

## What does the half game regulation say?

Regulation 15.12.1 states: *“All clubs, teams, schools and colleges must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least half of the Available Playing Time. This requirement is mandatory across the entire age grade game and in respect of all contact and non-contact age grade matches, including 7 a-side matches and festivals/tournament matches.”*

## Does it have to be ½ a game for every game?

No, if a team is playing (for example) 6 matches, a player must play for at least 6 halves / 3 full matches / or the equivalent time.

## We have guaranteed games but the finals are knockouts, how do we work out how much a player should play?

In the Age Grade game, competition organisers should select a format that ensures all teams have equal playing time.

However if this is not the case, players must play half of the *guaranteed*, or known, games available. In 7s competitions these known games will be classed at “available playing time”. For example:

- If every team is guaranteed 4 games followed by knock out finals where involvement isn’t guaranteed – then there are 4 guaranteed games so every player must play at least 4 halves.
- If there are 4 guaranteed games with every team guaranteed to enter a knock out phase – then there would be 5 guaranteed games.

Even in the knock out element, best practice is to ensure all players get half a game.

## What if we’re only guaranteed one game?

We would not expect an Age Grade 7-a-side competition to only have one guaranteed match. If however this is the case – all squad players should play a least half of this match.

## What if a team intended to play a certain number of games, but due to injuries or changes in format play fewer matches?

Every effort should be made to avoid this and coaches should think ahead to ensure that players had opportunity to play ahead of it, i.e. not leaving all the changes until the latter matches. If known game time reduces due to unforeseen circumstances this is permitted in regulation.

## What about injury time or extra time?

There is no extra time in Age Grade rugby.

Injury time is not included in the available game time. If the guaranteed playing time is, for example, 4 x 14 mins then a player must play at least 28 minutes (4 halves) of play.

**What about a tournament which takes place over 2 days, must a player play half the guaranteed time per day?**

Yes.

**What if a player gets a yellow card, or is banned for a match?**

Time in the sin bin, or a suspension is included as part of the game time for a player. For example, if a player was due to play 4 games (therefore guaranteed 4 halves) the time from being sent off and the missed game would be included in their 4 halves.

**What if a player misses some games due to injury but recovers for final games?**

If this follows a suspected concussion the RECOGNISE & REMOVE principle must be used, 'IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT'. These players must not then take any further part in the competition.

If there is another injury which means a player needs to leave the field and unable to play, we would not expect them to be asked to take part in the remaining matches.

In both, if there is a *bona fide* injury, the half game rule does not apply.

**We have a player who isn't ready to play a full game, but we would give a few minutes if we could.**

A Player who is not fully trained to safely play should not be in the match day squad.

**Is there a minimum squad size?**

This is decision for the competition organisers.

**Another team hasn't followed the half game rule, what should we do?**

Firstly, try to avoid these situations, through having a conversation pre-match with the opposition coach and referee. If there is a suspected breach report this to the event organisers.

**What should I do as a competition organiser?**

Our advice would be to ensure that team managers are aware of the regulation in the competition and that they are asked to plan ahead for how they will implement the half game rule.

If there is a reported breach an RFU sanctions table is available to help.