

REG 8 TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS (LEAGUES AND KNOCKOUTS)

PUBLISHED | 2 SEPTEMBER 2026 (UPDATED 22 SEPTEMBER 2026)

Please note: REG 8 applies to the Team Championships conducted as part of the National, Premier and Conference League/Knockout programme.

REG 8.1 A record of BUCS's Team Championships (Leagues and Knockouts) on offer is contained in Appendix 1 ('BUCS Competition Offer and Associated BUCS Points'). Amendments to Team Championships (Leagues and Knockouts) on offer will be made in accordance with the [Making Changes to BUCS Competitions - Framework](#).

REG 8.1.1 The BUCS Executive reserves the right to make final decisions on the structures of all competitions, based on the geographical location of the teams eligible to compete at that level and the number of entries received.

REG 8.2 Competition requirements Should a team be unable to meet the requirements of competition, resulting in hindering the completion of required fixtures, they may be automatically withdrawn and/or restricted from entering future competitions.

REG 8.2.1 A withdrawal or restriction may be reconsidered if an alternative arrangement can be made, which is acceptable to other affected teams, and is agreed in good time.

REG 8.2.2 Competition requirements under REG 8.2 relates to facilities/hosting, essential travel, officials requirements, and any other requirements considered pertinent to the completion of fixtures.

REG 8.3 Leagues

REG 8.3.1 Team eligibility per Tier Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations, the following allowance of teams per Playing Entity, per gender, of a particular sport are permitted:

REG 8.3.1.1 Premier Tier – the maximum number of teams in the tier will be that of the number of levels available. So, for example:

- If there is a National league, North/South 1 leagues and North/South 2 leagues in the Premier Tier, then a Playing Entity may have a maximum of three teams in the Tier
- If there is a National league and North/South leagues in the Premier Tier, then a Playing Entity may have a maximum of two teams in the Tier
- If there are North/South 1 and North/South 2 leagues in the Premier Tier, then a Playing Entity may have a maximum of two teams in the Tier
- If there is only a National league OR North/South leagues, then a Playing Entity may have a maximum of one team in the Tier

However, with the above limits, Playing Entities are restricted to having only one team in the top level league, and a maximum of two teams in any lower level Premier Tier league. So, for example, in Men's Rugby Union, it would be possible for a Playing Entity to have:

- One team in the National league, one in North 1, and one in North 2, or;
- One team in the National league, two in North 1, and no team in North 2, or;

- No team in the National league, two in North 1, and one in North 2, or;
- No team in the National league, one in North 1, and two in North 2.

REG 8.3.1.2 Tier 1 and below (except for the lowest tier) – maximum of two teams per tier, regardless of playing conference.

REG 8.3.1.3 Lowest Tier – maximum of three teams or 50% of the total teams in a league per institution, whichever is fewer, regardless of playing conference.

REG 8.3.1.3.1 The lowest tier restriction outlined in REG 8.3.1.3 is applicable at the point of league finalisation. Should teams withdraw after league finalisation, any teams remaining in the competition which are now in breach of REG 8.3.1.3 shall be permitted to remain for that season only.

REG 8.3.1.3.2 Where a Playing Entity has entered more teams than REG 8.3.1.3 would allow to be accepted into the competition, they can make a request for an exemption to the regulation to the BUCS Executive. Any request would need to be supported by the other Playing Entities in the league(s) affected, and, if approved by the BUCS Executive, the team would not: be entered into the respective knockout competition; be eligible for promotion; or be able to earn any BUCS Points based on their final league position.

REG 8.3.2 League sizes Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations or Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'), the following league size restrictions shall apply:

REG 8.3.2.1 For leagues above the lowest tier, the league size will typically be six teams.

REG 8.3.2.2 The minimum number of teams in any league will be four, unless there is only a single tier of competition in which case the minimum shall be three.

REG 8.3.2.2.1 The minimum number of teams restrictions outlined in REG 8.3.2.2 are applicable at the point that final leagues and fixtures are published on BUCS Play. Should any team(s) be withdrawn from a league after this point (note REG 8.3.4), leading to it comprising of less than the applicable minimum number stated in REG 8.3.2.2, but at least two teams, the league shall be permitted to continue for the remaining teams should they wish to continue with the reduced number of teams.

REG 8.3.2.3 The maximum number of teams in any one lowest tier league can be 10. If entries increase to the point that there are more than 10 teams to fit in a bottom Tier league, the league will be split. The existing league will maintain six teams and the remaining teams will either:

- Where the maximum number of leagues in that tier has not been met, form an additional league in that tier alongside the existing league, or;
- Form a new lower tier league (up to a maximum of 10). For example, in a Conference which only goes as low as Tier 1, where there would be 11 teams in Tier 1, the top six teams will remain in Tier 1A, and the remaining teams will form Tier 2A.

REG 8.3.2.3.1 Where creation of a new lower tier is required, teams previously entered will be ranked based on their league finishing position in the previous season, with the higher ranked teams maintaining their place and the lower ranked teams joining any new teams in the new lower tier.

REG 8.3.3 New teams All new teams will be placed in the lowest tier.

REG 8.3.3.1 Although, as per REG 8.3.3, new teams should expect to be entered into the lowest tier of the competition structure, as an organisation BUCS acknowledges the potential safety issues when severe performance imbalances occur and cause potential risks to the safety of players. Therefore, new teams within recognised 'collision sports' (American Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union) can apply to BUCS for special dispensation to enter the competition structure at a higher tier league (excluding any National league). The set of criteria upon which an application should be made, and the associated deadlines, are listed in Appendices 15a–15d.

REG 8.3.4 Entries and withdrawals

REG 8.3.4.1 Entry fees Entry fees for BUCS Team Championships (Leagues/Knockouts) will be billed after the relevant entry set closes and are to be paid in line with REG 3.3.

REG 8.3.4.2 Late entries

REG 8.3.4.2.1 Once the Team Entry closing date has passed, and prior to the closing of the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window, the BUCS Executive may, at their discretion and where competition structures allow, accept late entry requests into Team Championships (Leagues/Knockouts).

REG 8.3.4.2.2 When the BUCS Executive receive a late entry request after the closing of the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window, and prior to 2 October of the respective season (2 April for Cricket) or the first working day following this if it falls on a weekend, the following process will be used to determine if the request is accepted:

- The BUCS Executive will reply to the institution/Playing Entity which submitted the request, outlining the process.
- The BUCS Executive will send a consultation email to the Institution Administrators (IAs) of all teams in the affected league(s) detailing the request and asking them to respond to confirm on behalf of their team(s) whether they would prefer for the request to be accepted or rejected. The institution/Playing Entity which submitted the request will be sent a blind carbon copy and shall be permitted to contact the IAs of the affected teams if they wish.
- A deadline for responses will be set and detailed in the email sent out by the BUCS Executive. This deadline will take into consideration the time of year as follows:
 - For a consultation email sent before 1 September, the deadline will be 10 working days after the email has been sent.
 - For a consultation email sent on or after 1 September, the deadline will be five working days after the email has been sent.
- Responses to the consultation should be submitted by email to fixtures@bucs.org.uk and will only be accepted from IAs or other recognised Athletic Union (or equivalent) representatives. For the avoidance of doubt, if an institution/Playing Entity has more than one team in the affected league(s) then they will have one vote per team. If only one response is received from an institution/Playing Entity with multiple teams, their response will be taken to apply to each of these teams.

- The first working day following the deadline set for responses, the BUCS Executive will review all received responses. If there are any non-responses, the BUCS Executive will send a follow-up email to those yet to respond, giving an extended deadline of a further two working days in which they can respond.
- If there are any non-responses following the extended deadline, then these will be classed as a preference for the request to be accepted.
- If 80% of the teams currently in the affected league(s) would prefer for the request to be accepted, the late entry will be accepted.
- If less than 80% of the teams currently in the affected league(s) would prefer for the request to be accepted, the late entry will be rejected.
- Following the conclusion of the consultation, the BUCS Executive will email the IAs of all teams in the affected league(s) and the institution/Playing Entity which submitted the request to confirm if the request has been accepted or rejected.

REG 8.3.4.2.3 Any late entry accepted will be subject to an administration charge as follows which will be based on when the late entry is requested:

- Entry requested after the Team Entry Window closes, up until the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window closes (dates communicated on an annual basis when the Team Entry Window is opened): £10 per team.
- Entry requested after the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window has closed, up until 1 October of the respective season (1 April for Cricket): £25 per team.

REG 8.3.4.3 Withdrawals and refunds Whether an institution/Playing Entity can withdraw a team and how, whether they will be eligible for an entry fee refund, and the impact on that team should they re-enter for the following season, will be subject to the following regulations:

REG 8.3.4.3.1 Prior to the Team Entry closing date, any entries submitted can be withdrawn through BUCS Play. Entry fees will not be charged for teams withdrawn prior to the deadline.

REG 8.3.4.3.2 Once the Team Entry closing date has passed, and prior to the closing of the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window, any teams submitted can be withdrawn (note REG 8.3.4.3.6) by emailing fixtures@bucs.org.uk. Entry fees will not be charged for teams withdrawn during this window.

REG 8.3.4.3.3 Once the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window closing date has passed, whether a team can be withdrawn and/or whether entry fees will be charged/will not be refunded will be subject to the following:

REG 8.3.4.3.3.1 If BUCS has not been able to accommodate a team in a competition, the institution will not be charged the entry fee.

REG 8.3.4.3.3.2 A team can be withdrawn (note REG 8.3.4.3.6) prior to the relevant withdrawal deadline below; however, the entry fee will still be charged/will not be refunded:

- A team scheduled six league fixtures or less can be withdrawn prior to two of their scheduled league fixtures, as they were originally scheduled by the BUCS Executive, having passed.
- A team scheduled seven–nine league fixtures can be withdrawn prior to three of their scheduled league fixtures, as they were originally scheduled by the BUCS Executive, having passed.
- A team scheduled 10–12 league fixtures can be withdrawn prior to four of their scheduled league fixtures, as they were originally scheduled by the BUCS Executive, having passed.
- A team scheduled 13–15 league fixtures can be withdrawn prior to five of their scheduled league fixtures, as they were originally scheduled by the BUCS Executive, having passed.
- A team scheduled 16–18 league fixtures can be withdrawn prior to six of their scheduled league fixtures, as they were originally scheduled by the BUCS Executive, having passed.

REG 8.3.4.3.2.1 Exceptions to these deadlines are:

- Men's and Women's Dodgeball
- Mixed Softball
- Women's Outdoor Ultimate
- Mixed Wheelchair Basketball
- Where a team is participating in a league in any other sport where, as per REG 9.2.4, the league has been agreed to be hosted in a central venue/tournament format.

In these cases, a team can withdraw at any time prior to 10 working days before the first agreed fixture date for the competition. Once this deadline passes, teams cannot withdraw. For example, if a league's first fixture date was Saturday 28 October or Sunday 29 October, then teams would not be allowed to withdraw after 23:59 on Sunday 15 October. Or, if a league's first fixture date was Wednesday 1 November, then teams would not be allowed to withdraw after 23:59 on Tuesday 17 October.

REG 8.3.4.3.3.3 Where a team can be withdrawn any results logged for any fixtures prior to this will be expunged. They will also be withdrawn from, or prevented from qualifying for, any corresponding knockout competition. If they already have a scheduled knockout competition fixture, they will be withdrawn by way of an involuntary walkover.

REG 8.3.4.3.3.4 If a withdrawal is permitted under REG 8.3.4.3.3, it should be requested by contacting fixtures@bucs.org.uk. Once confirmation of withdrawal has been received from the BUCS Executive, the institution/Playing Entity should contact all other teams in the league affected, and any knockout opposition, to inform them of the withdrawal.

REG 8.3.4.3.4 Where a team is no longer permitted to be withdrawn as the relevant deadline under REG 8.3.4.3 has passed, any fixtures which they do not

fulfil may be claimed as walkovers by their opposition, or be recorded as void, and the results of any fixtures already logged prior to this will remain. Please note the penalties incurred for multiple walkovers, dependent on tier of competition in REG 13.7.5. Where walkovers are claimed, an institution/Playing Entity can apply for these walkovers to be considered involuntary – see REG 13.7 for more details.

REG 8.3.4.3.5 Teams withdrawn will be relegated to the tier below (where applicable) should they re-enter the following season. If they do not re-enter the following season, then at any future point they re-enter they will be treated as a new team (note REG 8.3.3).

REG 8.3.4.3.6 An institution/Playing Entity cannot withdraw a team whilst a lower ranked team of theirs remains in the competition structure. An exception to this is where an institution/Playing Entity has Ring Fencing in place. In such a case the same principle shall apply but only between teams under the same Ring Fencing, or those not Ring Fenced, as applicable.

REG 8.3.5 All Premier Tier leagues (National, North 1/South 1, North 2/South 2, North/South) must comply with all regulations relating to Premier leagues, regardless of the number of leagues within the respective Premier Tier (e.g. National and North/South), unless specified otherwise.

REG 8.3.6 League points

REG 8.3.6.1 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations, three points will be awarded for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a loss.

REG 8.3.6.2 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations, where a walkover has been awarded/conceded (REG 13), three points shall be given to the non-offending team and three points deducted from the offending team.

REG 8.3.6.3 No points will be awarded to either team in the case of a void fixture.

REG 8.3.7 Calculating final league positions

REG 8.3.7.1 Final league positions will be primarily based on league points accumulated. However, should there be any ties on points within a league, they shall be split using the sequential system of tiebreaker steps detailed in REG 8.3.7.2–REG 8.3.7.10 (except for American Football, Baseball, Cricket, Dodgeball, Netball, Softball, Squash, Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball and Wheelchair Basketball which shall follow sport specific regulations).

REG 8.3.7.2 If after the application of a step the number of tied teams is reduced, but two or more teams remain tied, the tiebreaker criteria from that step shall be reapplied again to any remaining tied teams, before, if required, moving to the next step. For the avoidance of doubt, this will also apply where four or more teams are tied and may then split into two or more separate groupings of tied teams.

REG 8.3.7.3 For any tiebreaker step where data from fixtures across the whole league is used, if the tie on league points has been effected by any walkovers conceded to the teams tied or any void fixtures involving these teams, any results against the team(s) which conceded the walkover(s) or the team(s) involved in the void fixtures (i.e. all the results between the teams tied on league points and the team(s) conceding the walkover(s)/void match(es)) will not be included in the calculation.

REG 8.3.7.4 The teams tied will be ranked based on voluntary walkovers conceded (the lower the better).

REG 8.3.7.5 The teams tied will be ranked based on league points accumulated from fixtures between the tied teams (the higher the better).

REG 8.3.7.6 The teams tied will be ranked based on Goal/Match/Point/Rubber/Run/Total Point (dependent on the sport) difference from fixtures between the tied teams (the higher the better).

REG 8.3.7.7 The teams tied will be ranked based on Goals (Football, Futsal, Hockey, Lacrosse, Ultimate, Water Polo)/Matches (Golf)/Points (Basketball, Fencing, Rugby League, Rugby Union)/Rubbers (Badminton))/Total Points (Gaelic Football) for from fixtures between the tied teams (the higher the better).

REG 8.3.7.8 The teams tied will be ranked based on Goal/Match/Point/Rubber/Run/Total Point (dependent on the sport) difference from fixtures across the whole league (the higher the better).

REG 8.3.7.9 The teams tied will be ranked based on Goals (Football, Futsal, Hockey, Lacrosse, Ultimate, Water Polo)/Matches (Golf)/Points (Basketball, Fencing, Rugby League, Rugby Union)/Rubbers (Badminton))/Total Points (Gaelic Football) for from fixtures across the whole league (the higher the better).

REG 8.3.7.10 If a tie cannot be broken using the above system, then the final league positions of any teams still tied shall be determined by the BUCS Executive drawing lots.

REG 8.3.8 Promotion and relegation

REG 8.3.8.1 Specific promotion and relegation details for each programme can be found in Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'). However, promotion and relegation of a team can be impacted upon by concession of walkovers (note REG 13.7) and team eligibility per tier (note REG 8.3.1), therefore, to establish if a team is eligible for promotion or relegation, consideration must be given to these regulations.

REG 8.3.8.2 Elective non-promotion

REG 8.3.8.2.1 A team finishing in a position which results in automatic promotion for the following season can request elective non-promotion by emailing fixtures@bucs.org.uk. Any request will be required to provide a justification for the request which shall be considered by the BUCS Executive on a case-by-case basis and approval is not guaranteed. Special consideration will be given in instances where health and safety may be of concern, for example within recognised 'collision sports' (American Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union).

REG 8.3.8.2.2 Requests for elective non-promotion received after the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window has closed (dates communicated on an annual basis when the Team Entry Window is opened) will be subject to an administration charge of £25 per team.

REG 8.3.8.3 Elective relegation

REG 8.3.8.3.1 A team which has not finished in a position which results in automatic relegation for the following season can request elective relegation by emailing fixtures@bucs.org.uk. Any request will be required to provide a justification for the request which shall be considered by the BUCS Executive on a case-by-case basis and approval is not guaranteed. Special consideration will be given in instances where health and safety may be of concern, for example within recognised 'collision sports' (American Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union).

REG 8.3.8.3.2 Requests for elective relegation received after the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window has closed (dates communicated on an annual basis when the Team Entry Window is opened) will be subject to an administration charge of £25 per team.

REG 8.3.8.4 Promotion to/between and relegation from/between Premier Tier leagues

REG 8.3.8.4.1 If a league winning team is eligible for promotion but chooses to opt out of promotion/participating in the playoffs, the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will not be passed to any other team from their league.

REG 8.3.8.4.2 If a league winning team is not eligible for promotion, then the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will be passed to the team finishing in second place if they are eligible for promotion. If the team finishing in second place chooses to opt out of promotion/participating in the playoffs, the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will not be passed to any other team from their league.

REG 8.3.8.4.3 If both a league winning team and the team finishing in second place are not eligible for promotion, then the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will be passed to the team finishing in third place if they are eligible for promotion. If the team finishing in third place chooses to opt out of promotion/participating in the playoffs, the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will not be passed to any other team from their league.

REG 8.3.8.4.4 If none of the teams finishing in first to third place in a league are eligible for promotion, the opportunity for promotion/to compete in the playoffs will not be passed to any other team from their league.

REG 8.3.8.4.5 Teams who at the conclusion of their league may be eligible for promotion/to participate in playoffs can elect to opt out of promotion/participating in playoffs by the relevant deadline stated in Appendix 14 ('BUCS Premier Tier Playoffs Document'). Teams which do not opt out by the relevant deadline and subsequently do not fulfil any scheduled playoff fixtures will be liable to concede voluntary walkovers and subject to sanctions as per REG 13.7.5.3. If a team eligible for promotion has not opted out of promotion/participating in playoffs, and there is no need for any playoffs to take place to determine promotion, they will be automatically promoted.

REG 8.3.8.4.6 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations or Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'), a team finishing bottom of a North/South, North/South 2 or North/South 1 league shall be relegated, except in the following circumstances:

1. If there are no teams eligible to be promoted to the league and/or all eligible teams have opted out of promotion/competing in the respective playoff(s), then the team shall retain their place in the league unless they are required to be relegated under a different regulation (for example because they have conceded a walkover).
2. If the league contains less than the standard number of teams, then the team shall retain their place in the league unless they are required to be relegated under a different regulation (for example because they have conceded two or more walkovers). For example, if a team has withdrawn from a North/South league which would usually contain six teams, then the team finishing in fifth place will retain their place.
3. Should any other team(s) in the league be due to be relegated (for example because they have conceded two or more walkovers) then the team shall retain their place in the league unless they are also due to be relegated under a different regulation (for example because they have conceded a walkover). This scenario may also impact promotion from the league(s) below.
4. If there are no other teams from the league due to take part in any playoff(s) against any team(s) seeking promotion and a team finishing in second or third place is the only eligible team for promotion or the only eligible team to not opt out of promotion/competing in the respective playoff(s), then there shall be a playoff between the two teams, unless the team from the higher league are required to be relegated under a different regulation (for example because they have conceded a walkover) or if points 1, 2, and/or 3 above apply.

REG 8.3.8.4.6 If no teams are promoted to a league as a result of the application of REG 8.3.8.4.1, REG 8.3.8.4.2, REG 8.3.8.4.3, REG 8.3.8.4.4 and/or REG 8.3.8.4.5, and a team is due to be automatically relegated from this league under a different regulation to REG 8.3.8.4.6 (for example because they have conceded a walkover), then the BUCS Executive reserves the right to consider not relegating the team and/or to consider offering an opportunity for promotion or to compete in promotion playoffs to a team, or teams, finishing lower than second place in the league(s) below.

REG 8.3.8.5 Playoffs Should playoffs for promotion and/or relegation be required as part of a competition structure, the following shall apply:

REG 8.3.8.5.1 All playoff fixtures must be played in accordance with the requirements of the level of competition to which teams are seeking promotion, for example National league general and sport specific regulations.

REG 8.3.8.5.2 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations or Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'), if two teams are involved, they shall be drawn at random into a playoff 'Final', with the winner being promoted for the following season. No draws are permitted and so sport specific knockout regulations should be applied to determine match winners as required.

REG 8.3.8.5.3 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations or Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'), if three teams are involved, they shall be placed in a round robin

format, each team having one 'home' and one 'away' fixture. The winner(s) being the best performing team(s) in the mini league produced from these results, who will then be promoted for the following season. All fixtures should be played only to the end of 'normal time' with draws being permitted, with the exception of Basketball (see BAS 9). However, at the conclusion of each fixture, specific tiebreaker penalties shall be undertaken in the following sports in case these should be required to break any ties in the mini league:

- Football (Penalty shootout as per the International Football Association Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game)
- Futsal (Penalty shootout as per the FIFA Futsal Laws of the Game)
- Hockey (Penalty shootout as per HOC 9.1)
- Water Polo (Penalty shootout as per the Water Polo Rules of the World Aquatics (WA) Competition Regulations)

Please note: For these sports, the score at the end of normal time is what should be put on BUCS Play. The result of the tiebreaker penalties is not utilised, other than to assist with determining the winner(s) as part of the process outlined in REG 8.3.8.5.3.1. As such, the tiebreaker penalties information should be e-mailed by the home institution to fixtures@bucs.org.uk and the away institution in case this should be required.

REG 8.3.8.5.3.1 Process for separating tied teams REG 8.3.7, or where applicable the relevant sport specific regulations for calculating final league positions, shall be followed. However, in the sports of Football, Futsal, Hockey and Water Polo, if a tie still exists after **REG 8.3.7.9**, then the tiebreaker penalty results will be used before progressing to **REG 8.3.7.10**, see REG 8.3.8.5.3.2.

REG 8.3.8.5.3.2 In the sports of Football, Futsal, Hockey and Water Polo, if a tie still exists after **REG 8.3.7.9**, then the tiebreaker penalty results will be used as follows:

- Tiebreaker penalties head-to-head (where two teams are tied) / Tiebreaker win-loss record (where three teams are tied)
- Tiebreaker penalties goal difference
- Tiebreaker penalties goals conceded
- If teams are still tied at this point, then **REG 8.3.7.10** shall be applied.

REG 8.3.8.5.3.3 Playoff fixtures that no longer have a bearing on determining promotion and/or relegation (dead rubbers) do not need to be completed but desire to withdraw from said fixtures must be communicated to the BUCS Executive and the affected team(s) as soon as possible in advance of the fixture. Sanctions for conceding may not apply in such instances, if reasonable notice is given. REG 9.7 still applies in that affected teams may claim any costs incurred from the opposition.

REG 8.3.8.5.4 Unless stated otherwise in the relevant BUCS sport specific regulations or Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information'), if four teams are involved, teams shall be drawn at random into a 'Semi-Final' and 'Final' 'knockout' format of playoffs, the eventual winner being

promoted for the following season. No draws are permitted and so sport specific knockout regulations should be applied to determine match winners as required.

REG 8.3.8.6 As an organisation BUCS acknowledges the potential safety issues when severe performance imbalances occur and cause potential risks to the safety of players. Therefore, existing teams within recognised 'collision sports' (American Football, Rugby League and Rugby Union) can apply to BUCS for special dispensation to be promoted to a higher tier league (excluding any National league) in the relevant competition structure for the following season. The set of criteria upon which an application should be made, and the associated deadlines, are listed in Appendices 15a–15d.

REG 8.4 Knockout competitions

REG 8.4.1 Alongside the annual league programmes (and as part of the same entry for each team), BUCS will offer knockout competitions, where entry levels permit.

REG 8.4.1.1 Teams from BUCS member institutions in Northern Ireland wishing to be considered for inclusion in a BUCS National Championship knockout competition must submit a written request to the BUCS Executive at the time team entries are submitted for the following season. Requests shall be considered by the BUCS Executive on a case-by-case basis and approval is not guaranteed.

REG 8.4.1.2 A Knockout Opt-Out Window will be provided on an annual basis, during which any team may opt out of participating in the knockout competition(s) associated with their league, without penalty. Any teams who do not opt out and subsequently do not fulfil a scheduled knockout competition fixture will be liable to concede a voluntary walkover and subject to sanctions as per REG 13.7.5.2. The Knockout Opt-Out Window will close in alignment with the initial Provisional Leagues Feedback Window, except for Baseball, Dodgeball, Gaelic Football, Softball, and Outdoor Ultimate (for teams in Tier 1 only), for which it will close in alignment with the relevant league deadline.

REG 8.4.2 The format of all knockout competition draws, and the dates of the various rounds will be determined by the BUCS Executive.

REG 8.4.3 The qualification criteria for all knockout competitions is contained in Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout information').

REG 8.4.3.1 When there is the requirement to establish the next best first team or best performing team across multiple leagues the following processes will be used:

REG 8.4.3.1.1 Where the teams to be compared were all scheduled the same number of league fixtures, league points accumulated will be compared. However, should there be any ties on points that need splitting, this shall be done as follows:

- A team tied on points who has conceded at least one voluntary walkover shall automatically be placed below any other tied teams who have conceded fewer voluntary walkovers. If a tie still exists;
- The appropriate performance indicator(s) to the sport as used for separating ties within a league under REG 8.3.7 or any equivalent sport specific regulations shall be used. Where any team has more walkovers (conceded to them) and/or void fixtures than another team being compared to them, the appropriate performance indicator(s) will be

averaged across the total number of fixtures fulfilled and conceded as a voluntary walkover by each team.

REG 8.4.3.1.2 Where the teams to be compared were not all scheduled the same number of league fixtures, average league points per game will be compared. However, should there be any ties on average league points per game that need splitting, this shall be done as follows:

- A team tied on average league points per game who has conceded at least one voluntary walkover shall automatically be placed below any other tied teams who have conceded fewer voluntary walkovers. If a tie still exists;
- The appropriate performance indicator(s) to the sport as used for separating ties within a league under REG 8.3.7 or any equivalent sport specific regulations shall be used on an average per game basis. Where any team has more walkovers (conceded to them) and/or void fixtures than another team being compared to them, the appropriate performance indicator(s) will be averaged across the total number of fixtures fulfilled and conceded as a voluntary walkover by each team.

REG 8.4.3.1.3 The processes of REG 8.4.3.1.1 and REG 8.4.3.1.2 shall also be used in relation to other regulations where a best performing team requires establishing.

REG 8.4.4 All BUCS knockout round matches must be played to a conclusion. If the teams are tied on match score at the end of 'normal time' of a knockout competition match, then the appropriate tiebreaker method (E.g. extra time) as laid down in the sport specific regulations shall be applied to achieve a winner. Should further rules be required then the appropriate rules of the International Governing Body or National Governing Body of the sport concerned (as identified in the sport specific regulations) shall be used. As such, facilities must be booked for an appropriate length of time to allow for the possibility of a tiebreaker being required at the end of 'normal time'.

REG 8.4.5 The levels of knockout competitions are as follows:

REG 8.4.5.1 National Championship

REG 8.4.5.1.1 Only first teams shall be eligible to compete in a National Championship knockout competition.

REG 8.4.5.1.2 The National Championship in each sport shall consist of a maximum of 16 teams, drawn from the relevant Premier Tier league(s). Further details and any exceptions to this regulation are in Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout Information').

REG 8.4.5.1.3 The National Championship in each sport shall take place following completion of the league programme, with the draw being based on final league positions.

REG 8.4.5.1.4 The venues of matches in the Last 16, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final stages shall be those of the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.1.5 National Championship Finals shall be hosted at an appropriate venue determined by the BUCS Executive or an appointed Third Party. The BUCS Executive (or appointed Third Party) shall be responsible for all hosting

requirements (including appointment of officials) which would usually sit with the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.2 National Vase

REG 8.4.5.2.1 National Vase knockout competitions are only offered in American Football, Hockey, Rugby Union and Tennis.

REG 8.4.5.2.2 The National Vase in each sport shall consist of a maximum of 16 teams, drawn from the relevant Premier Tier league(s). Further details are in Appendix 10 ('BUCS Promotion, Relegation and Knockout information').

REG 8.4.5.2.3 The National Vase in each sport shall take place following completion of the league programme, with the draw being based on final league positions.

REG 8.4.5.2.4 All National Vase matches must comply with all regulations relating to National Championship matches, unless specified otherwise.

REG 8.4.5.2.5 The venues of matches in the Last 16, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final stages shall be those of the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.2.6 National Vase Finals shall be hosted at an appropriate venue determined by the BUCS Executive or an appointed Third Party. The BUCS Executive (or appointed Third Party) shall be responsible for all hosting requirements (including appointment of officials) which would usually sit with the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.3 National Trophy

REG 8.4.5.3.1 The National Trophy in each sport shall consist of a maximum of 64 teams, drawn from the relevant Tier 1 (and in some cases Premier Tier) league(s). Further details and any exceptions to this regulation are in Appendix 10 ('Promotion, Relegation and Knockout information').

REG 8.4.5.3.2 The National Trophy in each sport shall take place concurrently with the league programme, with the draw being made prior to the season beginning. Exceptions to this include American Football, Dodgeball, Squash and Ultimate (Outdoor) for which Trophy draws shall take place following completion of the league programme.

REG 8.4.5.3.2.1 Where the number of teams eligible for participation in the National Trophy is just over a draw size (for example 33 teams), the BUCS Executive reserves the right to run a preliminary round to the main draw, instead of a full additional round to the draw.

REG 8.4.5.3.2.2 Where possible, the first (main) round draw shall be regionalised North and South.

REG 8.4.5.3.3 The venues of matches in the Last 64, Last 32, Last 16, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final stages shall be those of the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.3.4 National Trophy Finals shall be hosted at an appropriate venue determined by the BUCS Executive or an appointed Third Party. The BUCS Executive (or appointed Third Party) shall be responsible for all hosting

requirements (including appointment of officials) which would usually sit with the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.3.5 If a league match has been rearranged to take place on the date of a scheduled round of National Trophy matches, as per Appendix 2 ('BUCS Leagues and Knockouts - Dates and Deadlines'), and this results in a fixture clash for either team involved when the fixtures for that round are confirmed, then the National Trophy fixture must take precedence and the league fixture shall be rearranged in line with REG 14.3 with the first named (home) institution/Playing Entity remaining as host, unless otherwise agreed between the institutions/Playing Entities.

REG 8.4.5.4 Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield

REG 8.4.5.4.1 The Conference Cup knockout competition(s) in each sport will be randomly drawn from all teams from Tier 2 and below in each Conference.

REG 8.4.5.4.2 The Conference Trophy knockout competition(s) in each sport will vary in the tier(s) from which teams are drawn. Teams may be drawn from as high as Tier 4.

REG 8.4.5.4.3 The Conference Shield(s) in each sport will vary in the tier(s) from which teams are drawn. Teams may be drawn from as high as Tier 5.

REG 8.4.5.4.4 Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield knockout competitions in each sport shall take place concurrently with the league programme, with the draw being made prior to the season beginning. An exception to this is American Football, for which Conference Cup draws shall take place following completion of the league programme.

REG 8.4.5.4.4.1 Where the number of teams eligible for participation in a Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield is just over a draw size (for example 65 teams), the BUCS Executive reserves the right to run a preliminary round to the main draw, instead of a full additional round to the draw, or running an additional knockout competition at the level below (for example a Conference Shield below a Conference Trophy).

REG 8.4.5.4.5 The venues of matches in the Last 64, Last 32, Last 16, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final stages shall be those of the first named (home) team.

REG 8.4.5.4.6 Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield Finals shall be hosted at the venue of the first named (home) team unless otherwise instructed by the BUCS Executive or agreed by the respective Conference in advance in accordance with REG 8.4.5.4.6.1.

REG 8.4.5.4.6.1 The process and associated deadline(s) for communicating to the BUCS Executive the decision of a Conference to host any finals as part of a centralised Conference Finals event shall be communicated by BUCS on an annual basis. Once a host has been confirmed, teams are bound to attend the finals (if qualifying) at the host's venue unless otherwise agreed with the host and any opposition.

REG 8.4.5.4.7 If a league match has been rearranged to take place on the date of a scheduled round of Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield matches, as per Appendix 2 ('BUCS Leagues and Knockouts - Dates and Deadlines'), and this

results in a fixture clash for either team involved when the fixtures for that round are confirmed, then the Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield fixture must take precedence and the league fixture shall be rearranged in line with REG 14.3 with the first named (home) institution/Playing Entity remaining as host, unless otherwise agreed between the institutions/Playing Entities.

REG 8.4.5.4.8 All Conference Shield fixtures must comply with all regulations relating to Conference Trophy matches, unless specified otherwise.

REG 8.4.5.4.9 Minimum number of teams required for a Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield The minimum number of teams (at the time of fixtures being published) for which a Conference Cup/Trophy/Shield competition will be formed is four. Should teams withdraw after fixtures are published, the competition shall be permitted to continue for the remaining teams for that season only.

REG 8.5 The use of drones at BUCS hosted league/knockout fixtures (for example a final taking place at BUCS Big Wednesday) is strictly prohibited. The only permissible use of drones will be with the express permission of BUCS for professional companies with appropriate licenses, insurance, risk assessments and in line with all the requirements of the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority). The unauthorised use of drones will result in disciplinary action under REG 5, and the relevant authorities being notified e.g. CAA.