
Competitions 2027/2028 Women-Men

Final Format | Belgium Rugby |

Intro

To start our work, we first analysed the match data across the various categories and divisions. We looked at the number of scheduled matches, the number of forfeited matches and the number of matches without development (a gap of more than 30 points)

We then sent out a survey to gather the needs and expectations of players regarding competition

*all data is attached to the relevant categories

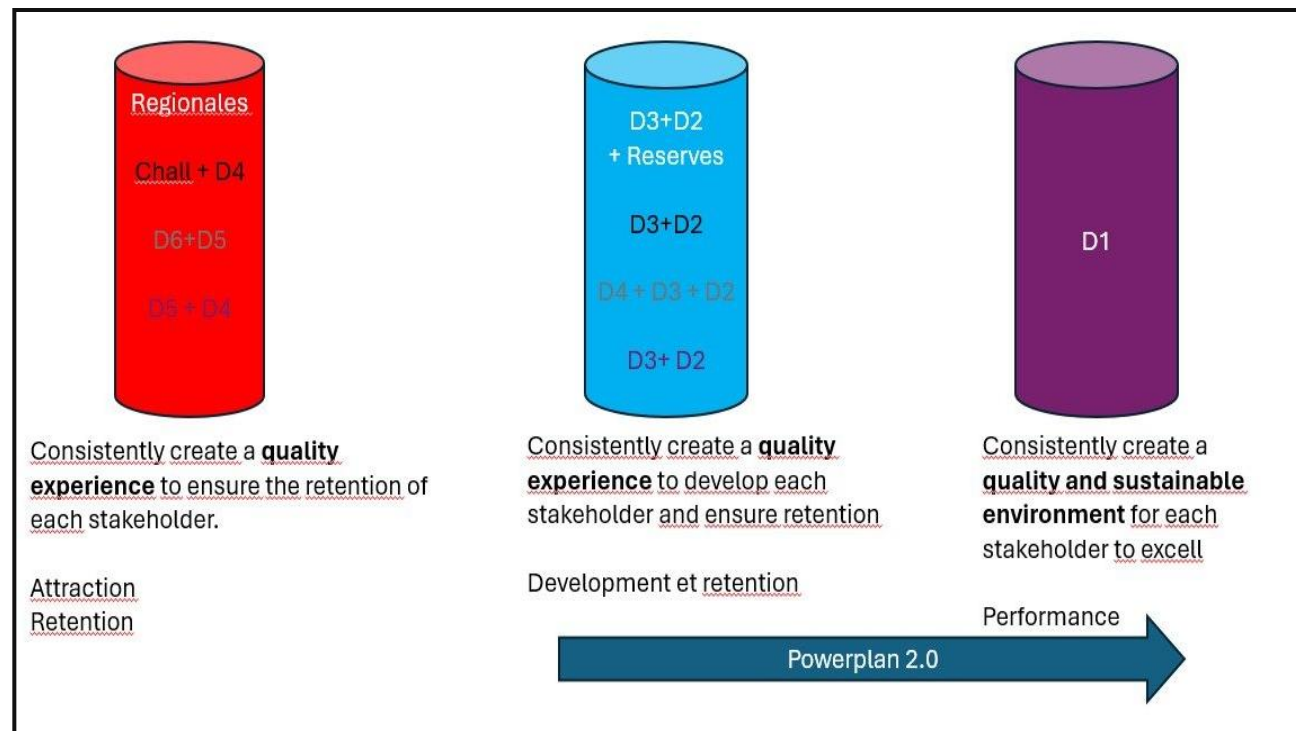


Division Structure

For the lower divisions (red pillar), the aim is to attract players and keep them in rugby

For the middle divisions (blue pillar), the aim is to retain players while also supporting their development.

For the higher divisions (purple pillar), the aim is to focus on performance



Our approach

The competition reform was developed in collaboration with our rugby community. To make sure different points of view were taken into account, we set up a working group made up of representatives from clubs and divisions across the country.

We started by asking players, coaches, committee members and other stakeholders what, in their view, makes a successful competition. Based on their feedback, we developed several competition formats and shared them with all clubs through a second survey.

Finally, we held two online meetings to discuss the proposals, answer questions and collect final feedback. The model presented in this document is the result of that collaborative process.

Working group members:

- Bernard Steuve
- Christian Cornet
- Didier Vanderhaegen
- Ruben Gooskens

In-person working group meeting:

- 1 in-person meeting (17 February 2026)

Online working group meetings:

- 18 December 2026
- 13 January 2026
- 03 February 2026
- 05 March 2026
- 2 April 2026
- 23 April 2026
- 4 May 2026
- 9 and 11 June 2026
- 23 June 2026

Meetings with the clubs:

- 17 and 18 June
- 1 and 2 July

Surveys sent:

- For each pillar there were 3 surveys (coach, player, board). That makes 9 surveys in total

BENECUP

Attention!!

- This applies to all categories taking part in a competition with the Netherlands. The exact format of these competitions still has to be confirmed with the Netherlands; if there are any changes, the clubs will be consulted.

Women

The Objectives

The working group's objectives for this category were:

- Limit the number of matches without development
- Adjust the number of teams per division
- Offer a play-off/play-down system allowing teams to measure themselves

Working criteria based on the survey:

- Start in September and finish at the end of May
- No play during the holidays. Playing during university exams is possible, except in D1
- Play between 15 and 18 matches in blocks of 2-3 matches

On the following pages you will find the figures on competitive balance in the current structure



Some Figures

Season 2024-2025

- In the first phase of the championship we recorded between 1 and 14% forfeited matches across all divisions except Challenge (33%), and between 43 and 63% matches without development except in D2 and Q3B (20% and 14%).
- In the second phase we recorded between 15 and 27% forfeited matches, except in D2 Gold with 5%. Matches without development ranged between 20 and 37%, except in Challenge, where the figures were 60 and 47%

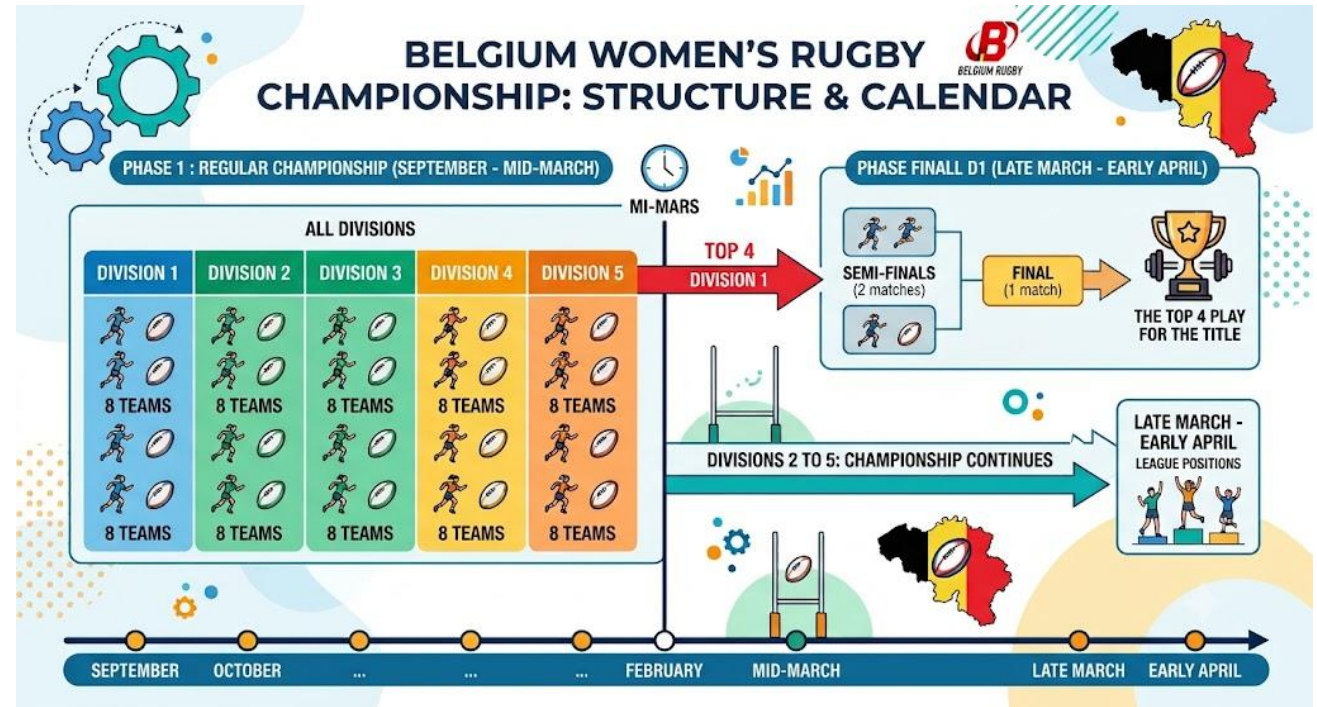
Season 2025-2026

- In the first phase of the championship we recorded between 0 and 9% forfeited matches across all divisions (except Challenge B (40%)) and between 35 and 69% matches without development, except in Q3A (18%).
- In the second phase we recorded between 0 and 9% forfeited matches, except in Challenge Gold (47%). Matches without development ranged between 32 and 38%, except in D3 Gold, where the figure was 18%

Format 2027/2028

Phase 1

- 8 teams per division
- Home and away rounds
- The top 4 of D1 play semi-finals and a final



Format 2027/2028

Phase 2

We create two pools.

Each team plays against all the teams in its own pool. The winner of each pool moves up to the higher division, the last team in each pool stays in the lower division.

The 2nd of each pool plays at home against the 3rd of the other pool.

The winner of the match between the 2nd and the 3rd moves up, the loser stays in the lower division.



Play offs 2026 – 2027

Women

Play Offs D1 – D2 Women

Division 1	
D1	Result
1er	½ finale
2ème	½ finale
3ème	Play-off
4ème	Play-off
5ème	Play-off
6ème	Play-off
7ème	Barrage against the loser final Gold D2
8ème	Relegate to D2

Division 2	
D2 Gold	Result
1er	Final Gold
2ème	Final Gold
3ème	
4ème	
5ème	
6ème	
D2 Silver	Result
1er	
2ème	Barrage against first D3
3ème	Relegate to D3
4ème	Relegate to D3
5ème	Relegate to D3
6ème	Relegate to D3

*The format communicated by the championship management prevails in all cases

Play Offs D3 – D4 Women

Division 3	
D3	Result
1er	Barrage against 2 nd D2 Silver
2ème	
3ème	
4ème	Barrage against first D4
5ème	Relégation D4
6ème	Relégation D4
7ème	Relégation D4
8ème	Relégation D4

Division 4	
D4	Result
1er	Barrage against 4th D3
2ème	
3ème	
4ème	
5ème	
6ème	
7ème	
8ème	

*The format communicated by the championship management prevails in all cases



Men

The objectives

The working group's objectives for this category were:

- Limit the number of matches without development
- Introduce a high-level competition for D1
- Offer a play-off/play-down system allowing teams to measure themselves

Working criteria based on the survey:

- Start in September and finish at the end of May
- No play during the holidays, except D1. Avoid playing during university exams
- Play between 15 and 20 matches in blocks of 2-3 matches
- The obligation to field a second team is a barrier at the lower level, but important at the middle and higher levels

On the following pages you will find the figures on competitive balance in the current structure



Some figures

Season 2024-2025

- For the first teams we recorded between 1 and 4% forfeited matches and between 9 and 27% matches without development
- For the reserve teams we recorded 0% forfeited matches, except in D3R with 32%. Matches without development ranged between 31 and 51%

Season 2025-2026

- For the first teams we recorded between 0 and 3% forfeited matches and between 22 and 35% matches without development
- For the reserve teams we recorded 0% forfeited matches in D1R, 3% in D2R and 31% in D3R. Matches without development ranged between 31 and 43%

Format 2027/2028

Phase 1

- Championship with 8 teams per division.
A reserve team is mandatory for divisions 1, 2 and 3.



Format 2027/2028

Phase 2

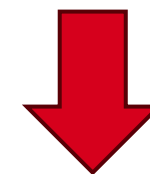
- The Benecup will take place during the season over 4 match days. (The format is still being discussed with the Netherlands. The D1 clubs will be contacted for final feedback)
- On the same weekends as the Benecup, a Belgian Cup will be organised for the teams not taking part in the Benecup (D2, D3, D4) (entry by registration). D1R should take part in the Benecup by playing before the first team (pending confirmation from the Netherlands). If it does not take part, it will be required to enter the Belgian Cup, joining at a later stage



Play off – Play down 2027-2028

At the end of the season, the bottom two teams of each division face the top two teams of the division below (3 matches); the best two go up to the higher division and the bottom two go down to the lower division.

	Playdown/Play-off
1	7th higher division
2	8th higher division
3	1st lower division
4	2 nd lower division



3 games

	Promotion/relegation
1	Higher division
2	Higher division
3	Lower division
4	Lower division

Play offs 2026 – 2027

Men

Play Offs D1 – D2 Men

Division 1

D1	Result
1er	½ finale
2ème	½ finale
3ème	Play-off
4ème	Play-off
5ème	Play-off
6ème	Play-off
7ème	
8ème	Barrage against 1st D2
9ème	Relegate to D2
10ème	Relegate to D2

Division 2

D2	Result
1er	Barrage against 8th D1
2ème	
3ème	
4ème	
5ème	
6ème	Barrage against first D3
7ème	Relegate to D3
8ème	Relegate to D3
9ème	Relegate to D3
10ème	Relegate to D3

*The format communicated by the championship management prevails in all cases

Play Offs D3 Men

Division 3	
D3	Result
1er	Barrage against 6th D2
2ème	
3ème	
4ème	
5ème	Relegate to D4
6ème	Relegate to D4
7ème	Relegate to D4
8ème	Relegate to D4
9ème	Relegate to D4

*The format communicated by the championship management prevails in all cases

Regional divisions

LBFR 1 and RV1 promote directly to D4

	Play offs	
M1	LBFR 2	RV 3
M2	LBFR 3	RV 2



	Play offs	
M3	winner M1	winnerM2



Winner M3 promotes to D4

*The format communicated by the championship management prevails in all cases