be hosted in any stadium in Europe that has hosted either:*
      1. Any of the 6 national teams in any exhibition or Six Nations match.
      2. Any Rugby World Cup match (Union or League).
   3. The ERA Supporter’s Shield winners in both leagues get to host all playoff matches except for the championship.
   4. The #1 seed plays the #4 seed while the #2 seed plays the #3 seed.



* 1. *After the postseason, the ERA Champions & Challenge League Winners will compete in the Rugby Union World Club Challenge (i.e. a 5-team round-robin tournament) against the following teams 2 weeks after the ERA Finals:*
     1. European Rugby Association (ERA) Champions & Challenge League winners, Super Rugby, Major League Rugby (MLR), & Súper Liga Americana de Rugby (SLAR).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| #1 = ERA Champions #2 = Super Rugby #3 = ERA Challenge #4 = MLR #5 = SLAR | **Round 1** | **Round 2** | **Round 3** | **Round 4** | **Round 5** |
| 1v4 | 3v1 | 5v3 | 2v5 | 4v2 |
| 2v3 | 4v5 | 1v2 | 3v4 | 5v1 |
| Bye -5 | Bye-2 | Bye-4 | Bye-1 | Bye-3 |

1. **The postseason for ERDA Teams is a 8-team single-elimination tournament in which the top 4 teams from each division compete for the Continental Shield:**
   1. *The ERDA Grand Final can be hosted in any stadium in Europe that has hosted either:*
      1. Any of the ERDA national teams from the participating in any exhibition match.
      2. Any Rugby World Cup match (Union or League).
   2. The ERDA Supporter’s Shield winners in both leagues get to host all playoff matches except for the championship.
   3. The #1 seed plays the #4 seed, while the #2 seed plays the #3 seed.



1. **Promotion & Relegation:**
   1. *Each year the teams will be allocated to divisions based on their previous year's final positioning:*
      1. In terms of England and France, the top club from their respective nation will be placed in the same division as the bottom club from their respective nation (i.e. the top overall team must be in the same division as the lowest team that managed to be promoted).
      2. The top English & French teams must be placed in different divisions.
   2. *English & French teams:*
      1. The bottom 2 English & French teams in the Champions League will be relegated to the Challenge League, with the top 2 English & French teams in the Challenge League replacing them.
      2. The bottom 2 English & French teams in the Challenge League will be regulated to the RFU Championship & ProD1 (former D2) respectively, with top 2 English & French teams in the RFU Championship & ProD1 replacing them.
   3. *Welsh, Scottish, Irish & Italian teams:*
      1. The worst Welsh, Scottish, Irish & Italian teams in the Champions League must be relegated to the Challenge League.
      2. The best Welsh, Scottish, Irish & Italian teams in the Challenge League must be promoted to the Champions League.
      3. The worst Welsh, Scottish, Irish & Italian teams in the Challenge League must be relegated to the Welsh Premier Division, Scottish League Championship, All-Ireland League, & the Italian National Championship of Excellence.
      4. The best Welsh, Scottish, Irish & Italian teams in the Welsh Premier Division, Scottish League Championship, All-Ireland League, & the Italian National Championship of Excellence must be promoted to the Challenge League.
   4. *ERDA Teams:*
      1. The ERDA teams in the Challenge league will be automatically relegated back to their respective nation’s top domestic league.
      2. The 2 ERDA teams that make it to the ERDA Grand Final will be promoted to the Challenge League, but only for 1 season.
      3. The top club from each participating nation will be promoted to the European Rugby Development Association, but only for 1 season (as the team who wins the domestic championship next will replace them in order to get more exposure)

# **Other Rules:**

1. **Scoring System:**
   1. *Try (T or PT):*
      1. Regular Try = 5 points
      2. Power Try = 9 points; tries scored from a play beginning inside a team’s defensive 22-meter box.
      3. There will be no conversion with a power try
   2. *Drop Goal (DG):*
      1. Inside 50-meter line = 3 points.
      2. Outside 50-meter line = 4 points.
   3. *Conversion (C):*
      1. Worth 2 points
      2. Conversions must be taken within 90 seconds of scoring a try.
   4. *Penalty Kick (PK):*
      1. Inside 22-meter box = 2 points.
      2. Outside 22-meter box = 3 points.
2. **The Ball:**
   1. The Rugby ball is oval in shape (technically a prolate spheroid), and is made up of four panels.
   2. The ball was historically made of leather, but in the modern era most games use a ball made from a synthetic material.
   3. *Specific Dimensions:*
      1. 280-300mm in length
      2. 740-770mm in circumference of length
      3. 580-620mm in circumference of width.
3. **The Referee:**
   1. Many signals that a referee makes are immediately understandable. They reflect the play that has just occurred. Signals are used by the referee to indicate to the players and spectators why penalties have been awarded, when a team has been awarded a free kick, given advantage in play, and for scoring play. The referee is the person responsible for knowing how much time has been played and is left to be played.
   2. Challenges = All coaches have 1 challenge per game (by throwing a red flag onto the field, leading to video review) unless they are right, in which case they are awarded a second.
4. **Broadcast Rules:**
   1. ERA Matches are broadcast live on BT Sport, BeIN Sports, BeIN Sports Australia, ITV,  Canal+, France Télévisions, BBC Two Wales, BBC Two Northern Ireland, RTÉ, TG4, BBC Alba, S4C, BBC Two Wales, Setanta Sports, Sky Sports, & RAI Sports for TV broadcasts.
5. **Match Structure:**
   1. At the beginning of the game, the captains and the referee toss a coin to decide which team will kick off first.
   2. Play then starts with a drop kick, with the players chasing the ball into the opposition's territory, and the other side trying to retrieve the ball and advance it.
   3. If the ball does not reach the opponent’s 10-meter line the opposing team has two choices; 1) To have the ball kicked off again, or 2) to have a scrum at the center of the half-way line and they throw in the ball. If the player with the ball is tackled, frequently a ruck will result.
   4. Games are divided into 40-minute halves, with a break in the middle. The sides exchange ends of the field after the half-time break.
   5. Stoppages for injury or to allow the referee to take disciplinary action do not count as part of the playing time, so that the elapsed time is usually longer than 80 minutes. The referee is responsible for keeping time, even when—as in many professional tournaments—he is assisted by an official time-keeper.
   6. If time expires while the ball is in play, the game continues until the ball is "dead", and only then will the referee blow the whistle to signal half-time or full-time; but if the referee awards a penalty or free-kick, the game continues.
   7. The line where the lineout is taken by the opposition where the ball went into touch, but if the ball is kicked into touch directly by a player outside the 22-meter line the lineout is taken level to where the kick was taken.
6. **Passing & Kicking:**
   1. Forward passing (throwing the ball ahead to another player) is not allowed; the ball can be passed laterally or backwards.
   2. The ball tends to be moved forward in three ways — by kicking, by a player running with it or within a scrum or maul.
   3. Only the player with the ball may be tackled or rucked.
   4. When a ball is knocked forward by a player with his/her arms, a "knock-on" is committed, and play is restarted with a scrum.
   5. Any player may kick the ball forward in an attempt to gain territory.
   6. When a player anywhere in the playing area kicks indirectly into touch so that the ball first bounces in the field of play the throw-in is taken where the ball went into touch.
   7. If the player kicks directly into touch (i.e. without bouncing in-field first) from within their own 22-meter line the lineout is taken by the opposition where the ball went into touch, but if the ball is kicked into touch directly by a player outside the 22-meter line the lineout is taken level to where the kick was taken.
7. **The Playing Field:**
   1. The field of play on a rugby pitch is as near as possible to a maximum of 120 meters long by 70 meters wide (130yd long by 77yd wide).
   2. In actual gameplay there should be a maximum of 94-100 meters (103-109 yd) between the two try-lines, with anywhere between 5 meters and 22 meters behind each try line to serve as the in-goal area along with a width of 68-70m (74-77 yd).
   3. There are several lines crossing it, notably the half way line and the "twenty two", which is 22 meters (24 yd) from the goal line.
   4. Rugby goalposts are H-shaped, and consist of two poles, 5.6 meters (6.1 yd) apart, connected by a horizontal crossbar 3 meters (3.3 yd) above the ground.
8. **Rugby Terminology:**
   1. ADVANTAGE LAW – Allows play to proceed after an infringement in the case of the non-offending team receiving an advantage.
   2. ATTACKING TEAM – The team in possession of the ball.
   3. BACKS – Players who spread out and attempt to run the ball delivered from a scrum or lineout.
   4. DEAD BALL LINE – The limit to which a try can be scored beyond the goal line.
   5. DEFENDING TEAM – The team not in possession of the ball.
   6. DROP KICK – A kick made after the ball has reached or bounced off the ground. Worth three points if it clears the goalposts; also used to restart play after a score or certain other occasions.
   7. FORWARD PASS – A violation that usually results in a scrum to the non-offending side.
   8. FORWARDS – Players who pack in a scrum or throw and jump in a lineout.
   9. FREE KICK – A relatively minor law violation that allows the non-offending side to restart play in an unopposed fashion. Opponents must retreat 10-meters and wait for the non-offending team to kick the ball through the mark. A free kick cannot be taken for goal.
   10. INFRINGEMENT – A breaking of a law (i.e. a foul or penalty).
   11. INTERCEPT – To catch a pass intended for a member of the opposition.
   12. KNOCK ON – The accidental hitting of the ball from the hands or arms toward the dead ball line. Results in the same scenario as a forward pass — a scrum to the non­ offending team.
   13. LINEOUT – Restarts play after the ball goes out over the touchline. The team that didn’t touch the ball last has the throw-in.
   14. MARK – The place where the referee signals play will be restarted. For example, the referee marks where the scrum will take place, or where the penalty has occurred.
   15. OFFSIDE – Players in front of a member of their own team who was last in possession of the ball, or in front of established lines at a scrum. Lineouts of loose play are said to be offsides. In some instances, one can retreat to an onside position without penalty; other times the infraction is automatically a violation.
   16. PACK – Forward unit of a team, engages in scrum and lineouts.
   17. PENALTY – Awarded after a serious infringement of the laws. Offenders are required to retire 10-meters while the opposition is given possession to restart play unopposed. Many times the non-offending team will attempt a kick at goal, worth three points.
   18. PUT IN – Rolling the ball down the center of the scrum tunnel.
   19. RUCK – A ball-winning activity following a tackle and release; a ruck is formed if a player from both teams is in physical contact over the ball.
   20. SCRUM – A way to restart play where a bound group of players form a tunnel with the opposition.
   21. SEVENS – An abbreviated game of rugby that follows the same laws but for the number of players and time of the contest. A 7s team fields only seven players; each half is seven minutes long. Much like a game of three-on-three full court basketball, it’s a wide-open contest.
   22. SET PIECE – A term for scrums and lineouts.
   23. SUPPORT PLAYERS – Players who position themselves to increase the ball transfer options of the ball carrier.
   24. TAP KICK (OR “TAP MOVE”) – A gentle kick to oneself, followed by a pick up, used to restart play after either a penalty or free kick is awarded.
   25. THROW IN – Throwing the ball down the middle of a lineout.
   26. TOUCHLINE – The side boundary of the field (sideline).
   27. TRY – Forcing the ball onto the ground with downward pressure over the opposition’s goal line. The equivalent of a touchdown.
   28. 22-METER LINE – Balls kicked out of bounds from behind the “22” restarted by a lineout where the ball went out; balls kicked out of bounds from in front of the 22 are restarted by a lineout where the ball was kicked. The exception is a ball kicked out of bounds immediately after a penalty has been awarded; the lineout is held where the ball went out and the non-offending team retains the throw-in.

