

Rules of the Hertfordshire Football Association Limited “The Association”

1. Definitions and Interpretation

‘Association’ means Hertfordshire Football Association Ltd.

‘Chairman’ means the Chairman of the Association appointed in accordance with the Articles of the Association.

Council means the Council of the Hertfordshire Football Association Ltd.

Club means any football club;

Club Official means any official, director, secretary, servant or representative of a Club;

Competition means any competition (whether a league or knock-out competition or otherwise) sanctioned by the Association;

Football club means any club which plays the game of football in England and is recognised as such by the Association;

Management Committee Member means a person responsible for the management and administration of an unincorporated Club;

Manager means the Official of a Club responsible for selecting a club team.

Match means a football match sanctioned by the Association.

Match Official means referees and assistant referees and includes reserve officials and fourth officials.

Non Contract Player means any Player (other than a player on a scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

Official means any official, director, secretary, servant or representative of an affiliated association or competition.

Participant means an Affiliated Association, Authorised Agent, Competition, Club, Club Official, Licensed Agent, Player, Official, Match Official, Management Committee Member, Member or Employee of an affiliated Club and all such persons who are from time to time participating in any activity sanctioned either directly or indirectly by the Association.

Player means any Contract Player, Out of Contract Player or Non-Contract Player or other player who plays or is eligible to play for a Club or is subject to any suspension from playing.

Rules of the Football Association means the Rules of the Football Association as amended from time to time and published in the Handbook of the Football Association.

Standard Code of Rules means those Rules approved and issued from time to time by The Football Association for the effective governance and operation of affiliated youth and open age football leagues

The Chief Executive means the Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Directors in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association

Whole Game System means that electronic system introduced and maintained by The Football Association

The Football Association means The Football Association Limited at their Registered Office

2. Qualification

- (a) All clubs playing according to the rules of The Football Association, having their ground and/or headquarters within the County of Hertfordshire, and all Competitions and Associations having their Headquarters within the County of Hertfordshire, are eligible for membership, subject to the approval of Council. Clubs which do not have a recognised playing ground, or which cannot obtain a suitable ground within the area of the Association, are eligible for membership provided they are bona fide Hertfordshire Clubs.
- (b) Youth Clubs conforming to the foregoing and all players under the age of eighteen (18) on 31 August of the current season and over the age of six (6) years shall be eligible for membership, subject to the approval of Council.

3. Affiliation of Clubs

Any club seeking affiliation shall by the 30th June each year complete the electronic affiliation process using the 'Whole Game System' in accordance with the requirements of the Football Association and this Association and submit the appropriate affiliation fees as determined by the Association

Affiliation fees are due by the 30th June each year. Any affiliations received after this date will be liable to a late fee as determined by time to time by the Association.

Clubs are required, in accordance with Football Association Regulations, to be a member of a players' personal accident insurance scheme covering each of their teams, which meets or exceeds the minimum criteria set by their County Association.

Any Club not fulfilling this criteria will have their affiliation withheld until they are able to comply. This Association's minimum criteria is identical to the minimum level set by the Football Association.

4. Sanction of Competitions

All Competitions seeking sanction by the Association must satisfy the requirements for sanction as determined from time to time by the Association.

All Competitions seeking sanction shall each year complete the electronic affiliation/sanction process using the 'Whole Game System' in accordance with the requirements of the Football Association and this Association and submit the appropriate sanction fees as determined from time to time by the Association.

Each Competition seeking sanctioned by the Association shall forward to the Association copies of the Rules of the Competition in such format as the Association shall require showing clearly any changes proposed to the Competition Rules.

Each Competition in determining the Rules for the forthcoming season shall follow the format and content of the relevant Standard Code of Rules issued from time to time by The Football Association. Competitions which have rules which conflict with the Standard Code of Rules shall not be sanctioned until such time as the Competition Rules are in accordance with the Standard Code of Rules or have been specifically agreed by the Association.

The Association may attach such conditions to the sanction of any Competition as it considers necessary.

All Competitions shall prior to the first date of their playing season return to the Association an acknowledged and counter signed a copy of such conditions of sanction.

It shall be the responsibility of each Competition to ensure that the conditions of sanction are met. Failure to comply with conditions of sanction will be regarded as Misconduct and dealt with accordingly by the Association.

Each Competition sanctioned by the Association shall on request forward to the Association copies of the minutes and notes of such Meetings of the Competition and details of any financial information as the Association shall require.

Such copies shall be submitted within 14 days of any such meeting. Facsimile or e-mail transmission may be used provided a receipt of acknowledgement is also obtained.

Each Competition sanctioned by the Association shall forward to the Association such information as the Association may require from time to time to enable the Association to fulfil its obligations to The Football Association, any other Sports Governing Body or statutory authority. Failure to comply will be regarded as Misconduct and dealt with accordingly by the Association.

5. Conduct of Clubs and Competitions

- (a) A Child under the age specified by The Football Association must not play and shall not be permitted to play, or encouraged to play, in a match where any other player is older or younger by 2 years or more than that person.
- (b) No Child under the age specified by The Football Association shall be permitted to play or encouraged to play in open age football
 - (i) The age ranges and provisions relating to players under 16 years of age as specified from time to time by The Football Association shall apply.

6. Financial Records

(a) Records to be kept

Competitions and Clubs in membership of the Association shall keep accounting records for recording the fact and nature of all payments and receipts so as to disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position including the assets and liabilities of the Affiliated Competition or Club.

(b) Records to be Retained

An affiliated Competition or Club must retain accounting records including all books and vouchers for at least two years.

(c) Corporate Bodies – Accounts

An affiliated Competition or Club which is formed and registered under the Act shall, on demand, forward to the Association a copy of its annual accounts most recently approved by its Board of directors.

Such Competitions and Clubs formed and registered under the Act shall meet the requirements of The FA in respect of their accounts as set out in The Rules of The FA.

(d) Unincorporated Bodies – Financial Statements

An affiliated Competition or Club which does not prepare annual accounts in accordance with the Act shall prepare annual accounts in a form acceptable to the Association.

Such accounts must:

- (i) be forwarded to the Association on demand,
- (ii) prepared in accordance with the constitution of the affiliated Competition or Club;
and

- (iii) have been laid before the members of the Affiliated Competition or Club at a general meeting called in accordance with its constitution.

Notwithstanding any provision in the Standard Code of Rules any affiliated Competition or Club with gross assets exceeding ten thousand pounds shall have its accounts audited in a form accepted to the Association and such audit accounts shall be laid before members as described in paragraph (iii) above.

Any material errors or omissions in the accounting records of an affiliated Competition or Club must be reported by such a body to the Association within 28 days of the error or omissions being first identified.

7. Misconduct

- (a) The Association may act against a Participant in respect of any “Misconduct”, which is defined as being a breach of the following:
 - (i) the Laws of the Game;
 - (ii) the Rules and regulations of the Association
 - (iii) the rules or regulations of an Affiliated Association or Competition; and
 - (iv) an order, requirement, direction or instruction of The Association.
- (b) The same facts or matters may constitute a breach of more than one rule, regulation, statute or law referred to above, The Association may bring a charge or such charges as it sees fit.
- (c) No Participant may be fined or otherwise dealt with, for any breach of Rule, or misconduct, until they have first been advised in writing of the charges laid against them and have had an opportunity to be heard by, or to submit their observations to, a Disciplinary Panel appointed by the Association to deal with the matter.
- (d) It is misconduct for players to join, play for, or register with any Club other than that of which they were members at the time of fining or suspension without the special consent of the Association, and in these respect players contravening this Rule will be liable to further suspension and/or fine.
- (e) It is the duty of any affiliated Club, when signing on, or registering, players as members, to secure from the players a written declaration that they are not under any form of suspension from football and that they have no outstanding fines, or costs, against them. Any Club found guilty of playing, registering, or accepting into membership any player with an unexpired period of suspension will be deemed itself to be guilty of misconduct and dealt with accordingly.
- (f) Any Club, Official or Player in Default of Payment of any fine or official cost to an Affiliated Competition or Club shall be suspended until such monies have been paid.

- (g) Any fines or costs due to the Association or Competitions from defunct Clubs shall be the responsibility of all the registered players and Club Officers of that Club on a pro rata basis and subject to the procedures as in Rule 7(f).
- (h) No action will be taken by the Association to assist in the recovery of debt unless an application for assistance is received within 28 days of formal payment being requested and 112 days of the debt being incurred.
- (i) Affiliated Members must reply to all correspondence as directed by the Association.
- (j) All cases of misconduct will be liable for the administration charge in force at the time.
- (k) All instructions of the Association or any of its officers or servants must be carried out.
- (l) 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 any Club 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 any players signature without first ascertaining whether such claims have been discharged to the satisfaction of the Club or Clubs, for which the player last played.
- (m) Members of this Association are prohibited from playing with or against unaffiliated Clubs, Associations or Competitions.

8. General Behaviour

A Participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour.

9. Discrimination

A Participant shall not carry out any act of discrimination by reason of ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

10. Compliance with Decisions, including Suspensions

- (a) Each Participant shall comply with a decision made pursuant to the Rules and regulations of the Association.
- (b) A Participant shall not participate in any activity with another Participant suspended from carrying out such activity.

- (c) A Club shall do all things necessary to ensure that a Player associated with it complies with a penalty or order imposed pursuant to the Rules and regulations of The Association.
- (d) An Affiliated Association, Competition, or Club shall not appoint to any position, or allow to continue in such position, any individual who has been suspended from holding such position.

11. Reporting Misconduct

- (a) A Participant shall immediately report to the Association any incident, facts or matters which may constitute Misconduct.
- (b) A report to the Association of any incidents, facts or matters shall not be made for vexatious or frivolous reasons.

12. Attendance at and Participation in Matches

- (a) An individual may take part in or attend at a Match only on condition that such individual observes the Rules, and each Affiliated Association, Competition and Club is required to observe and enforce such Rules.
- (b) Each Affiliated Association, Competition and Club shall be responsible for ensuring:
 - (i) that its directors, players, officials, employees, servants, representatives, spectators, and all persons purporting to be its supporters or followers, conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and refrain from any one or combination of the following: racist, violent, threatening, abusive, obscene or provocative behaviour, conduct or language whilst attending at or taking part in a Match in which it is involved, whether on its own ground or elsewhere; and
 - (ii) that no spectators or unauthorised persons are permitted to encroach onto the pitch area, save for reasons of crowd safety, or to throw missiles, bottles or other potentially harmful or dangerous objects at or on to the pitch.

13. Claims and Complaints

- (a) Any complaint or claim, other than those relating to County Competitions, made by a Competition, Club or player shall be in writing, and duplicate copies shall be sent to the Association's Registered Office accompanied by a deposit of £35.00 which shall be forfeited if the complaint or claim fails, but if it is sustained the deposit is to be repaid to the complainant. In the event of a frivolous or vexatious complaint being made the Association shall have power to compel the complaining Competition, Club or player to pay such expenses of the Competition, Club or player complained of, as

may be deemed fit. The costs of the Hertfordshire Football Association in dealing with a complaint shall be reimbursed by the offending Competition, Club or player.

- (b) Complaints relating to County Competitions shall be dealt with under the relevant County Competition rules.
- (c) Where Clubs seek reference to this Association's Competitions Records a search fee of £10.00 must accompany the request to The Chief Executive of the Association.
- (d) A Club, Player or Official has the right to Appeal against decisions of any affiliated Association, Competition or Club. Such notice of appeal must be lodged in accordance with Rule 15 which sets out appeal procedure.

14. Appeals against decisions by the Association

- (a) Save as provided in Rule 15(b) and (c), appeals from decisions by the Association shall be directed to the Chief Executive of the Football Association;
- (b) Any Competition, Club or individual wishing to appeal against the decision of the Committees of this Association shall forward to The Chief Executive of the Football Association, at their Registered Office, within fourteen (14) days from the date of the meeting at which the Committee gave its decisions, and by registered letter, notice setting forward the ground of appeal, together with the sum which may be in force from time to time. At the same time an exact copy of the notice must be sent to the Secretary of this Association, also by registered letter. In the case of an Association or Club, the appeal must be signed by the Chairman, or his deputy, and one member of the Management Committee or Board.
- (c) Appeals cannot be made in regard to matters arising out of the Competition of this Association when the rules provide that the decision of the Association shall be final.

15. Appeals against Decisions of other affiliated Associations, Competitions or Clubs.

- (a) Appeals from decisions of other affiliated Associations, Competitions and Clubs within the County shall be directed to The Chief Executive of the Hertfordshire Football Association. The Association shall decide in what manner and by whom such appeals shall be heard; but the operation of such decisions shall not be suspended pending the hearing of an Appeal, unless the appellant has submitted a written application for the setting aside of the decision and the application has been granted by the Association after consultation with the appropriate Competition, Club or other affiliated Association.
- (b) When an Appeal has been made to an Appeals Board of The Association, in respect of a decision of a Competition sanctioned by that Association, the decision of that

Appeals Board is final. There is no further Appeal to the Association against the decision of the Appeals Board.

- (c) Appeals shall not be entertained with regard to matters arising out of affiliated Competitions whose Rules provide that their decisions shall be final.
- (d) Appeals from decisions of a Competition, Club or other affiliated Associations made in accordance with this Rule shall be permitted only on the following grounds that the relevant body whose decision is appealed against:-
 - (i) failed to give the appellant a fair hearing;
 - (ii) failed to comply with the disciplinary procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge
 - (iii) came to a decision on the facts of the case that no reasonable body could have reached;
 - (iv) imposed a punishment, without reasons, not conforming with the schedule guide to recommended punishment
 - (v) imposed an award, order or any other sanction that is excessive.
- (e) Every Appeal under this section of the Rule must be lodged within fourteen (14) days of the posting of the written notification of the decision and be accompanied by an appeal fee of Thirty-Five Pounds (£35.00) which includes an Administration Charge of Ten Pounds (£10.00). .
- (f) In the event of an Appeal being successful, the appeal fee less the Administration Charge shall be returned to the appellant.
- (g) Unless the Association shall otherwise determine, an Appeals Board consisting of three Members of the Association shall hear such Appeals.
- (h) Such Appeals shall not be withdrawn except by leave of the Association or the Appeals Board appointed. The Hearing of the Appeal shall not be conducted as a re-hearing of the case, neither shall fresh evidence be permitted.
 - (i) The Appeals Board shall have power to adjourn the Hearing wholly or in part, and having heard the contention of both parties shall make one of the following decisions:
 - (i) to allow or dismiss the Appeal;
 - (ii) to vary the decisions of the affiliated Association, competition or Club; or
 - (iii) to order a re-hearing of the original case by the affiliated Association, Competition or Club or by another Association whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

- (j) Further, in the event of the Appeals Board dismissing the Appeal or varying the decision of the affiliated Association, Competition or Club, the Appeals Board may order the appeal fee to be forfeited towards the cost of the Board of Appeal and may make a further order for payment of costs.
- (k) An affiliated Association, Competition or Club shall not be ordered to pay costs, unless the Appeals Board find that it has acted wholly unreasonably and/or failed to comply with the Memorandum of Procedures (see F.A. Handbook) when dealing with a case concerning alleged field offences.

16. Representation

A Competition, Club Director, Manager, Club Official, Referee, Assistant Referee or Player may only be legally represented at a Personal Hearing or at an Appeal, Complaint, Claim or Enquiry after written notification to the Association of the intention to be so represented and then only following written consent of the Association.

17. Powers of the Association

- (a) Affiliation fees shall be as decided by the Board of the Association or as decreed by the Football Association from time to time, and be effective from such date as Council shall decide.
- (b) The Association shall have power to call upon Associations, Competitions, Clubs or players to produce any books, letters or documents including electronic documents or records, and other evidence Council may desire. The parties to a dispute or against whom a charge of infringement of the Rules has been made are entitled to be present when evidence affecting such charge or dispute is given.
- (c) A sub committee appointed by the Association shall inspect the books and accounts of up to twelve (12) selected Clubs or Competitions affiliated to the Association. This Committee shall report on the condition of such books and accounts to Council as soon as possible after the inspection.[18] The Association shall be entitled to publish in the public Press, or any other manner it shall think fit, reports of its proceedings, acts and resolutions, whether the same shall, or shall not, reflect on the character or conduct of any Competition, Club, Official, player or spectator, and every such Competition, Club, Official, player or spectator shall be deemed to have assented to such publication.
- (d) Entries for the competitions under the direct control of the Association may be accepted from Clubs having membership with other affiliated Associations, provided the assent of the Association to which the Club is affiliated has been obtained.

- (e) The Association shall have powers to promote Clubs to Senior rank, and also to permit Clubs to return to Junior rank after having become Senior.

18. Privileges of Council Members

The Honorary Past Presidents, the Honorary Life Vice-Presidents, all Members of Council and Life Members shall annually be provided with a pass, which is not transferable, and all Clubs, Associations and Competitions affiliated to the Association shall admit the holder to their grounds and stands upon production of such pass without requiring any other authority.

19. Representative Matches

- (a) Any player shall be eligible to represent the Association in matches, provided the player is qualified by 1) Birth and 2) a playing member of a Club affiliated to the Hertfordshire Football Association together with any other qualification laid down in the Rules of the Competition(s) in which the Representative Teams play.
- (b) Awards shall be made to all Players representing the Association in Inter-County matches. Such Awards, as approved by the Representative Football Committee, shall be made after playing one match, after playing four (4) matches and after playing seven (7) matches at the appropriate level.
- (c) The Association shall have the first call upon all players under its jurisdiction. A Club affiliated to this Association shall not, without special permission, play a player on the same day as a match played by this Association and in the event of that player being a member of that squad selected to represent the Association. A breach of this rule shall be treated as misconduct and dealt with accordingly by the Association.
- (d) Any Club having two or more players selected to represent a Hertfordshire County Representative Squad (including Youth) shall be permitted, if it so wishes, to postpone the League, Cup or other affiliated competition fixture scheduled to be played on the same day as that played by the Association. Such postponement must be made in writing to the affiliated competition within 48 hours of receipt of notice of the players selection and at least 14 days prior to the scheduled affiliated competition fixture.
- (e) The colours of the Association shall be royal blue and white or as determined from time to time by Council.

20. Players Without Written Contract

- (a) Subject to the provisions of these Rules, a player is not restricted as to the Clubs for which may play, provided the player complies with the Rules and Regulations of any Competitions in which the Club or Clubs may be engaged.

- (b) A player who does not hold a written contract with his Club shall not be approached, except during the period from 31st May to 1st July inclusive, by any Club or person attempting to induce such player to play for another Club or Clubs, without at least seven days' notice in writing being given to the Secretary of the Club for which the player was last known to have played, and the negotiations with the player must cease at the expiration of 21 days from the date of such notice being given.
- (c) The notice must be forwarded by registered post or a written acknowledgment otherwise obtained. A second notice shall not be given by the same Club in respect of the same player during the current season. The approaching Club, or person, shall not give notice of intention to approach more than one player of a Club at the same time and shall not give notice of intention to approach another player of the same Club within 28 days of a prior notice.
- (d) Except with the written consent of the Club, the seven days' notice is necessary if the first approach is made by the player, but this consent shall not be unreasonably withheld where circumstances of a special character exist, e.g. change of residence or non-selection for any team of the Club for three consecutive weeks.
- (e) A Saturday Club seeking the transfer of a player shall contact the Saturday Club holding the registration of the player involved. Sunday Clubs shall contact the Sunday Club holding the registration and Mid-Week Clubs shall contact the Mid-Week Club involved.
- (f) While serving in any branch of Her Majesty's Regular Forces, a player must first obtain the consent of their Association Secretary before signing a registration form to play for a Club.
- (i) All reports of misconduct by Service players shall be sent direct to the Association, except in matches confined to Service teams, when the report shall be sent direct to the Service Association concerned.
- (g) Any dispute as to whether consent has been unreasonably withheld may be referred to the Association.
- (h) A breach of this rule shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Rule 6 of the Association.

21. Referee Appointments

Associations and Competitions may appoint Referees for Competitions conducted by them, but such appointments may be made only from a County Football Associations Register. For contravention of this rule, a fine of £ 20.00 may be imposed for the first offence, and each subsequent offence will be referred to Council for such action as it deems fit.

22. Alteration of Rules

- (a) In the event of any alterations being considered necessary to these Rules, notice of the proposed alterations shall be sent in writing to The Chief Executive of the Association, with the name of the proposer and seconder, on or before 1st March. Notice of such proposed alteration with any alterations proposed by Council shall be sent to each affiliated Club, Association or Competition with the notice convening the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) No amendments or alterations may be made at a general meeting to any resolutions proposed at that general meeting other than to correct a typographical error. No alterations shall be made to these Rules unless supported by at least two-thirds of those present and voting at the meeting at which such alterations are submitted.

23. Fair Play in Football

- (a) Fair play in football means that EVERYONE connected with football:
 - (i) shows understanding of and respect for the Laws of the Game;
 - (ii) supports the belief that the game should be played in an entertaining and positive way; and
 - (iii) behaves on and off the field in a sporting manner towards all others involved, be they players, officials or spectators, irrespective of results.