



**Lower XVs team entry criteria for the English Club Championship,
including the process for CBs to make local variations to the entry of LXVs**

Part 1: Entry Criteria

1. Subject to the potential for local variations as set out below, Lower XVs will be admitted to Level 7 (or below) of the English Clubs Championship (ECC) if they meet the criteria set out below. These criteria take precedence over and supersede any existing criteria in place in relation to lower XVs.

(a) Clubs must apply to their respective DOC for consideration to be admitted into the league structure in such form as prescribed by the DOC by [insert date]. This must include a request from the club as to the level they wish to be initially placed in.

(b) Premiership clubs' Lower XVs and Championship clubs' 2nd XVs are ineligible to apply. Applications from Championship clubs' 3rd XVs and below are permitted.

(c) Applications must be in the form prescribed by the DOC and include the following evidence:

a. Have a 1st XV already playing in the ECC Leagues, but not at the lowest league level locally.

b. Sufficient evidence in the opinion of the DOC/CB that demonstrates a consistent ability to fulfil fixture commitments over the previous two playing seasons. As a minimum standard the evidence will consist of:

i. 15 games played for the most recent season

ii. The date, venue and result of each match

iii. Matches played on the same day as the higher team i.e. 1st XV team

iv. Consideration will also be given to matches that have been postponed [or not fulfilled] where there is compelling evidence that the cancellation was made by the opponents or due to Covid-19 related reasons.

v. Only fixtures entered into GMS will count as evidence

2. All applications must be submitted to the DOC by the deadline who will determine if the applicant is permitted to participate in the ECC. Applicants will be notified accordingly of the DOC decision.

3. Applicants may appeal the DOC decision by writing to [insert] within 14 days of the written confirmation of the DOC decision. Any appeals will be heard by the FCS Implementation Commission (FCSIC) who may request in their absolute discretion further information from the DOC and/or applicant. The decision of FCSIC will be final and binding, and there is no further appeal thereafter.

4. As set out in RFU Regulation 13.2.4(b), teams from the same club will not be permitted to play together in the same league.

Part 2: Local variations

There will be a new Regulation to allow a local variation based on the following principles. There will be further detail to be included in regulations, including managing the decision-making between CBs and DOCs. Note: as set out in the covering paper, the four principles of the FCS work are to be taken into account in the drafting of the regulation, namely:

- Player centricity/player welfare
- Appropriate travel time/distance
- Quality of player experience/quality of competition
- Club sustainability

A Constituent Body may elect to exclude Lower XVs from being admitted to Level 7 or below of the English Clubs Championship in the leagues in the English Clubs Championship which it operates, but only if a vote has taken place open to all clubs which are members of that Constituent Body playing in the English Clubs Championship which resulted in 66% or more of those voting, voting in favour of not having Lower XV's integrated into the English Clubs Championship in the leagues in the English Clubs Championship which that Constituent Body operates.

The Constituent Body may elect to hold this vote itself, or it must conduct a vote if a sizeable number [Note: to be defined more clearly in regulation] of clubs which are members of that Constituent Body playing in the English Clubs Championship request that a vote is held. The wording of any resolution must be as specified by the FCS Implementation Commission.

If a Constituent Body wishes to put in place any local variations to the inclusion of Lower XVs in the English Clubs Championship, such as:

(a) a restriction on the level at which Lower XVs may enter into the English Clubs Championship; or

(b) a restriction on the number of Lower XVs that may enter into the English Clubs Championship; or

(c) an ability for the Constituent Body to refuse permission if it is satisfied that there is an existing sustainable local competition meeting the needs of an applicant club's Lower XV,

then this must be agreed with the FCS Implementation Commission. Any decision of the FCS Implementation Commission is final.