

## REGULATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL PYRAMID AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

### 1. Introduction

The Women's Football Pyramid shall comprise a system by which promotion and relegation links shall exist between participating leagues (the "Leagues") and shall be operated in accordance with these regulations.

The aims and objectives of the Women's Football Pyramid are:

- (a) To provide clubs with a level of competitive football appropriate to their playing ability, stadium/ground facilities and economic means.
- (b) To provide a framework for discussion on matters of policy and common interest to leagues and clubs.
- (c) To allow the seasonal movement of clubs.

All leagues, and clubs participating from time to time in such leagues (the "Clubs"), shall be bound by these regulations. All leagues will be required to sign a copy of these regulations on an annual basis signifying their agreement to be bound by their content.

### 2. Position of a League in the Women's Football Pyramid

2.1 The structure of the Women's Football Pyramid is set out at Appendix A

2.2 Any league wishing to become part of the Women's Football Pyramid at Step 6 must advise The Football Association in such form and/or providing such information as shall be required by the FA Women's Football Committee ("FAWFC") from time to time. The decision as to whether or not a league should be admitted to, and their position in the Women's Football Pyramid shall be made by the FAWFC and shall be final and binding.

### 3. Rules and Regulations for Promotion and Relegation

3.1 The Women's Football Pyramid shall provide for the seasonal promotion and relegation of clubs between Steps within the system. A league that signifies its acceptance to be bound by these regulations must be in a position to promote and relegate clubs at the conclusion of each season. In extenuating circumstances, where a league is not in a position to relegate due to that league not being up to strength they must obtain the permission of the FAWFC.

### 4. Detailed Promotion and Relegation Issues

4.1 Eligibility criteria, including ground grading, shall be agreed between the FAWFC and the various leagues. Details of the requirements at each Step are contained in the Women's Football Pyramid Ground Grading Document as published by The Football Association.

4.2 It may be necessary from time to time to move clubs between leagues at the same Step to accommodate the movement of clubs by normal promotion and relegation. Where this is necessary, no club will be asked to move more than once in every three seasons.

4.3 At the conclusion of each season, the following procedures will apply:

#### Step 1 and Step 2

The clubs finishing in the bottom two places at Step 1 (FAWPL National Division) will be relegated and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 2 (FAWPL Northern & Southern Divisions). They will be replaced by the clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the divisions at Step 2.

### Step 2 and Step 3

The clubs in the bottom two places in each of the two divisions at Step 2 will be relegated to Step 3 (Combination Leagues). They will be replaced by the clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the leagues at Step 3. Should a club finishing in 1st position not wish to be considered for promotion, then the club finishing in 2nd or 3rd place may take its place. Clubs finishing lower than 3rd place will not be considered for promotion.

### Step 3 and Step 4

The clubs in the bottom two places in each of the four leagues at Step 3 will be relegated to Step 4 (Regional League Premier Divisions). They will be replaced by the clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the leagues at Step 4. Should a club finishing in 1st position not wish to be considered for promotion, then the club finishing in 2nd or 3rd place may take its place. Clubs finishing lower than 3rd place will not be considered for promotion.

### Step 4 and Step 5

The clubs in the bottom two places in each of the eight leagues at Step 4 will be replaced by the clubs finishing in 1st place in the sixteen divisions at Step 5 (Regional Leagues 1st Divisions). Should the ground of a club finishing in 1st position not be considered suitable by the respective management committee for Step 4, then a club finishing in 2nd (or 3rd) may take its place, provided that its ground does meet the requirements of Step 4.

Other promotion and relegation can occur if agreed by the Clubs in membership and with the approval of the FAWFC.

A club finishing in a position lower than 3rd will not be considered for promotion

### Step 5 to Step 6

The movement of clubs between Steps 5 and 6 (County Leagues) will be at the discretion of the appropriate Joint Liaison Committees.

Each league shall include in its constitutional rules and regulations provisions for the movement of clubs as detailed above.

Reserve Teams are not permitted to play above Step 5.

## **5. The Movement of Clubs within the Women's Football Pyramid other than by Promotion or Relegation**

- 5.1 Movement of a club from participation in one league to another is not permitted other than by promotion and relegation save with the approval of the FAWFC, such approval being final and binding.
- 5.2 Any club proposing to move from one league to another must make appropriate applications to resign from and be elected to the relevant leagues in accordance with the rules and regulations of those leagues. Any such notice must in any event, and regardless of any provisions to the contrary in a league's rules and regulations, be given to both leagues and the FAWFC by 1st April in the relevant year in order to be valid.
- 5.3 If a club (whether a Members' Club or a Company) is liquidated and then wishes to reform, unless otherwise determined by the FAWFC, it will be allowed to make an application only to join a league/division a minimum of two Steps below the league/division in which it was a member when liquidated. This relates only to clubs that wish to reform for the following season

## **6. Election of a Club into a League**

In normal circumstances a club can enter the Women's Football Pyramid only at Step 6 (County League level) and only to the County League of their Parent County Association. However, in exceptional circumstances a league may seek approval from the FAWFC to elect a club not currently in membership of a league within the Women's Football Pyramid provided that there is: (a) a vacancy within its constitution (b) the club meets the entry criteria and (c) promotion and relegation issues have been satisfied.

The determination by the FAWFC shall be final and binding.

## **7. Women's Football Conference**

The Women's Football Conference (the Conference) will comprise of representatives from leagues within the Women's Football Pyramid and the FAWFC with the objective to take steps to protect and further the interests of Girls' and Women's Association Football.

## **8. Joint Liaison Committees**

Regional Joint Liaison Committees (JLC's) will be established to consider matters relating to the development of the Women's Football Pyramid in their regions. In particular JLC's will be responsible for the determining the promotion and relegation of clubs between Steps 5 & 6.

The Joint Liaison Committees will be established on a regional basis and will comprise of representatives of the Regional League and the appropriate County Leagues.

Both the Conference and the JLC's may refer a matter to the FAWFC for determination and the decision of the FAWFC shall be final and binding.

## **9. Procedures for the Determination of any Matter, Dispute or Difference by the Women's Football Committee**

9.1 The FAWFC may adopt such procedures for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference as it considers appropriate and expedient, having regard to the aims and objectives set out at Regulation 1. The FAWFC may require the attendance at a meeting or the written observations of any league or club, as it considers appropriate to assist its determination.

9.2 The FAWFC may, at its discretion, delegate the resolution of any matter, dispute or difference arising under these Regulations to any body it considers to be appropriate (including a sub-committee or commission which may include members of council not on the FAWFC or a body constituted by a County Football Association).

## **10. Appeal Procedure**

Any dispute or difference between a league and a club relating to promotion and relegation issues and/or other eligibility criteria should be referred for determination to the FAWFC, such determination shall be final and binding. Any referral must be carried out in accordance with The Football Association's appeal procedure and be submitted at the offices of The Football Association, 25 Soho Square, London W1D 4FA within 14 days of the posting of the relevant decision and must be accompanied by a fee of £100.

## **11. Arbitration**

The fact of participation in the Women's Football Pyramid and signifying agreement to be bound by these Regulations shall constitute an agreement between each league and club to refer to Arbitration any challenge in law arising out of, or in relation to, these Regulations in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of The Football Association.

## 12 The FA Women's Super League

The FA Women's Super League shall be introduced in [TBC]. This league shall be outside of the Women's Football Pyramid until the 2011-2012 FA Women's Super League season, at which point it shall be integrated into the Women's Football Pyramid.

No club may participate in both The FA Women's Super League and any Step of the Women's Football Pyramid, save that a club who participates in The FA Women's Super League may also have a reserve Team that participates at up to Step 5 of the Women's Football Pyramid.

In accordance with Rule B8(c)(v) of the Rules of The Association, the playing season for The FA Women's Super League shall run between March and October each year.

The "Close Season" for The FA Women's Super League only shall be defined as the period between 1 December and 31 December inclusive each calendar year, save where The Association makes an order to the contrary, during which no club in The FA Women's Super League shall play any matches.

This shall not affect the Close Season for any league in the Women's Football Pyramid, which shall be in accordance with Rule B8 of the Rules of The Association.

## 13 Girls' Teams Playing in Leagues

13.1 From and including season 2009/10, any Clubs wishing to enter a new girls' team into a league competition shall only do so if the league competition is sanctioned by the County FA with which the Club has Membership. If the club is in Membership of more than one County FA, the league competition must be sanctioned by the Club's Parent Association.

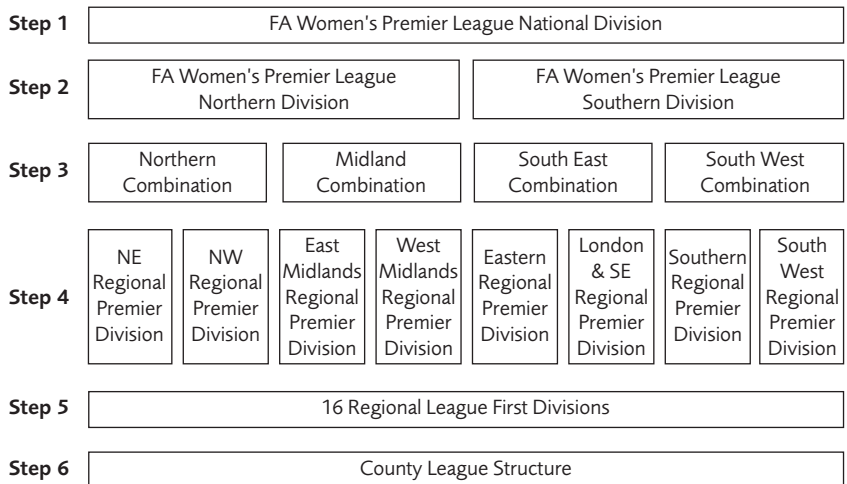
This Regulation applies to all new teams, irrespective of whether a Club has another team already competing in a league sanctioned by The Football Association or any County FA.

13.2 The following exceptions to the above Regulation shall apply, and a new team shall be permitted to compete in a league sanctioned by The Football Association or any County FA, regardless of whether the Club is in Membership of it, where the Club can establish:

- (i) The travelling required to compete in a league sanctioned by The Football Association or another County FA is less onerous than the travelling that would be required to compete in the appropriate league sanctioned by the County FA with which it has Membership (or its Parent Association, where applicable); or
- (ii) There is no appropriate age group division in the league sanctioned by the County FA with which it has Membership (or its Parent Association, where applicable) for the new team to compete in; or
- (iii) The league sanctioned by the County FA with which it has Membership (or its Parent Association, where applicable) does not offer the format of football that the Club wishes the new team to compete in, e.g. 11v11, 7v7.

The County FA with which the Club has its Membership, or the Club's Parent Association where applicable, shall decide, at its absolute discretion, whether any one of the above exceptions applies and so whether the team may compete in a league sanctioned by The Football Association or another County FA, and its decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.

13.3 Teams may continue to participate in any league that they have participated in prior to season 2009/10, irrespective of whether that league is sanctioned by The Football Association or a County FA other than the one with which that team's Club has its Membership, or its Parent Association, where applicable.



**I agree to the terms and conditions of the above Regulations of the Women's and Girls' Pyramid of Football and consent to be bound by their content:**

Name of League: .....

Position within League: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Position within League: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....