

**CHESHIRE COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
MID CHESHIRE DISTRICT FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
YOUTH CHALLENGE CUP COMPETITIONS - RULES**

1. CONTROL

- a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competitions and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested in the Council of the Cheshire County Football Association, who may grant such rights as they consider appropriate to the Mid Cheshire District Football Association. These rules cover District Football Association Youth Challenge Cup Competition(s).
- b) The DFA Council shall have the power to delegate all its powers in relation to the Competitions to a Youth/Cups Committee whose decisions on all matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to eligibility and qualification) shall be final and binding on all participants in the Competition in relation to these and any other matters not specifically mentioned in the Competition Rules, subject to rule 16.
- c) The DFA Youth/Cups Committee shall have the power to propose amendments to the regulations for the organisation, control and management of the Competition as it, from time to time, deems expedient (the "Competition Rules") subject to the agreement of Cheshire County FA.
- d) All participants participating in any way in the Competition shall be bound by and comply with the Competition Rules (and any Rules or Regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules)
- e) The DFA Youth/Cups Committee shall have the power to appoint a Sub-Committee to exercise the powers of Council in order to expedite decisions to ensure the progress of the Competition.
- f) A Club participating in the Competition shall have only such rights in relation to the Competition (and any match in the Competition) as are expressly granted in writing to the Club under the Competition Rules or by Cheshire County Football Association.
- g) In addition to any other action or penalty, DFA the Youth/Cups Committee shall have the power to disqualify any competing Club, or player for any competing Club(s), which it determines to have breached the Rules of the District Association or the Competition Rules (any Rules or Regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules), and the decision of the DFA Youth/Cups Committee shall be final and binding, subject to rule 16.

2. THE COMPETITIONS

The Competitions shall be named as follows:

The Mid Cheshire District Youth Challenge Cups are for under 13/14/15/16/and 18 age groups only. *(Provision of competitions for under 6 – 12's inclusive are left to the discretion of the respective youth football leagues to arrange as part of the FA's Youth Development Review in accordance with FA regulations).* This maintains the age groups as for CCFA Youth Cup competitions.) All games shall be played on a Sunday unless the Council directs otherwise.

3. ENTRY TO THE COMPETITION

- a) The entry fee for the Competition shall be determined by the Mid Cheshire District Football Association and the closing date for the entry being 1 August of each year. Clubs who do not enter by the required date shall be fined in accordance with DFA rule 11.3 and entered into the Competition, if appropriate, and shall be required to pay the entry fee of £14. Clubs may enter more than one team in a competition provided the name(s) of other team(s) is clearly identifiable.
- b) The competitions shall only be open by invitation to youth clubs/teams allocated to or invited by the Mid Cheshire District Football Association from other County Football Associations or District Football Associations affiliated to Cheshire FA except where special permission has been given to admit teams from other County Football Associations. Clubs/teams entering from other County or District Football Associations affiliated to Cheshire FA must seek permission from their respective County or

District Football Association to enter the Mid Cheshire District Football Association Youth Challenge Cups.

c) The District Association shall agree the format and player requirements of the competition(s)-each season and notify the respective clubs with their appropriate entry forms. The DFA Youth/Cups Committee shall have the power to refuse the entry of any club from taking part in its competitions.

“Notes” concerning the eligibility of players are considered to be part of the rules.

e) The Cup shall be competed for annually in accordance with these Rules.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

a) Players must be over the age of 11 and under the age of 13-14-15-16 or 18 as at midnight on the 31st August of the current playing season.

b) In all rounds of the competitions a player must have been a Sanctioned League registered player of his/her club by 12 noon on the Thursday previous to the date of the game, or conference date, whichever is the sooner.

c) Contract players, as defined in Football Association Rules, are not permitted in this competition. No player registered with a F.A. Premier League or Football League Academy under the Elite Player Performance Plan contained within Youth Development Rules (F.A. Web Site) will be permitted to play in this Competition.

(d) In order to be eligible for the Final ties, players must have been eligible to play in the semi-final ties and/or have a 28 day playing qualification.

(e) Any club playing an ineligible player shall be struck out of the competition and shall be liable to a fine of £25 and any other sanctions as agreed by the Association.

(f) A player shall not in the same season play for more than one competing club or team.

(g) A club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the game use substitute players in any match as follows:

Under 13 – 18 Competitions

In all competitions, up to 5 substitutes may be selected from 5 players.

A player who has been substituted becomes a substitute and may replace a player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

All substitutes to be named to the referee prior to the commencement of the game.

Players not so named will not be allowed to participate in the game. Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury before kick-off he/she may be replaced provided the referee is informed.

(h) In the case of abandoned or postponed matches only those players shall be allowed to play who were eligible for the original match. A player who has been suspended may play after the term of his suspension has expired.

(i) All questions of eligibility or qualification shall be referred to the Council, whose decision shall be final.

(j) Any club failing to fulfil a fixture will be subject to a fine of £25 and may be dismissed from the competition (see also rule 10(d))

(k) A team struck out of the competition, or withdrawing for any reason, maybe replaced by the defeated club at the discretion of the Council.

- (l) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that players (10 years or over) coming from an overseas Association (including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) have the required International Transfer Clearance/Certificate. The International Transfer Clearance/Certificate takes precedence over a player's registration therefore this is also required by 12 noon on the Thursday prior to the playing of the tie for the player's registration to be valid.

5. COMPETITION ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The names of the clubs/teams entered for the Competition shall be placed in one lot and shall be drawn in couples at a time and the first drawn Club shall have choice of ground in all rounds except the Final tie.
- b) The Council may exempt the previous season's semi-finalists and such other Clubs as they may approve from the first round of the Competitions.
- c) As soon as is practicable after each drawing, the Competition Secretary shall intimate to each of the Clubs drawn, the name of the Club against whom it is drawn and the time and date on which the game is to be played and the kick off time.
- d) Any Club refusing or failing to play the club/team against whom it has been drawn on the date intimated to it, and without sufficient reason for so doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and may be deemed by the Council to have been guilty of misconduct and liable to such out of pocket expenses and liabilities as are incurred by their failure to play. The Council shall decide whether "sufficient reason" is acceptable and their decision shall be final.
- e) No club may change the registered address of its ground for the playing of any cup match without first receiving the permission of the District FA Secretary or Competitions Secretary. Any club found to be in breach of this rule should be fined a sum not less than £10 and may be dismissed from the competition.
- f) Inspection of grounds for fitness may be made only by the match official or other official with the prior approval of the Honorary Referees Secretary or District FA Secretary or Competitions Secretary— subject to the organisation responsible for the ground e.g. Local Authority
- g) Any club causing the postponement of a match without due cause or reason may be struck out of the competition and fined a sum of not less than £25.
- h) Notwithstanding the provision of rule 5(a) the Council shall have the power to order the game to be played on their opponents or neutral ground if the ground of the club having choice of ground is repeatedly unfit (i.e. AFTER 2 WEEKS), thus hindering progress of the competition.
- i) **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 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 11.**
- j) All matches will be played on the conference dates and times. Matches will only be re arranged from the conference dates/times as a result of changes due to County FA Cup matches or postponement due to inclement weather. No other changes will be considered.
- k) Clubs cannot re-arrange conference dates/kick off times without prior permission of this Association through the District Secretary or Competitions Secretary. Failure to do so shall be liable to a fine of £25 and possible dismissal from the competition.

6. GROUNDS

- a) All ties must be played on a football ground approved by the Council. (see also rule 5(e).
- b) If the ground of the Club having choice of ground shall be considered unsuitable for a Cup-tie, their opponents may appeal to the Council who may order the match to be played on the ground of the appealing Club, or on a neutral ground. Such protest must be made within six days of the draw being received.
- c) In the case of the appurtenances of the ground being temporarily unfit in consequence of special causes, a protest may be lodged with the Referee before the start of the game and the game shall be played under protest. The Council shall consider such protests at its next meeting and decide the validity of same. In the event of a valid protest the game may be ordered to be replayed on such ground and date as the Council decide.
- d) The home Club shall be responsible for statutory pitch markings, provision of corner posts of regulation height, goal nets and **two match balls**. The pitch is to be roped off down both touchlines, and located 1.5 meters back, where possible, from the touchline by using the RESPECT barriers or rope of 8mm diameter. Failure to provide these items will render the Club liable to a fine not exceeding £10 for each offence and possible dismissal from the Competition.

7. COLOURS

- a) Clubs having similar colours must change. In all ties, the **HOME** Club must change. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from other players and match officials. Player's shirts shall be clearly numbered on the back in accordance with the official team sheet. No change of numbers during the match shall be allowed except on a change of goalkeeper or where a player has been required by the Referee to change his shirt because of a blood injury. Failure to comply with this Rule renders the Club liable to a fine of £20 for each offence.
- b) In the final tie both clubs must play in their registered first choice colours or as notified to this Association at least 14 days prior to the Final. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £25. If their colours are deemed by the Council or appointed match official to be similar both clubs must change unless mutually agreed. Clubs failing to change colours, as required, in any match will be subject to a fine of not less than £25.
- c) No player should wear shirts that in any way conflict with the black shirts worn by the match officials.

8. OFFICIALS

- a) Referees and Assistant Referees (where applicable) shall be appointed by the Honorary Referees Secretary. In those games where, official Assistant Referees are not appointed by the District F.A., each club **MUST** provide a suitable person to assist the Referee in line duties if requested by the match official. Clubs failing to provide such a person shall be fined £10.
- b) The Referee at the conclusion of each tie shall, where necessary, complete a match report form with the exact time of starting and cause of the late start, or any other breaches of competition rule (if any) in writing to the Competition Secretary of the District Football Association within 72 hours of the match being played.
- c) Match officials must be in attendance at all ties at least 30 minutes before the appointed time of kick-off and 45 minutes in Final ties. It shall be within the power of the Association to report any matters regarding match officials to Cheshire FA for any necessary further action to be taken.

9. LOCATION OF GROUNDS

Each home Club must confirm to the Match Officials and the visiting Club the location of the ground and their playing colours, at least 5 days before the date of the game. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to a fine of not less than £10

10. TIME OF KICK-OFF AND PLAYING UNDER STRENGTH

- a) Clubs must be prepared to kick-off at the appointed time as notified by the Competitions Secretary.
- b) Those Clubs responsible for a late kick-off shall be fined £2.00 per minute delayed
- c) No deviation from the appointed time will be allowed unless prior permission has been given by the Competition Secretary.
- d) Clubs failing to fulfil a fixture shall be fined a sum of £25 and will be dismissed from the competition.
- e) **The Association reserves the right to dismiss teams from the competition in the event of proven misconduct.**
- f) **Kick Off times**
 - Under 13/14/16** – either 10.30am or 2.00pm. No other kick off times permitted.
 - Under 15 and 18** – 2.00pm. No other kick off times permitted.

11. DURATION OF GAMES

- Under 18 – Two equal halves of 45 minutes each way – Ball size 5
 - Under 15/16 – Two equal halves of 40 minutes each way – Ball size 5
 - Under 13/14 – Two equal halves of 35 minutes each way – Ball size 4
- The half time interval shall be no longer than 10 minutes and this may only be altered with the consent of the match referee.

12. DRAWN/POSTPONED GAMES

- a) In the case of a draw after 90/80/70 minutes as the case may be, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by The International Football Association Board.
- b) All postponed or abandoned games shall be played within seven days or as the Council shall determine.
- c) When a match has been postponed or abandoned before the completion of 90/ 80/70 minutes (as the case may be), with neither Club being at fault, it must be replayed in its entirety on the same ground or ground as decided by the Association.
- f) Matches abandoned through the fault of the Clubs shall be dealt with by the Association.
- g) It is the responsibility of the Home Club to advise the District Football Association, the opponents; their League Secretary and the Match Officials, when a game has been postponed for whatever reason. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £15.

13. ADVICE OF RESULT

- a) Immediately each game is completed the home team must notify the result as directed and by no later than 6.00pm on the date the match is played.
- b) Notice of the result of each match together with the full names of the competing players (showing name against the number of the shirt worn in the match) shall be sent by each of the competing clubs on the match report form provided so as to reach the Assistant Competition Secretary within 72 hours of the game being played.
- c) Clubs failing to comply with this Rule will be subject to a fine of £15 for each offence.

14. PROTESTS

- a) Protests other than those under Rule 6(b) must be lodged in duplicate with the District Competition Secretary within three days after the match. Two copies of the protest must be lodged and must be accompanied by a fee of £25. Such fee may be forfeited to the funds of the Association. The Club adjudged in default may be called upon to pay such expenses as the Association shall determine.
- b) In the Final tie, all protests as to players' eligibility must be lodged with two members of Council prior to the conclusion of the game.

c) Should either of the two Clubs in connection with a protested Cup tie have a member on the Council of the Association, such member shall withdraw whilst the said protest is being considered.

15. APPEALS

a) A Club, within 7 days of receipt by them of written notification of the decision of the Mid Cheshire District Football Association, may appeal against such decision by lodging particulars in duplicate, accompanied by a fee of £35.00, such appeal being addressed to the Chief Executive of the Cheshire County Football Association Limited for the adjudication of a Board of Appeal, whose decision shall be final and binding on all concerned.

b) In the event of an appeal being successful the fee shall be returned to the Club in whole or part at the discretion of the Board of Appeal, who shall decide by whom the costs of the appeal must be borne. A copy of the Appeal must be sent to the District Football Association Secretary and the operation of the decision of the Mid Cheshire District Association shall not be suspended pending the result of the appeal unless a Board of Appeal or the Council of the Cheshire County Football Association Limited through its officers, orders such suspension.

c) Any such appeal shall only be permitted on one or more of the following grounds:

- (i) The DFA Youth/Cups Committee or a committee appointed by the Cups Committee misinterpreted/failed to comply with the procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge or.
- (ii) The DFA Youth/Cups Committee or a committee appointed by the Cups Committee came to a decision on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached or;
- (III) The DFA Youth/Cups committee or a committee appointed by the Cups Committee imposed a sanction that is excessive.

d) Any appeal must be made in accordance with such procedures as may be determined by Cheshire County FA from time to time.

e) For the avoidance of doubt a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

16. SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL TIES

a) The Council shall decide the grounds, dates and kick-off times for semi-final and final ties.

b) Each Club shall be provided with 4 complimentary tickets for the Final ties only for the sole use of participating players and/or club/team officials.

17. AWARD TO FINALISTS

a) The Association will present 16 trophies to the winners and runners-up, and trophies to Match Officials in the Final ties.

b) No player/club official sent from the field of play, or dismissed prior to or after a final tie, for whatever reason, shall receive a trophy/medal on the day.

c) It shall be open to such a player's or club official's club to apply to the District Association Secretary, in writing, within 14 days of the final tie, for the player/club official to receive a trophy/medal giving reasons why it is felt this should be agreed.

d) The Cups Committee shall have sole discretion in considering such a request once the alleged misconduct which resulted in the player/club official dismissal has been dealt with by the County Football Association and its decision shall be final and binding.

18. RECEIPT OF THE TROPHY

(a) At the conclusion of the Final tie (provided that no protest has been lodged) the Cup and trophies shall be presented on the ground.

A document shall afterwards be given by the holders to the Secretary of the Association to the following effect:

"WeSecretary of theClub, the said Club which has now been declared to have won the.....District FAChallenge Cup, and the same having been delivered to us bythe Secretary of the said Association, do hereby on behalf of the said Club and individually engage to return the same to the said..... or Secretary of the said Association for the time being, on or before the first day in February next, in like good order and condition, and providing the Cup is destroyed by fire or lost by any other accident whilst in our possession, we agree to refund the Association the amount advised to us of its value. The Cup shall be insured annually by the Association.

- (b) Failure to return the trophy by the required date (1 February) will incur a fine not exceeding £50.
- (c) All trophies must be returned cleaned and undamaged by the required date in accordance with rule 18(b). Failure to do so will incur a fine not exceeding £50

19. FINES & CORRESPONDENCE

a) All fines should be paid within 14 days of notification. Failure to do so will incur a further fine of £25 for failing to deal with correspondence as per District Football Association rule 11.3

b) Failure to respond, within 7 days, to District Football Association rule 11.3 will result in the matter being referred to Cheshire County FA that may result in your club / team fixtures being suspended until the outstanding monies have been paid. This action may also incur an additional administrative fee from Cheshire County FA in addition to the outstanding fines.

20. MATCH EXPENSES

a) Clubs entering the Competition being drawn at home and not having a ground acceptable for the playing of the game and then having to play on their opponent's ground, shall be treated as having been drawn away from home.

b) In all rounds of the competitions, except for Final ties, the match fees shall be shared. The fees payable to match officials in all rounds up to and including the Finals shall be determined by the competition, having regard to the fees set by Cheshire County FA. The Mid Cheshire District Football Association will pay the match officials in the Final ties.

c) The Association will pay the match officials in the Final ties.

d) MATCH EXPENSES

All Rounds (including the Final)

Under 18

Referee	£25	inclusive of mileage
Assistant Referee	£18	inclusive of mileage

Under 13/14/15/16

Referee	£23	inclusive of mileage
Assistant Referee	£18	inclusive of mileage

Final ties

Match Fees + Souvenir Trophy

In the event of a Reserve Official being officially appointed to any game he/she will be entitled to the same fee as the Assistant Referee.

e) In the event of a postponed or cancelled game, the match official(s) attending shall be entitled to a half fee.

21. OTHER RULES

The Council shall have powers to make other Laws as they from time to time deem expedient.

22. MATCH EXPENSES**Disputes**

The Council shall decide any dispute as to excessive charges.

23. EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

An Emergency Committee to deal with matters of extreme urgency shall consist of at least three members of the DFA Council.