



Hertfordshire Middlesex Merit Tables 2025/2026 Season Administration Instructions

These Administrative Instructions accord to RFU Regulation 6.7 and shall apply to all clubs playing in this merit table competition and will be administered by Hertfordshire RFU, Director of Game Development
This competition is open to all Hertfordshire & Middlesex clubs to participate in. Consideration will also be given to clubs from outside these counties who wish to participate in HMMT.

OVERVIEW

This season sees a few changes to the delivery of the merit tables. This was done in consultation and at the request of the clubs to have more competitive fixtures throughout the season rather than localised games where they may have been in a table where the opponents were competitively stronger.
The 'winter' tables have been randomly drawn and the following format will follow:

8 matches before Christmas to determine abilities of each team

Post Christmas new tables created as below:

Teams finishing 1st, 2nd & 3rd

Teams finishing 4th, 5th & 6th

Teams finishing 7th, 8th & 9th

Cup competition will be random 1st round draw and then losers from this round will move to next cup competition and so on meaning most teams will get 2 + additional games.

Participating Clubs

Table 1		Table 2		Table 3	
1	Berkhamsted	1	Bishops Stortford Chindits (4s)	1	Bishops Stortford Abbots (5s)
2	Biggleswade 3s	2	HUEL Tring 3s	2	Cantabs 3s
3	Datchworth 2s	3	Old Albanians Gladiators (4s)	3	Enfield Ignations 2s
4	Hemel Hempstead 2s	4	Royston 2s	4	Harpenden 3s
5	Hertford 3s	5	Southgate	5	Hertford 4s
6	Mill Hill	6	St Albans 2s	6	Letchworth 3s
7	Old Grammarians 2s	7	Tabard 2s	7	Old Albanians Grizzlies (3s)
8	Saracens Crusaders (2s)	8	Verulamians 2s	8	Shelford 4s
9	Watford 2s	9	Weston	9	The Mount

Fixture Card

Date	FIXTURES	Internationals	Date
06/09/2025	Pre-Season	Woman's RWC	06/09/2025
13/09/2025	Pre-Season	Woman's RWC	13/09/2025
20/09/2025	Herts Presidents Plate Rd 1 (all clubs)	Woman's RWC	20/09/2025
27/09/2025	Winter Table Game 1	Woman's RWC Final	27/09/2025
04/10/2025	Winter Table Game 2		04/10/2025
11/10/2025	BREAK / NAW		11/10/2025
18/10/2025	Presidents Plate & Chairmans Shield Rd 2		18/10/2025
25/10/2025	Winter Table Game 3		25/10/2025
01/11/2025	Winter Table Game 4	v Australia 3.10pm	01/11/2025
08/11/2025	Winter Table Game 5	v Fiji 5.40pm	08/11/2025
15/11/2025	BREAK / NAW	v New Zealand 3.10pm	15/11/2025
22/11/2025	Winter Table Game 6	v Argentina (sun)	22/11/2025
29/12/2025	Winter Table Game 7		29/12/2025
06/12/2025	Winter Table Game 8		06/12/2025
13/12/2025	Winter Table Game 9		13/12/2025
20/12/2025	BREAK / NAW	CHRISTMAS	20/12/2025
27/12/2025	BREAK	CHRISTMAS	27/12/2025



Hertfordshire Middlesex Merit Tables
2025/2026 Season
Administration Instructions

03/01/2026	BREAK	NEW YEAR	03/01/2026
10/01/2026	BREAK / NAW	NEW YEAR	10/01/2026
17/01/2026	Presidents Plate, Chairmans & Merit Shield QF's		17/01/2026
24/01/2026	Spring Table Game 1		24/01/2026
31/01/2026	Spring Table Game 2		31/01/2026
07/02/2026	BREAK / NAW	v Wales (H) 4.40pm	07/02/2026
14/02/2026	Spring Table Game 3	v Scotland (A) 4.40pm	14/02/2026
21/02/2026	BREAK / NAW	v Ireland (H) 3.10pm	21/02/2026
28/02/2026	Spring Table Game 4		28/02/2026
07/03/2026	Spring Table Game 5	v Italy (A) 4.40pm	07/03/2026
14/03/2026	Spring Table Game 6	v France (A) 8.10pm	14/03/2026
21/03/2026	Presidents Plate, Chairmans & Merit Shield SF's		21/03/2026
28/03/2026	Spring Table Game 7		28/03/2026
04/04/2026	BREAK	EASTER	04/04/2026
11/04/2026	Spring Table Game 8		11/04/2026
18/04/2026	Spring Table Game 9		18/04/2026
25/04/2026	Presidents Plate, Chairmans & Merit Shield FINALS DAY		25/04/2026

Cup Competition

This season merit table cup competition will see clubs playing for the Hertfordshire RFU Presidents Plate, the Hertfordshire RFU Chairmans Shield and the Hertfordshire Merit Table Shield.

The 1st round of the competition will be a random draw. The losers from this round will move to next competition and so on meaning most teams will get 2 + additional games.

1. Matches

The overriding aim is 'to get the games played'. All participating clubs should work together and endeavour to complete their fixtures on the designated dates.

- All matches in the competition shall be played under the Laws of the Rugby Football Union and shall comply with the appropriate byelaws, resolutions and regulations of the RFU.
- There will be no double headers
- All participating players MUST BE "club registered"
- All Merit Table and Knock-Out Competition matches shall be played between 6th September 2024 and 25th April 2025 and shall be played on Saturday afternoons unless mutually agreed between the participating clubs concerned or as directed by the Organisers. Playing under floodlights on other days of the week is acceptable, where mutually agreed between clubs and with the organiser's agreement.
- This season will see us trial the use of electronic match cards (EMCs)
- A club is expected to play all its fixtures on the dates appointed in accordance with the HMMT structured season. It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure the availability of a pitch at their normal home ground or, if that is unavailable, a suitable alternative venue agreed by their opposition in accordance with Regulation 6.22.
- Clubs are encouraged to work together and ensure the scheduled games are played on the scheduled date. Midweek and/or Friday Night Lights games are allowed.
- Clubs are **NOT** to create manual fixtures for merit table fixtures. Any amendments/changes will be made by the HMMT administrator.
- All other match arrangements shall be like those normally made for club fixtures.

Point Scoring System.



Hertfordshire Middlesex Merit Tables 2025/2026 Season Administration Instructions

- 4pts for a win
- 2pts for a draw
- 0pts for a loss
- 1 bonus point given for teams scoring 4 tries or more
- 1 bonus point given to losing team if score within 7
- -4 point and 0-16 sanctions for non-fulfilment of fixture
- 4 Points and +16-0 score line for teams given a walkover
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2. Postponed Matches

There should be no reason to postpone a fixture. The only justifiable postponement is that due to weather conditions.

If a club seeks to postpone a fixture for another reason, they shall inform both the Merit Table Administrator **AND** the opposing Club **IMMEDIATELY** giving an explanation as to why they seek a postponement and offer a next available date to play.

- **Any club postponing a fixture other than for bad weather, will be subject to a -4 points deduction.**
- **Any club failing to rearrange or play their postponed fixtures will be subject to a further - 4 points deduction**
- **3. 'Next Available Weekend' (NAW) Protocol**
- Matches rearranged in accordance with RFU Regulation 26.49 will be scheduled as follows:
- (a) As soon as it is known that both clubs are available, i.e., not involved in a previously rescheduled league match, the rescheduled date will be CONFIRMED. This date will not be changed save in accordance with sub-paragraph (d) below.
- (b) If the availability of one or both clubs cannot be confirmed but remains possible, then the match will be scheduled as PROVISIONAL for that 'NAW'.
- (c) If two or more matches become available at the same time for confirmation on the same 'NAW' then the longest outstanding original scheduled fixture will take precedence.

4. RFU Game On

- In the event that either side is unable to fulfil a 15 a side fixture then all clubs are encouraged to use the RFU Game On principles (see Appendices) to get the games played and avoid cancellation of games.

5. Player Eligibility

- All participating players must be RFU registered and/or Club registered with their club and assigned to a team. Players may be assigned to more than one side within their club.
- Some clubs actively scrutinise published team sheets to see if clubs are fielding perceived stronger sides for key fixtures to 'win' the game and then make a complaint to overturn a result or seek a sanction.
- As a result of this, it is expected that clubs with more than one side WILL NOT select/play any regular 1st XV player to fulfil any merit table fixtures. A player who has been selected as a starting player or replacement in seven (7) or more league matches in a higher team or has played in the final fixture of a team in a higher league in the current season must not play for a lower team in any league fixture unless:
 - They are only playing for the higher team to replace an injured higher team player.
 - They are returning from a period of injury, which needs to be more than 4 playing weekends;
- It is an expectation of each club to notify their opponent re the above. The impact of this will mean that clubs will have to review their return to play protocols where in previous years, players



Hertfordshire Middlesex Merit Tables 2025/2026 Season Administration Instructions

returning from injury or lengthy work commitments would have been able to have valuable game time to regain fitness etc playing in the merit table fixtures.

- Maximum Squad size for match days is 20. This may be increased to 22 but only if both clubs agree.

6. Determination of Merit Table Points and Winners

The winners of each merit table will be determined by the following.

- The team that has the most points at the end of the season
- If points awarded are equal then the side having the greater “points difference” shall take the higher position.
- If the sides still cannot be separated then the side having scored the most points in the competition shall take the higher position.
- If this method still fails to determine the winner of a merit table at the end of the season, then the side scoring the most points in the matches between the tied clubs shall be declared the winner.

7. Rulings, Decisions and Appeal Procedures (Sanctions)

The HMMT Organiser has delegated authority (Regulation 6.7), to make all primary decisions regarding any Regulation and any of these Instructions in respect of all clubs within that league. This shall be in accordance with Regulations 6.85 and 6.86 having regard to the Sanction Guidelines (Regulation 6, Appendices 3 and 4).

- Home Team postponing game and NOT rearranging – points deduction of 5pts
- Away Team postponing game and NOT rearranging – points deduction of 5pts
- Postponed game due to unplayable pitch and NOT rearranged – 2pts given to each side
- Merit Table Fixtures played using ‘Game On’ principles – 2pts additionally given to both sides
- Any club failing to play at least one agreed game with the Mount in the season – 3pt deduction. Only exception will be if the game is forfeited by The Mount.
- Any side that is unable to commence more than three (3) games without a front row will be penalised by the loss of 1 point on each further occasion.

PRE-MATCH DAY

1. Appointment of Referees/Match Confirmation

- It is the responsibility of the **HOME CLUB** to
 - Confirm the fixture with the appointed match official in a timely manner.
 - Inform the opposing club **no later than 9pm, the Tuesday before the game** and advise if the fixture is likely to be played or postponed.
 - Confirm the fixture will be played, **no later than 8.30pm, on the Thursday before the game.**

MATCH DAY

1. Kick-off Time for Matches

- In accordance with RFU Regulation 6.41 all matches shall kick-off between 2.00pm and 3.00pm.
- The HMMT organiser has decreed that clubs without floodlights shall kick-off **NO LATER THAN:**
 - 3.00pm September, October.
 - 2.00pm November, December, January, February
 - 3.00pm March, April.



Hertfordshire Middlesex Merit Tables 2025/2026 Season Administration Instructions

- NOTE: Clubs can mutually agree on a kick-off time outside these times, they are required to inform the Merit Table Administrator in order that changes can be made to GMS

2. Kit Colour Clash

- If in the opinion of the referee there is a colour clash, the home side shall change their shirts.
- Clubs should ensure that if a colour clash is likely to occur between clubs, arrangements for the home team to change are made when the match is confirmed.

3. Squad Size/Substitutions/Replacements

- Maximum Squad size for match days is 20. This may be increased to 22 but only if both clubs agree when confirming the game.
- Where a team arrives with less than 15 players, then captains/managers are required to balance the numbers in the sides by loaning players to the side with less than 15 players. Replacements remain at a maximum of three. Teams should be evened up to the maximum number permissible. They must not be reduced to the level of the team with player shortages.
- Both sides must start each match with an equal number of players.
- Each team shall be permitted to use rolling replacements of not more than the maximum number of the Player interchanges (“Player Interchanges”) set out in the table below:

Number of Replacements	Player Interchanges
Up to 3	8
4	9
5 or 6	10
7	12

- There is no requirement for front row replacements. However, to comply with the Laws of the Game, if teams do elect to have up to three replacements or more, they must have at least four players in their team capable of playing in the front row. In the event of uncontested scrums for all or part of the game the result will stand as though contested scrums had taken place throughout.
- Any side that is unable to commence more than three games without a front row will be penalised. Clubs must alert their opponents as soon as they are aware, or by Thursday at the latest, that they will be unable to field a full front row, so that the opportunity to offer a replacement player is given.
- Both the home and away sides are required to advise the Organisers whenever a side commences a match with ‘uncontested scrums’ due to a shortage of front row players. Additionally, the clubs involved must also advise if a game moved to ‘uncontested scrums’ during a game and the approximate time of this change.
- If a side shows a pattern of moving to ‘uncontested scrums’, the Organisers will review the occurrences with the club and deduct points if it was unfair play.

POST MATCH

1. Reporting of Match Results

- The Home Club is responsible for confirming the final score with the referee and entering the final score onto GMS by 5.30pm on the day of the game.
- Failure to adhere to the above will result in late posting of results onto the England Rugby website and the games deemed as having not been played.

CLUB CONTACT LIST

CLUB	Contact Name	Contact No	Contact EMail
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2025/2026 Season
Administration Instructions

1	Berkhamsted	Paul Stewart	07584 228478	
2	Biggleswade 3s	Dave Tysom	07581 519871	Tysom2.4@ntlworld.com
3	Bishops Stortford Chindits (4s)	Andrew 'Macca' Mackenzie	07736 466370	
4	Bishops Stortford Abbots (5s)	Chetan Sharma	07341 343371	
5	Cantabs 3s	Will Riggs	07806 603454	
6	Datchworth 2s	Diane Wyatt	07779660902	ld_wyatt@hotmail.com
7	Enfield Ignations 2s	Ken Carroll	07793 404277	kmjco cmcd@hotmail.co.uk
8	Harpenden 3s	Mark Lewis	07939 824453	mlewisedi@gmail.com
9	Hemel Hempstead 2s	Mike Hart	07944 724529	
10	Hertford 3s	Dave Albon	07746 311673	
11	Hertford 4s	Olly Gawthorne	07815 608304	gawthorne@btinternet.com
12	HUEL Tring 3s	Shane Graham	07881 337069	
13	Letchworth 3s	Nicky Hughes	07780 833804	Nicky.bubbles@outlook.com
14	Mill Hill	Rob Fielder	07525 945413	Robfielder1979@icloud.com
15	Old Albanians Grizzlies (3s)	Kim Watson	07973 615867	Kim.watson@oarugby.com
16	Old Albanians Gladiators (4s)			
17	Old Grammarians 2s	Graham Kantowicz	07798 860817	Graham.kantorowicz@gmail.com
18	Royston 2s	Tim Illsley	07876 350822	timillsley@gmail.com
19	Saracens Crusaders (2s)	Tom Weir	07956 768610	seniors@saracensarfc.com
20	Shelford 4s	James Robinson	07535 702837	James.robinson1@astrazeneca.com
21	St Albans 2s	Bill Harris	07951 427278	Bill.harris@exactval.co.uk
22	Southgate	Jack Stapleton	07946 681981	stapletonjack@hotmail.com
23	Tabard 2s	Ewan Webster	07881 444772	Ewan_webster@hotmail.com
24	The Mount	Alexie Sale	07944 405694	Graham.sale@justice.gov.uk
25	Verulamians 2s	Hamish Jeram	07904 934994	
26	Watford 2s	Scott Menzies	07903 673304	sammienzies@hotmail.co.uk
27	Weston	Alex Webb	07415 383926	Alexwebb1998@gmail.com