



RUGBY
WORLD CUP
FRANCE 2023

5

TOURNAMENT RULES

5. Tournament Rules

5.1 Laws and Regulations

The Tournament will be played according to the current World Rugby Laws of the Game and Regulations relating to the Game (available on World Rugby's website at <https://laws.worldrugby.org/> and <https://www.world.rugby/handbook/regulations> respectively). Participants will also be subject to additional specifications contained in the Terms of Participation and subsequent communications and directions of RWCL from time to time.

5.2 Tournament Format

5.2.1 Pool phase

The 20 Teams were allocated to four pools of five Teams each at the RWC 2023 Pool Draw, held in Paris in December 2020.

The pool phase will consist of a round robin in which each Team shall play each other within the pool once (the "Pool Phase"). There will be 10 Matches played in each pool, for a total of 40 Matches in the pool phase of the Tournament.

5.2.2 Match points system

The following number of Match points will be awarded for each pool phase Match:

Win	4 points
Draw	2 points
Loss	0 points
4 or more tries	1 point
Loss by 7 points or less	1 point

No Match points will be awarded to a Team which has been expelled from the Tournament, refuses to play a Match or abandons a Match in progress, without direction from Match Officials or the Match Commissioner, subject always to the provisions of the Terms of Participation. The Tournament Director shall determine whether a Team has refused to play a Match or abandoned a Match. Should this occur, the opponent in that Match shall be awarded a win and therefore four Match points. For the avoidance of doubt, bonus points will not be awarded.

Where a Team is expelled from the Tournament, it shall forfeit all Match points previously awarded and its opponents in each Match previously played shall be awarded four Match points (which shall replace any Match points previously awarded from the particular Match). All points scored for and against in these Matches shall be discounted in the official pool rankings and Team records used for Tournament purposes.

Disruption to Matches caused by Covid-19 related circumstances shall be dealt with in accordance with the Covid-19 Protocols and/or Section 16 Participation Agreement, Clause 9 at RWCL's discretion.

5.2.3 Rankings at the completion of the pool phase

At the completion of the pool phase, the Teams in a pool are ranked one through five based on their cumulative Match points, and identified respectively as winner, runner-up, third, fourth and fifth.

If at the completion of the pool phase two or more Teams are level on cumulative Match points, then the following criteria shall be used in the following order until one of the Teams can be determined as the higher ranked:

- The winner of the Match in which the two tied Teams have played each other shall be the higher ranked.
- The Team which has the best difference between points scored for and points scored against in all its pool Matches shall be the higher ranked.

- The Team which has the best difference between tries scored for and tries scored against in all its pool Matches shall be the higher ranked.
- The Team which has scored most points in all its pool Matches shall be the higher ranked.
- The Team which has scored most tries in all its pool Matches shall be the higher ranked.
- Should the tie be unresolved at the conclusion of steps 1 through 5, the rankings as per the updated Official World Rugby World Rankings on October 2, 2023 will determine the higher ranked Team.

For clarification, in the case of a tie between three or more Teams at the end of the pool phase, once the highest ranked Team has been determined following the above criteria, to determine the next higher ranked Team the process would repeat, starting at criterion 1.

Qualification / elimination at the conclusion of the Pool Phase

The winner and runner-up in each pool qualify for the quarter-finals. Teams ranked third, fourth and fifth will be eliminated from the Tournament.

5.2.4 Knock-out Matches

Quarter-finals

The first two Teams in each pool will progress to the quarter-final round, which will be contested by knock-out Matches. The quarter-final Matches will be determined as follows:

QF 1 - Winner Pool C v Runner up Pool D
 QF 2 - Winner Pool B v Runner up Pool A
 QF 3 - Winner Pool D v Runner up Pool C
 QF 4 - Winner Pool A v Runner up Pool B

Teams winning quarter-final Matches qualify for the semi-finals and Teams losing quarter-final Matches will be eliminated from the Tournament.

Semi-finals

The semi-final Matches will be contested by knock-out Matches, as follows:

SF 1 - Winner QF1 v Winner QF2
 SF 2 - Winner QF3 v Winner QF4

The winners of the semi-final Matches qualify for the Final, and the losers of the semi-final Matches will contest the Bronze Final.

The RWC 2023 Match Schedule is included in Section 7.

5.2.5 Tied Matches

Pool Phase

Tied Matches will be considered as a draw in the pool phase and no winner determined through additional rules. This means that each Team is awarded two Match points for the drawn Match plus any bonus point earned for scoring four or more tries.

Knock-out Matches

For quarter-finals, semi-finals, the Bronze Final and the Final, if Teams are tied at fulltime, then the winner shall be determined through the following sequential criteria;

- Extra time
 Following an interval of 5 minutes, extra time of 10 minutes each way (with an interval of 5 minutes) shall be played in full (referred to in this Section as "Normal Extra Time"). For the avoidance of doubt, Teams must remain on the Field of Play. The Match referee will conduct a coin toss during the 5-minute interval to determine which Team will kick-off and the direction of play. Team B will call the toss, in line with Section 7. The Team captain who wins the coin toss can either:

- nominate to kick-off, therefore the other Team must choose the direction they will play
- nominate their preferred direction of play, therefore the other Team must kick-off

- Sudden death

If the scores are tied at the conclusion of Normal Extra Time, then following an interval of 5 minutes a further extra time of 10 minutes maximum shall be played (referred to in this Section as “Sudden Death”). At the end of Normal Extra Time, Teams swap ends and whichever Team kicked off the first half of Normal Extra Time also kicks off Sudden Death. During this period the first Team to score any points shall be declared the winner;

- Kicking competition

If after this Sudden Death period no winner can be declared, a kicking competition will be organised between the two Teams as set out in Section 5.2.6. The winner of that competition shall be declared the winner of the Match.

If Teams are tied at fulltime, coaching staff and non-playing Team Members must remain in their Match positions during Normal Extra Time and Sudden Death, however coaching staff are allowed to come to Team bench during:

- 5 minutes break before Normal Extra Time
- Half-time Normal Extra Time
- 5 minutes interval between Normal Extra Time and Sudden Death
- Kicking competition

Presentation of the final score in tied Matches

For Matches completed at the end of Normal Extra Time or during the Sudden Death, the final score will be presented as the score at the time at which the Match was completed (that is, including Normal Extra Time or Sudden Death).

For Matches completed through the organisation of a kicking competition, the final score shall be presented as the Match score at the completion of the Sudden Death period, followed in brackets by the notification of the winner of the Match and the score in the kicking competition.

5.2.6 Kicking competition

If at the end of a knock-out Match, after Normal Extra Time and Sudden Death periods of play have been completed, the Teams remain tied, then the referee will conduct a place-kick competition to determine the winner of the Match. Four (4) Match balls will be available to both Teams for kicking competition. RWCL will predetermine which end the kicking competition will take place in order to simplify relocation of photographers and ensure the best broadcast coverage of the kicking competition.

The following procedures apply:

1. All players and Match Officials will remain on the playing enclosure. The referee will call the captains of the two Teams to the centre of the playing enclosure and will conduct a coin toss. As per Section 7 Team B will call the toss. The winner of the coin toss will choose which Team kicks first.
2. Only players on the playing enclosure at the time of the completion of the sudden death period may take part in the kicking competition. For the avoidance of doubt, no substituted (including for injury, HIA and/or blood), ordered off or temporarily suspended player not on the Field of Play at the completion of the sudden death period may take part in the kicking competition at any time. Each Team captain must nominate five players to participate in the kicking competition and the order in which they kick must be specified to the referee by the start of the kicking competition.
3. The Match Officials and Team Members will assemble on the halfway line. Team Members must remain behind the halfway line in the side of the playing area not being used for the kicking competition. No one except the players participating in the kicking competition, referee, two assistant referees, substitution controllers, members of the ball team and the Host Broadcast handheld camerapersons and audio assistants are allowed in the part of the playing area being used for the

competition. The five players from each Team will place kick from three different areas, all on the 22 metre line, as follows:

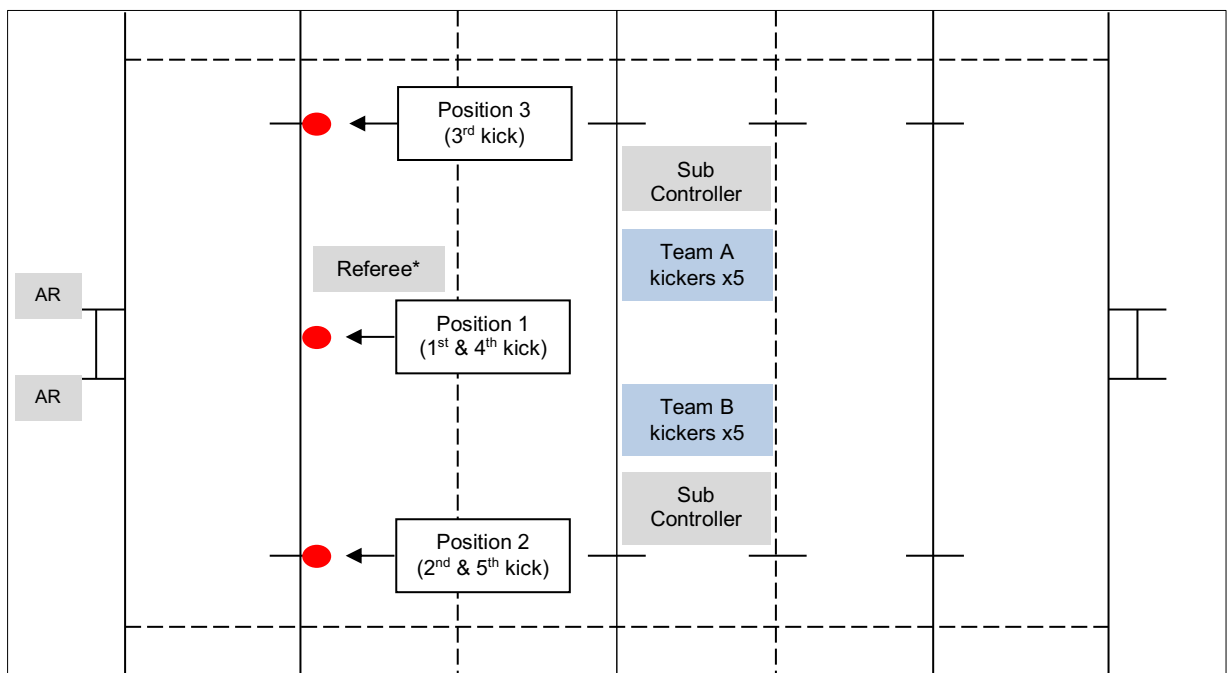
Position 1: directly in front of the posts

Position 2: on the 15 metre line on the left-hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts)

Position 3: on the 15 metre line on the right-hand side of the posts (determined as facing the posts)

4. The referee will start the competition by calling the first player selected from the Team kicking first to the first kicking position. Once the player has taken the kick, the referee calls a player from the opposing Team to kick from the same position.
5. The next two players (one from each Team) will kick from the second position in turn. This will continue until all five players from each Team have kicked (the next players kicking respectively from the third position, first position and finally the second position), or until one Team is unable to equal the score of the other Team within the remaining number of kicks. For clarification purposes, the order and positions of kickers is as follows:
 - Kicker 1 from each Team, from position 1
 - Kicker 2 from each Team, from position 2
 - Kicker 3 from each Team, from position 3
 - Kicker 4 from each Team, from position 1
 - Kicker 5 from each Team, from position 2

6.



* Location of the Referee is approximate (centrally located between the 22m and 10m lines)

If there is an equal number of successful kicks once each Team has completed its five kicks, the competition continues on a “sudden death” basis, following the same order of kickers used in the first five kicks.

7. The competition will continue two kicks at a time (one from each Team), going progressively through the three kicking positions stated above, starting at position 1 (and repeating the process if necessary) until one player succeeds with a kick and the player from the other side taking the same kick misses it. Once this occurs, the Team of the player who succeeded with the kick will be declared the winner.

8. Throughout the kicking competition:
- 8.1 Players must be nominated immediately on request by the referee. Once a player has been handed the ball on the kicking area, he must take the kick within one minute. Should he take longer, the referee shall declare the kick void.
 - 8.2 After each kick, the referee will record the number of the player and whether or not the attempt was successful. The Match Media Officer will record the same details on the official Match report.
 - 8.3 Whether or not the kick is successful is the sole decision of the referee, who may at his sole discretion rely on the assistance of his assistant referees and/or the TMO. The referee's decision shall be final and binding.
 - 8.4 Once a player has completed his kick, he shall return to stand with his Team behind the halfway line in the side of the playing area not being used for the kicking competition.
 - 8.5 Should a player injure himself during the kicking competition, this player may be replaced. If a replacement is required, the Team can call upon a replacement kicker but only select from the remaining 10 players that were on the Field of Play at the end of sudden death. For the avoidance of doubt, a player not on the Field of Play at the end of sudden death cannot participate in the kicking competition.

5.3 Delayed, Postponed, Abandoned and Cancelled Matches

In the interests of the Teams, the commencement of Matches at the scheduled time shall be the first priority in all instances. However, in circumstances deemed necessary and/or appropriate by RWCL, Matches may need to be delayed, postponed, abandoned or cancelled. All decisions in this regard shall be made by the Tournament Director and communicated to Teams by RWCL as soon as practicable.

5.3.1 COVID-19

Disruption to Matches caused by Covid-19 related circumstances shall be dealt with in accordance with the Covid-19 Protocols and/or Section 16 Participation Agreement, Clause 9 at RWCL's discretion.

5.3.2 Participating Union-caused

Where the delay, abandonment, postponement or cancellation of a Match is deemed by the Tournament Director to be caused by a Participating Union, not acting under instruction of a Match Official or Match Commissioner, such Participating Union shall, in accordance with the provisions of the Participation Agreement, be subject to the decisions of RWCL regarding forfeiture of the Match, and financial and/or other sanctions as appropriate.

Delay

Matches which cannot commence at the scheduled time will be considered delayed. Decisions on the delay of Matches will be made as early as possible

Wherever possible, and without compromising Team and player preparation, RWCL will endeavour to ensure that a Match commences at the scheduled kick off time as per the Match Day Run Sheet. This is important to the integrity of the Tournament and the maximisation of the global audience for the sport.

- 1. In the event that a Team arrives at a Match Venue later than its scheduled arrival time for reasons outside of its control, such as traffic delays, the Team shall be given a minimum of 45mins for warm-ups and other Team pre-Match preparations.
- 2. When a Team is likely to be arriving late at the Match Venue therefore a delay to kick off is expected and the opposing Team has arrived on time, the opposing Team is entitled to continue its warm ups and preparations as originally planned if it so chooses. The opposing Team does not have to wait for the late arriving Team to commence its warm ups, however must adhere to changes in the run sheet timings, for example, coin toss, boots check etc.

3. If a Team's late arrival at a Match Venue is due to its own actions, such as late departure from the Team hotel, the Team shall still be given a minimum of 45mins for warm-ups and other Team pre-Match preparations. Such late arrival may constitute a breach of the Terms of Participation under Section 15.
4. If a Team arrives at the Match Venue within 45mins of the scheduled kick off time, the Match will be delayed by one minute for every minute a Team arrives within that time. For example, if a Team arrives at KO - 40mins, kick off would be delayed by 5mins.

No decision regarding the delay of a Match in instances outside of the above policy shall be made without consultation with the Host Broadcaster at the Venue and IBC and approval from the Tournament Director (via the Match Commissioner).

5.3.3 Pool Phase Matches

Delayed Matches

Where a Pool Phase Match cannot be started at the scheduled time, it will be considered delayed. Decisions on the delay of Matches will be taken as early as possible on the Match day and be communicated to Teams by the Match Commissioner.

Cancelled Matches

Where a Pool Phase Match cannot be commenced on the day in which it is scheduled, it shall be considered as cancelled, unless (i) RWCL (acting reasonably) is able to make all necessary alternative arrangements to rearrange the Match to take place at the same Venue or relocate the Match to an alternative Venue within 48 hours of the scheduled kick-off time and (ii) RWCL is reasonably satisfied that there is no undue compromise to player welfare considerations. In the event that RWCL determines that the Match is cancelled, the result shall be declared a draw and Teams will be allocated two Match points each and no score registered. For the avoidance of doubt, no bonus points will be awarded.

Abandoned Matches

Where a Pool Phase Match is stopped following commencement, and cannot be completed the same day, it will not be rescheduled to the following day, and will be considered as abandoned.

In such situations, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Where a Match has to be abandoned either at half time or at any time during the second half, the score at the time of the abandonment shall be considered as final and used to determine the result of the Match.
2. Where a Match has to be abandoned at any time during the first half the result shall be declared a draw for Match points purposes, however each Team will keep its score at the time of the abandonment. Any bonus points for scoring four tries secured at the time of the abandonment are also retained by the Teams involved in abandoned pool Matches.

5.3.4 Knock-out Matches

Delayed Matches

Where a knock-out Match cannot be started at the scheduled time, it will be considered delayed. Decisions on the delay of Matches will be taken as early as possible on the Match day and be communicated to Teams by the Match Commissioner.

Postponed Matches

Where a knock-out Match cannot be commenced on the scheduled Match day, it will be considered as postponed, and will be re-scheduled to be played within the two days following the scheduled Match day, or such longer period as determined by RWCL.

Abandoned Matches

Where a knock-out Match is stopped following commencement, and cannot be completed the same day, it shall be considered as abandoned.

In such situations, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Where a Match has to be abandoned either at half-time or at any time during the second half or any additional periods of play, the score at the time of the abandonment shall be considered as final and used to determine the result of the Match.

If the above result is a tie, then the winner will be determined by reference to the following sequential criteria:

- The Team which scored most tries in that particular Match.
 - The Team with the most Match points from the pool phase.
 - The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has the best difference between points scored for and points scored against.
 - The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has the best difference between tries scored for and tries scored against.
 - The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has scored most points.
 - The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has scored most tries.
 - Where all criteria above are not able to determine a winner, the winner shall be the Team that is higher ranked in the official World Rugby World Rankings at the time the Match is scheduled to be played (this criterion will not apply for the Final; in the case that the winner of the Final cannot be determined from the above criteria the two Teams shall be jointly declared winners).
2. Where a Match has to be abandoned at any time during the first half, the Match shall be played again in full within the two days following the scheduled Match day at the same Venue, or if required, an alternate Venue as directed by RWCL, for the full time, or such longer period as determined by RWCL.

Cancelled Matches

Where a knock-out Match cannot commence within the two days following the scheduled Match day (or such longer period as specified by RWCL) or is abandoned prior to half-time and cannot be postponed and re-scheduled within this period, it shall be considered as cancelled.

In such situations, the following sequential criteria shall apply to determine the winner of the cancelled Match:

- The Team with the most Match points from the pool phase (applicable in quarter-finals and semi-finals).
- The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has the best difference between points scored for and points scored against.
- The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has the best difference between tries scored for and tries scored against.
- The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has scored most points.
- The Team which in all its Tournament Matches has scored most tries.
- Where all criteria above are not able to determine a winner, the Team that is higher ranked in the official World Rugby World Rankings at the time the Match is scheduled to be played (this criterion will not apply for the Final; in the case that the winner of the Final cannot be determined from the above criteria the two Teams shall be jointly declared winners).

5.4 Opposed Training Sessions

From **August 28, 2023** Teams are not permitted to play non-Tournament Matches but are allowed to conduct opposed training sessions.

Teams are not permitted to include players from the Preliminary Training Squad or any other player that could potentially be selected for the Tournament Team in opposed training sessions with or against the Tournament Team.

Once a Team has officially entered the Tournament all training sessions, opposed or otherwise, must take place at agreed and nominated France 2023 Training Venues.

These sessions cannot be advertised, have recorded scores, cannot be ticketed or reported as Matches by media and must be de-structured as much as possible. All Commercial Rules must be respected by all Participating Unions in an opposed training session.

Teams must inform RWCL and France 2023 if any opposed training sessions are planned and who will be participating in these sessions.

Please note, that the opposed training session policy is applicable for Training Venues only. An opposed training session cannot take place during a Stadium Run at a Match Venue as additional players are not Accredited or registered as part of the Tournament. Preservation of the pitch is paramount.