

STANDARD CODE OF RULES FOR YOUTH COMPETITIONS

This document contains the Standard Code of Rules developed by The Football Association and additions, for Youth Competitions. Youth Competitions may add to the core of the Standard Code, which is mandatory, providing the additions are approved by the sanctioning association and do not conflict with the mandatory Rules or any relevant principles and policies established by the FA. Guidance from the sanctioning association should be sought in advance if there is any doubt as to the acceptability of additional Rules.

This Standard Code of Rules is mandatory for all Youth Competitions. Competitions seeking sanction must draft their Rules in conformity with the code putting them in the correctly numbered Rule and showing the standard heading. The mandatory element is printed in normal text and the optional elements of the Standard Code in italics.

It should be noted that in many cases Rules are so printed because they are alternatives and the procedure to apply should be retained and the others omitted. In all cases where a line is shown the necessary name, address, number or wording to complete this Rule must be inserted.

NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION

1. (A) This Competition shall be designated the
League/Cup and known as the
(*sponsorship title*) and shall consist of not more than
Clubs approved by the sanctioning authority.

The Competition will provide football in accordance with the agreed youth formats published under FA Rule C4(A). This Competition will reproduce the relevant FA Rule in its handbook and on its website to ensure clarity and compliance with Rule 8(B)

- (B) All such Member Clubs must be affiliated to an affiliated County Football Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date on the Form "D" to the County Football Association. The area covered by the Competition Membership shall be

This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the
Football Association(s) and the constituent teams of Member Clubs may be grouped in divisions, *each not exceeding* *in number*.

- (C) Inclusivity and Non-discrimination
- (i) This Competition and each Member Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination
 - (ii) This Competition and each Member Club does not and must not [by its rules or regulations or] in any manner whatsoever unlawfully discriminate against any person within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination (whether by age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability or otherwise).
 - (iii) This Competition and each Member Club must make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability or otherwise.
 - (iv) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning Association for investigation.

For Leagues intending to become Charter Standard Leagues:

- (D) *This Competition wishes to become a designated Charter Standard League. Existing Member Clubs have two years (until the end of the 2014-15 season) to achieve the Charter Standard club award or face expulsion from the League. New Member Clubs have one year to achieve the Charter Standard club award. The League has the right to refuse membership to a Club if it fails to demonstrate commitment to achieving the award.*

For Leagues that are already Charter Standard Leagues:

- (D) *As an FA Charter Standard League this Competition requires all its' Clubs to have achieved FA Charter Standard League status by yyyy (insert date – two years from when Charter Standard League status was awarded to the Competition). The League management committee may expel any club that has failed to achieve Charter Standard status by this date. New Member Clubs have one year to achieve the Charter Standard club award. The League has the right to refuse membership to a Club if it fails to demonstrate commitment to achieving the award*
- (E) *This Competition and its Clubs shall support the FA's Respect programme. As such it recognises that everyone in football has a collective responsibility to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place. A Respect League values the courtesy and fairness by opposing players, club officials and spectators. The League and its Clubs will seek to play fixtures in a fair, competitive but not antagonistic environment.*
- (F) *Member Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of F.A. and County F.A. Competitions) except with the written consent of the Management Committee of the Competition.*
- (G) *At the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, a majority of the delegates present shall have power to decide or adjust the compilation of the divisions at their discretion. When necessary this Rule shall take precedence over Rule 12.*

ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

2. (A) Applications by Clubs for admission to this Competition *or the entry of an additional team(s)* must be made in writing to the Secretary and must be accompanied by an Entry Fee of per team which shall be returned in the event of non-election.

At the discretion of a majority of the accredited voting members present applications, of which due notice has been given, may be received at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting. The Entry Fee shall apply.

When Rule 12(B) is applied and a team seeks a transfer, or is compulsorily transferred to another division, no Entry Fee shall be payable.

- (B) The Annual Subscription shall be £per Club/Team playing 11-a-side football, £per Club/Team playing 9v9 football and £per Club / Team playing Mini-Soccer payable on or before the in each year.
- (C) Each Club shall, *within* *days/on the day of election*, pay a Deposit of which shall be returnable to Clubs on leaving the Competition provided they have fulfilled their fixtures and complied with all orders of the Management Committee.
- (D) A Club shall not participate in this Competition until the Entry Fee, Annual Subscription and Deposit have been paid.
- (E) Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by of its County Football Association affiliation number for the forthcoming Season, *failing which they shall be fined* Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the prescribed form, of details of its Headquarters, Officers and any other information required by the Competition.

OFFICERS

3. The Officers of the Competition shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting and elected thereat.
(N.B. Auditors are not Officers).

MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

4. (A) The Competition shall be governed in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association by a Management Committee comprised of the Officers andmembers who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. All Participants shall abide by The Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children as determined by The Association from time to time.
- (B) Retiring Officers shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination. All other candidates for election as Officers or Members of the Management Committee shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the Secretaries of two Member Clubs, not later than in each year. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the foregoing for any office, nominations may be received at the Annual General Meeting
- (C) The Management Committee shall meet at least quarterly.
On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the Members of the Management Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee.
- (D) Except where otherwise mentioned all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.
- (E) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their nominated Officers.

POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

5. (A) The Management Committee may appoint sub-committees and delegate such of their powers as they deem necessary. *The decisions of all sub-committees shall be reported to the Management Committee for ratification.* The Management Committee shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of The Football Association or affiliated Association.
- (B) Subject to the permission of the County Football Association having been obtained the Management Committee may order a match or matches to be played each season, the proceeds to be devoted to the funds of the Competition and, if necessary, may call upon each Club (including any Club which may have withdrawn during the season) to contribute equally such sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency at the end of the season. (See Rule 6(e))
- (C) Each Member of the Management Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Committee Meetings and have one vote thereat, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Member or to the Club so represented or where there may be a conflict of interest. (This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee).
In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- (D) The Management Committee shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce the Rules of the Competition and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competition, including any not provided for in the Rules.

With the exception of Rules 5(I), 6(H), 10(A), 11 and 19, for any breaches of Rule a formal written charge must be issued. The respondent shall be given seven days from the date of notice to reply to the charge and given the opportunity to:-

- (i) Accept or deny the charge
- (ii) Submit in writing a case of mitigation, or
- (iii) Put their case before the Management Committee.

All breaches of the Laws of the Game, Rules and Regulations of The Football Association shall be dealt with in accordance with F.A. Rules by the appropriate Association.

With the exception of Clubs playing at Step 7 of the Football Pyramid and the FA Women's Premier League, the maximum fine permitted for any breach of a Competition rule is £250 and, when setting any fine, the Competition must ensure that the penalty is proportional to the offence, taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

- (E) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 16.

Decisions of the Management Committee must be notified in writing to those concerned within days.

- (F) Members of the Management Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Management Committee and Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by any sub-committee of the Competition.

- (G) The Management Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill, in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur amongst their number.

- (H) A Club having failed to comply with an order or instruction of the Management Committee, or failing to satisfactorily attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition shall be liable to be fined or otherwise penalised at the discretion of the Management Committee.

- (I) All fines and charges shall be paid within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification.

Any Club failing to do so will be fined a maximum of £50. Further failure to pay the fine including the additional sum within 14 days will result in fixtures being withdrawn until such time as the outstanding payments are settled.

- (J) *A member of the Management Committee appointed by the Competition to attend a meeting or match may have any expenses incurred refunded by the Competition.*

- (K) The Management Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the Annual General or Special General Meeting called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the Competition season.

- (L) No participant under the age of 18 can be fined.

- (M) Leagues who organise Mini Soccer for teams playing U7, U8, U9 and U10 football may not, with the exception of Rules 6, 10(A), 11(D), 14 and 19 fine clubs for breaches of League Rules.

- (N) For those leagues defined under Rule 5(M) when a team fails to fulfil either a festival or development fixture and pitch hire costs have been incurred, the Organising Competition will be empowered to order the defaulting club to pay these costs and charge an administration fee of up to £10.

- (O) The business of the Competition as determined by the Management Committee *may/shall* be transacted by electronic mail or facsimile.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least Members are present and entitled to vote:-
- (i) To receive and confirm the Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting.
 - (ii) To consider any business arising there from.
 - (iii) To receive and adopt the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts.
 - (iv) Election of Clubs to fill vacancies (as recommended by the Management Committee).
 - (v) Constitution of the Competition for ensuing season.
 - (vi) Election of Officers and Management Committee.
 - (vii) Appointment of Auditors.
 - (viii) Alteration of Rules, if any (of which notice has been given).
 - (ix) Fix the date for the commencement of the season and kick off times applicable to the Competitions.
 - (x) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted as being relevant to an Annual General Meeting.
- (B) A copy of the duly *audited/verified* Balance Sheet, Statement of Accounts and Agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least fourteen days prior to the meeting, and to the County Football Association(s).
- (C) A signed copy of the duly *audited/verified* Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall be sent to the County Football Association(s) within fourteen days of its adoption by the Annual General Meeting.
- (D) Each *Member Club/team* shall be empowered to send two delegates to an Annual General Meeting. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. Fourteen days' notice shall be given of any Meeting.
- (E) Clubs who have withdrawn their Membership of the Competition during the season being concluded or who are not continuing Membership shall be entitled to attend but shall vote only on matters relating to the season being concluded. *This provision will not apply to Clubs expelled in accordance with Rule 17.*
- (F) All voting shall be conducted by a show of voting cards unless a ballot be demanded by at least of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chairman so decides.
- (G) No individual shall be entitled to vote on behalf of more than one Member Club.
- (H) Any continuing Member Club failing to be represented at the Annual General Meeting without satisfactory reason being given *shall/may* be fined
- (I) Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an Annual General Meeting.

AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED

7. The Chairman and the Secretary of each Club shall complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the Competition together with the Application for Membership for the coming season, or upon indicating that the Club intends to compete.
- "We, (A), of (Chairman) and (B) of (Secretary) of Football Club have been provided with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Competition and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the said Club, if elected or accepted into Membership, to conform to those Rules

and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the Management Committee of the Competition, subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 16.”

Any alteration of the Chairman and /or Secretary on the above Agreement must be notified to the County Football Association(s) to which the Club is affiliated and to the Secretary of the Competition.

(Note: The spaces above are intended for the inclusion of the signatures and addresses of officers and members).

QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

8. (A) (i) Contract players, as defined in Football Association Rules, are not permitted in this Competition with the exception of those Players who are registered under Contract with the same Club who have a team operating at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any Player signing a registration form for that Club has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate. Clearance is required for any Player aged 12 and over crossing borders including Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

- (ii) No player registered with a F.A. Premier League or Football League Academy under the Elite Player Performance Plan contained within Youth Development Rules will be permitted to play in this Competition. Details of the Youth Development Rules are published on the FA web site.
- (iii) While serving in any branch of Her Majesty's Regular Forces, a player must first obtain the consent of his Association Secretary before signing a registration form to play for a Club.
- (B) A registered youth playing member of a Club is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:-

- (i) *Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink, countersigned by his /her parent or guardian and by an Officer of the Club, and who has been registered with the (Registrations) Secretary days prior to playing and whose completed registration counterfoil has been received by the Club prior to playing. The registration document must incorporate any known serious medical conditions of the player and emergency contact details of the player's parents or guardians. These details must be available at matches and training events the player attends within the management of the Club or Competition.*

- (ii) *Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing, countersigned by an Officer of the Club and witnessed by an Officer of the opposing Club, and submitted to the (Registrations) Secretary within two days (Sundays excluded) subsequent to the match. The player shall not again play until the Club is in possession of the completed counterfoil. A maximum of players may be registered in this way. The registration document must incorporate any known serious medical conditions of the player and emergency contact details of the players' parents or guardians. These details must be available at matches and training events the player attends within the management of the Club or Competition. Registration forms may also be submitted to the (Registrations) Secretary by facsimile machine prior to the player playing. The original document must be forwarded by post within three days of the match to the appropriate Officer.*

The registration document must incorporate a current passport-size photograph of the player seeking registration together with proof of the player's date of birth.

If a player's age is required for registration purposes a Competition must accept an original birth certificate or a photocopy. In cases where the birth certificate is not

available a Competition is required to accept a photocopy of the player's passport or other official document issued by a Government Agency attesting to the player's date of birth.

- (C) A child who has not attained the age of six shall not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match of any kind.

The relevant age for each player is determined by his or her age as at midnight on 31 August of the relevant playing season.

i.e. Children who are aged 6 as at midnight on 31 August in a playing season together with those who attain the age of 6 during the playing season will be classed as Under 7 players for that playing season. Children who are aged 7 as at midnight on 31 August in a playing season will be classed as Under 8 players for that playing season, and so on.

Notwithstanding the above, a child is permitted to play up in the age group above his or her chronological age group, irrespective of any changes of format or competition structure, save that a child who attains the age of 6 after 31 August is permitted to play only in the Under 7 age group, and may not play in the Under 8 age group, for that playing season.

The age groups that children are eligible to play in are set out in the table below, along with the permitted football formats for each of those age groups. Children shall not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match between sides of more than the stated number of players, according to their age group:

Age on 31 August of the relevant playing season	Eligible Age Groups	Maximum Permitted Format
6	Under 7	5v5
	Under 8	
7	Under 8	5v5
	Under 9	7v7
8	Under 9	7v7
	Under 10	
9	Under 10	7v7
	Under 11	9v9
10	Under 11	9v9
	Under 12	
11	Under 12	9v9
	Under 13	11v11
12	Under 13	11v11
	Under 14	
13	Under 14	11v11
	Under 15	
14	Under 15	11v11
	Under 16	
15	Under 16	11v11
	Under 17	
	Under 18	
16	Under 17	11v11
	Under 18	
	Open Age	

- (D) *A team shall not include any player/more thanplayers who has/have taken part in anyor more senior competition matches during the current season unless a period of days has elapsed since they played.
For the purpose of this Competition a senior competition(s) is/are*

(E) A player having taken part in matches for any Club affiliated to any County Football Association shall not be allowed to join, be transferred to, or sign for a Club in the Competition without first proving to the officials of the intended Club that the player has discharged all reasonable financial liabilities to the previous Club or Clubs, and a Club official may not accept such player's signature without first ascertaining whether such claims have been discharged to the satisfaction of the Club, or Clubs, for which the player last played.

(F) A fee of shall be paid for each player registered.

Registration forms shall be obtained from the (*Registrations*) Secretary on prepayment of per form.

(G) The Management Committee shall decide all registration disputes.

In the event of a player signing a registration form or having a registration submitted for more than one Club priority of registration shall decide for which Club the player shall be registered. The (*Registrations*) Secretary shall notify the Club last applying to register the player of the fact of the previous registration.

(H) It shall be deemed misconduct for a player to:-

- (i) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.
 - (ii) Having signed for one Club in the Competition, sign for another Club in the Competition in that season, except for the purpose of a transfer.
 - (iii) Submit a signed registration form for registration that the player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.
- (I) (i) The Management Committee shall have the power to accept the registration of any player subject to the provisions of clauses (ii) and (iii) below.
- (ii) The Management Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any player who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities. (Subject to Rule 16).
- (iii) The Management Committee shall have power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct (subject to Rule 16) subject to the right of appeal to the FA or the relevant County Football Association.

Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated proven misconduct, which may deter a participant from being involved in this Competition. Application should be made to the parent County of the Club the player is registered or intending to be registered with.

- (iv) For a player who has previously had a registration removed in accordance with clause (iii) but has a registration accepted at the expiry of exclusion will be considered to be under a probationary period of 12 months. Whilst under a probationary period, should the player commit a further act of proven misconduct under the jurisdiction of the Competition, (excluding standard dismissals), the Competition would be empowered to consider a further charge of bringing the Competition into disrepute.

(Note: Action under Clause (iii) shall not be taken against a player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Association, and then only in cases of the player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any case be subject to an Appeal to the Football Association. All decisions must include the period of restriction. For the purpose of this Rule, bringing the competition into disrepute can only be considered where the player has received in excess of 112 days' suspension, or 10 matches in match based discipline, in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence for any team playing in this Competition.)

- (J) Subject to FA Rule C2(a) dealing with players without a written contract when a player desires a transfer, the Club the player wishes to transfer to shall submit a transfer form to the *(Registrations)* Secretary accompanied by a fee of Such transfer shall be referred by the *(Registrations)* Secretary to the Club for which the player is registered. Should this Club object to the transfer it should state its objections in writing to the *(Registrations)* Secretary and to the player concerned within seven days of receipt of the transfer form. Upon receipt of the Club's consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within seven days, the *(Registrations)* Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date or days after receipt of such transfer.

In the event of an objection to a transfer the matter shall be referred to the Management Committee for a decision.

- (K) A player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after [date] except by special permission of the Management Committee.
- (L) A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played, and shall produce such records upon demand by the Management Committee.

In the event a Club has more than one team in an age group, each team must be clearly identifiable **but not designated 'A' or 'B' or 1st or 2nd**. In such cases, players will be registered for one team only. A player so registered will be allowed to play for his Club in a younger or older age group within the provisions of Rule 8 (B).

- (M) A register containing the names of all players registered for each Club, with the date of registration, shall be kept by the *(Registrations)* Secretary and shall be open to the inspection of any duly appointed Member Club representative at all Management Committee meetings or at other times mutually arranged. Registrations are valid for one Season only.
- (N) A player shall not be eligible to play for a team in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding match (as specified in Rule 12(A)) unless the player has played games for that team in this Competition in the current season.
- (O) *A player who has played for a team in the Division times or more shall not in that season be eligible to play in a lower Division except by permission of the Management Committee.*

(Note: There are many differing procedures to cover eligibility of players in various divisions of which the above is only one example. A Competition should adopt a Rule to suit their particular requirements.)

- (P) (i) Any team playing an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player or players may/shall have the points gained in the match deducted from its total and may be fined and/or otherwise dealt with at the discretion of the Management Committee.
- (ii) In addition the team *may/shall* have points deducted from its total at the discretion of the Management Committee and may be dealt with in any further manner which is thought to be fit.
- (iii) The Management Committee may, at its discretion, award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

(The following Clause applies to Competitions involving players in full-time secondary education):-

- (Q) (i) Priority must be given at all times to school and school organisations activities. This is not applicable for under 17/18 football.

- (ii) The availability of children must be cleared with the Head Teachers (except for Sunday Competitions).
- (iii) A child under the age of 15 as at midnight on 31 August in a playing season, shall not be permitted to play in a match during that playing season where any other player is older or younger than that child by two years or more.

CLUB COLOURS. CLUB NAME

9. (A) Every Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the Secretary by (date) who shall decide as to their suitability.

Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from other players and the referee. No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.

Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify the colours in which they will play to its opponents at least days before the match.

If, in the opinion of the referee, two Clubs have the same or similar colours, the *away/home* team shall make the change. Any team not having a change of colours or delaying the kick-off by not having a change shall be fined

The Secretary of the Competition may request shirts to be submitted if complaints are received as to lack of distinguishing colours, and the Management Committee may refuse to permit any shirts or shorts as they think fit. *Shirts must be numbered.*

- (B) Any Club wishing to change its name and/or colours must obtain permission from its affiliated County Football Association and from the Management Committee.

PLAYING SEASON. CONDITIONS OF PLAY

TIMES OF KICK-OFF. POSTPONEMENTS. SUBSTITUTES

10. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall determine the date for the commencement of the season in accordance with Football Association Rules. Original fixtures arranged by the (*Fixtures*) Secretary, or at a meeting specially convened for that purpose, to be held no later than, must not be arranged for a date later than seven days preceding the concluding date.

If mutually arranged at a meeting a list of fixtures must be forwarded to the (Fixtures) Secretary within seven days of the meeting. Fixtures are deemed to be accepted unless objections are received by the (Fixtures) Secretary within fourteen days of their issue.

Any Club failing to be represented at a fixture meeting or otherwise infringing this Rule shall be liable for a fine of and the Management Committee or the (Fixtures) Secretary shall arrange that Club's fixtures.

- (B) All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board or, for Mini-Soccer, and 9v9 football, the Laws as set down by The Football Association.

Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their grounds in a playable condition. All matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the Management Committee. If through any fault of the home team a match has to be replayed, the Management Committee shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

The Management Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for matches in the Competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground.

Football Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches. For clubs playing at Step 7 and below from season 2014/15, all Football Turf Pitches

used must be on the FA's register and must be tested (by an accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The FA will give a decision on the suitability for use and add the pitch to the Register.

The home Club is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 10(D).

All matches shall have a duration as set out below unless a shorter time (not less than minutes) is mutually arranged by the two Clubs in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves.

For Mini-Soccer – The maximum duration of play shall be two halves of 20 minutes each way. The maximum playing time in any one day for under 7 and under 8 age groups is 40 minutes and for under 9 and under 10 age groups is 60 minutes.

For Youth football – The duration of play shall be as follows unless it is mutually agreed by all parties to reduce the time. For under 11 and under 12, 30 minutes each half; for under 13 and 14, 35 minutes each half; under 15 and under 16, 40 minutes each half; under 17 and under 18, 45 minutes each half.

The minimum time for any game will not be less than 20 minutes each half for players in the under 14 age group and below and 25 minutes each half for all other age groups.

No player participating in an under 17 division or lower age group shall be permitted to play as at midnight on 31st August in any season shall be permitted to play more than one game or, in the event the competition allows the playing of a double-header, ie: two separate matches, 100 minutes per day in this Competition.

The times of kick-off shall be fixed at the AGM. Any Club failing to commence at the appointed time *shall/may* be fined a sum not exceeding or be otherwise dealt with as the Management Committee may determine.

Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

The home team must provide at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if the footballs are unsuitable.

A size 3 ball will be used for age groups U7 to U9.

A size 4 ball will be used for age groups U10 to U14.

A size 5 ball will be used for all other age groups.

Goal nets must be used.

- (C) Except by permission of the Management Committee all matches must be played on the dates originally fixed but priority shall be given to The Football Association and parent County Association Cup Competitions. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a match with the consent of the (*Fixtures*) Secretary.

In the case of a revised fixture date, the Clubs must be given by the Competition 5 clear days notice of the match (unless otherwise mutually agreed).

- (D) The Secretary of the home Club must give notice in writing of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the ground and time of kick-off to the *match officials* and the Secretary of the opposing Club at least clear days prior to the playing of the match. The away Club shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such particulars.

Any Club failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to a fine of

- (E) In the event of a Club playing in any match with less than players they *may/shall* be fined for each missing player. A minimum of players will constitute a team for a Competition match.

- (F) (i) Home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall have power to inflict a fine, deduct points from the defaulting Club, *award the points from the match in question to the opponents*, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals. *Notwithstanding the foregoing home and away provision, the Management Committee shall have power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent's ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.*
- (ii) Any Club with more than one team in the Competition shall always fulfil its fixture, within the Competition, in the following order of precedence:- First Team, Reserve Team, A Team. Clubs in breach of this requirement shall be fined a sum not exceedingor otherwise dealt with by the Management Committee.
- (iii) Any club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a fixture has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the (*Fixtures*) Secretary, the Competition *Referees Appointments* Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials. Any Club failing to comply shall be dealt with by the Management Committee who may inflict a fine.
- (iv) In the event of a match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it shall be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Management Committee. Failing such agreement and notification to the (*Fixtures*) Secretary within days the Management Committee shall have power to order the match to be played on a named date or on or before a given date. *Providing gate money is taken and retained the visiting Club shall receive their actual standard class rail or bus fares or the equivalent for persons, or car allowance at p per mile for transporting persons, or hire charge of a coach (receipt to be submitted). The residue (if any) to be equally divided between the two Clubs after deducting the cost of advertising, printing, posting, police and match officials charges. The home Club shall take the whole of the proceeds of the second match.*
- (v) The Management Committee shall review all matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) they shall be empowered to award the points for the match to the opponent. In cases where a match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both teams, or their Club member(s), the Management Committee shall rule all points for the match as void. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned match.
- (vi) The Management Committee shall review any match that has taken place where either or both teams were under a suspension imposed upon them by the Association or Affiliated Association. In each case the team that was under suspension would be dealt with in the same manner as if they had participated with ineligible players in accordance with Rule 8(O) above. Where both teams were under suspension the game must be declared null and void.
- (G) A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use substitute players in any match in this Competition who may be selected from (3,4,5,6 or 7) players.

For Mini-Soccer – any number of substitutions may be used at any time with the permission of the Referee. Entry onto the field of play will only be allowed during a stoppage in play. A player who has been replaced may return to the play as a substitute for

another player. **A Team must not have a squad greater than double the size of its team in an age group.**

For Youth Football – for teams in the under 18 age group and below, a player who has been substituted himself becomes a substitute and may replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitutes not later than minutes before the start of the match.

A player who has been selected, appointed or named as a substitute before the start of the match but does not actually play in the game shall not be considered to have been a player in that game within the meaning of Rule 8 of this Competition.

- (H) The half time interval shall be of minutes duration, but it shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.
- (I) *The Competition shall require all players and club officials to have signed the FA's Respect Codes of Conduct and produce these if so requested by the League management committee.*

Prior to each match the participating teams and officials shall conduct the 'Respect' handshake and/or participating teams to offer 'three cheers' and handshakes to the opposing team after the match.

The participating clubs taking part in the fixture shall identify a team captain designated with a captain's armband who has a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of his/her team mates. If the participating players are considered to be too young to take on this role a member of the team coaching staff should provide this support.

Each home club shall make arrangements for the provision of designated areas for spectators. This area can be marked by an additional painted line, the use of cones, a roped off area or use of a temporary spectator barrier. The area for spectators should start two metres from the touchline on both sides of the pitch. Each area should run the full length of the pitch. It is recognised, however, that the alignment of some public pitches does not allow for this arrangement in which case other appropriate arrangements should be made.

REPORTING RESULTS

11. (A) The (*Registration/Fixtures*) Secretary must receive within days of the date played, the result of each Competition match in the prescribed manner. This must include the forename(s) and surname of the team players (in block letters) *and also the Referee markings required by Rule 13, or any other information required by the Competition.* Failure to do so will incur a fine of and/or the Club being dealt with as the Management Committee decide.
- (B) *The Home Club/both clubs shall telephone/SMS/email/notify the result of each match to the by Clubs in default shall be fined.*
- (C) The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by a responsible member of the Club. Failure to do so will result in a fine of

NB. If the fixed penalty exceeds £20 the Club must be charged as detailed in Rule 5(D).

- (D) Leagues are permitted to collect but not to publish results for fixtures they organise for U7, U8, U9 and U10 Mini Soccer. They may require a Club to confirm that a set fixture has been played. A maximum fine of £5 may be imposed for a breach of this Rule.

DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP

12. (A) Team rankings within the Competition will be decided by points with three points to be awarded for a win and one point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners. Matches must not be played for double points.

In the event of two or more teams being equal on points team rankings may be determined by deciding match(es) played under conditions determined by the Management Committee.

- (B) *Automatic promotion and relegation shall be applied for the first and last teams in each Division except as provided for hereunder, subject to the provisions of Rule 1(b).*
- (i) *Should one or more teams withdraw from any one Division after the fixtures have commenced an equal number of teams to those withdrawing in that Division shall not be automatically relegated.*
- (ii) *Vacancies occurring after the conclusion of the season may be filled by any of the following ways:*
- (a) *retention of otherwise relegated team(s)*
- (b) *additional promotion of the next ranked team(s) from the Division below*
- (c) *election*
- (iii) *The last teams in the lowest Division shall retire, but be eligible for re-election except as below, and be subject to the conditions of paragraph (B)(i) above.*
- (iv) *When a senior team is relegated to a lower Division of which its reserve team is a member, or entitled to be a member, such reserve team must accept relegation to, or retain its position in, the next lower Division; and should the senior team be relegated to the lowest Division its reserve team automatically retires from the Competition.*
- (v) *Should either or both of the leading teams in any of the Divisions have its senior team in the next higher Division, promotion shall fall, at the discretion of the General Meeting, to the next highest team or teams in the Division concerned.*

- (C) *In the event of a team not completing 75% of its fixtures for the season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting team shall be expunged from the Competition table.*

- (D) *Where a promotion and/or relegation link exists between Competitions Clubs, providing they meet the appropriate grading criteria, will be eligible to make application to the Competition at their Annual General Meeting. Should the Champion Club not wish for promotion or, alternatively, not have the necessary grading criteria, then the or place Club will be eligible under the same conditions.*

At the end of each season and depending on the geographical location of Clubs gaining promotion to or being relegated from the Competition, it may be necessary for the Competition either (a) to accept a Club from the Competition, or (b) have a Club transferred to the same Competition.

The bottom Clubs in the Competition will be relegated. Each relegated Club will be allocated either to the Competition or to the Competition recommended as most appropriate by the Joint Liaison Committee. Clubs will be promoted to the Competition from the Competition, and the Competition providing that each Club is either the Champion Club or Runner-up or place Club and has the necessary grading criteria.

In the event of there being no eligible Club wishing promotion or not having the necessary grading criteria from any of the Competitions, this will reduce the number of Clubs to be relegated from the Competition.

If only Clubs are eligible or wish for promotion, the bottom Clubs in the Competition will be relegated. If only Club is eligible or wishes promotion, only the bottom Club in the Competition will be relegated.

If no Clubs are eligible, or wish for promotion, no Clubs will be relegated from the Competition.

In the event of a Competition Club not being placed in the bottom Clubs at the end of the season, wishing to resign from the Competition at the end of the season, or having been excluded under Rule only Clubs will be relegated at the end of the season.

In the event of a Competition Club opting to be relegated or being relegated under Rule such Club or Clubs will replace the Club or Clubs otherwise due for relegation.

REFEREES

13. (A) Registered Referees (and Assistant Referees where approved by the FA or County FA) for all matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the sanctioning Association(s).
- (B) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee the *appointed senior Assistant Referee shall take charge and a substitute Assistant Referee appointed by the competing Teams*. In cases where there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, or where the competition has been unable to appoint a Referee, the Clubs shall agree upon a Referee. A Referee thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered Referee.
- (C) *Where Assistant Referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club Assistant Referee. Failure to do so will result in a fine of being imposed on the defaulting Club.*
- (D) The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final *subject to either in the case of a ground of a Local Authority or the owners of a ground, the Representative of that body is the sole arbiter and whose decision must be accepted unless the ground is declared fit for play.*
- (E) Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the sanctioning Association Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee of and travel expenses of per mile/or inclusive of travel expenses.
The Home Club shall pay the Officials their fees and/or expenses *before/immediately after* the match.
- (F) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to *full fee plus expenses/half fee plus expenses/expenses only*. Where a match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Officials, if they attend the ground, their full fee and expenses.
- (G) A Referee not keeping his or her engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be reported to the Association with which he or she is registered.
- (H) Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The Football Association, award marks to the Referee for each match and the name of the Referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed Form provided. Clubs

failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined or dealt with as the Management Committee shall determine.

- (I) The Competition shall keep a record of the markings and, on the Form provided by the prescribed date each season, shall submit a summary to The Football Association/County Football Association.
- (J) *The Referee shall submit a report Form, supplied by the Competition, giving the result of the match, the number of players in each team and the time of kick-off to the (Registration) Secretary within two days of the match.*
- (K) *Referees and Assistant Referees shall be supplied, each Season, with a copy of the Competition Rules free of charge.*
- (L) *Referees and Assistant Referees shall have undertaken a Respect briefing offered by the FA/County FA or the League.*

CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

14. (A) After 31st December in the current Season a Club intending, or having a provisional intention, to withdraw a team from the Competition on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the Competition must notify the Secretary *in writing by 31st March/*..... each Season or be liable to a fine not exceeding

All Clubs wishing to remain in membership of the Competition for the following Season must confirm their intention to do so, in writing, to the Secretary by

- (B) A Club shall not be allowed to withdraw any or all of its teams from the Competition after *the Annual General Meeting/arrangement of fixtures* for the following Season. Any Club infringing this Rule shall be liable to a fine not exceeding per team and shall also be liable for its share of any call which may be made under Rule 5(D).
- (C) The Membership for the coming season having been decided at a Special General Meeting held for that purpose *not earlier than* *nor later than* or at the Annual General Meeting *held not later than* the Competition shall have the right, irrespective of other provisions in this Rule, to refuse to permit a Club to withdraw its team(s) in order to join another Competition and may hold the Club to its engagements.
- (D) In the event of a Member Club which is an unincorporated association withdrawing and/or disbanding it shall be immediately liable to discharge all its financial and other obligations to the Competition.

In the event that any such obligation remains undischarged after a period of twenty-one (21) days then such obligation shall be met by the then current Club Members, excluding those under the statutory school leaving age. Until a Member's pro rata obligation is discharged in full the Member shall not be allowed to participate in the Competition, which may apply to the Club's Parent County Association for a suspension order.

PROTESTS AND COMPLAINTS

15. (A) (i) All questions of eligibility, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Management Committee.
- (ii) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be entertained by the Management Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match. Any Club lodging such protest and not proceeding with it shall be deemed guilty of a breach of this Rule and shall be dealt with by the Management Committee.

- (B) Except in cases where the Management Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged in duplicate with the Secretary within days (excluding Sundays) of the match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Management Committee. A Member of the Management Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.
- (C) Any dispute occurring between Clubs in the Competition shall be referred for determination by the Management Committee whose decision shall be binding upon all parties subject to Rule 16.
- (D) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Management Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Secretary a sum of This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the enquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties.
- (E) All parties to a protest or complaint must receive a copy of the submission and must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement at least 7 days prior to the protest or complaint being heard.
- (i) All parties must have received days' notice of the Hearing should they be instructed to attend.
- (ii) Should a Club elect to state its case in person then they should forward a deposit of £..... and indicate such when forwarding the written response.
- (F) When dealing with a protest or complaint the Management Committee shall take into consideration the possession by the protesting or complaining Club of any information which, if properly used, might have avoided the protest or complaint.

BOARD OF APPEAL

16. Within 14 days of the posting of written notification of any decision of the Management Committee or the Competition, a Club, Official or Player against whom action is taken may appeal against such decision by lodging particulars in duplicate with the Secretary of the Football Association, including a fee of for adjudication of a Board of Appeal. The grounds of appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules. The Board of Appeal may order the appeal fee to be forfeited and shall decide by whom the costs of the appeal shall be borne. The decision of the Board of Appeal is final and binding on all parties concerned.
- No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an Annual or Special General Meeting unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

EXCLUSION OF CLUBS OR TEAMS

MISCONDUCT, CLUBS, OFFICIALS, PLAYERS

17. (A) At the Annual General Meeting, or Special General Meeting called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 19, Notice of Motion having been duly circulated on the Agenda, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude any Club or Team from further membership which must be supported by (more than) two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot.
- (B) At the Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 19, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude from further participation in the Competition any *Club or team of a Club* whose conduct has, in their opinion, been undesirable, which must be supported by (more than) two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted

by ballot. A Club whose conduct is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

- (C) Any official or member of a Club proved guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a player or players of another Club in the Competition to join them shall be liable to expulsion or such penalty as a General Meeting or Management Committee may decide, and their Club shall also be liable to expulsion in accordance with the provisions of Clauses (A) and (B) of this Rule.
- (D) *Any Club or Team failing to complete of its fixtures in any season shall (unless the conditions are beyond their control, or the accredited delegates present at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting decide otherwise by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast) be debarred from membership the following season.*

TROPHY:- LEGAL OWNERS, CONDITIONS OF TAKING OVER, AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED. AWARDS.

18. (A) The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the Cup or Trophy:-
 “We A and B, the Chairman and Secretary of FC, members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of Cup or Trophy, and it having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the Cup or Trophy to the Competition Secretary on or before
 If the Cup or Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair.”
 Failure to comply will result in a fine as determined by the Management Committee.
- (B) At the close of each Competition awards may/shall be made to the winners and runners-up if the funds of the Competition permit.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

19. Upon receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting.
 The Management Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time.
 At least seven days notice shall be given of either meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted at such meeting.
 Each Member Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all Special General Meetings. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only, as will members of the Management Committee. Any continuing Member Club failing to be represented at a Special General Meeting without satisfactory reason being given *shall/may* be fined
 Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Special General Meetings.

ALTERATION TO RULES

20. Alterations, for which consent has been given by the sanctioning Association, shall be made to these Rules only at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 19. Any alteration made during the playing season to the Rule relating to the qualification of players shall not take effect until the following season.
 Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the Annual General Meeting shall be submitted to the Secretary by in each year. The proposals, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by and any amendments thereto shall be submitted to the Secretary by The proposals and proposed amendments thereto shall be circulated to Clubs with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. A proposal to change a

Rule shall be carried if [a majority] of those present and entitled to vote and voting are in favour.

A copy of the proposed alterations to Rules to be considered at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting shall be submitted to the sanctioning Football Association days prior to the date of the meeting.

FINANCE

21. (A) The Management Committee shall determine with which bank or other financial institution the funds of the Competition will be lodged.
- (B) All expenditure in excess of £..... shall be approved by the Management Committee. Cheques shall be signed by at least two Officers nominated by the Management Committee.
- (C) The financial year of the Competition will end on
- (D) The books, or a certified balance sheet, of a Competition shall be prepared and shall be *audited/verified* annually by some suitable person(s) who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

INSURANCE

22. All Clubs must have public liability insurance cover of at least ten million pounds (£10,000,000).

DISSOLUTION

23. (A) Dissolution of the Competition shall be by resolution approved at a Special General Meeting by a majority of three quarters of the members present and shall take effect from the date of the relevant Special General Meeting.
- (B) In the event of the dissolution of the Competition, the members of the Management Committee are responsible for the winding up of the assets and liabilities of the Competition.
- (C) The Management Committee shall deal with any surplus assets as follows:
- (i) Any surplus assets, save for a Trophy or any other presentation, remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Competition shall be transferred only to another Competition or Affiliated Association or The Football Association Benevolent Fund or to such other charitable or benevolent object in the locality of the Competition as determined by resolution at or before the time of winding up, and approved in writing by the sanctioning Association.
- (ii) If a Competition is discontinued for any reason a Trophy or any other presentation shall be returned to the Donor if the conditions attached to it so provide or, if not, dealt with as the sanctioning Association may decide.