

# 6. FA COMPETITIONS

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The FA Cup is the oldest and most famous domestic cup competition in the world. Just fifteen clubs entered the first FA Cup competition in season 1871-72. 125 years on and this season a record 674 teams have taken part.

The original trophy, much smaller than the present one, was made by Messrs Martin, Hall & Co. and cost £20. In 1895, after Aston Villa had won the competition, the cup was stolen from the window of a firm of football outfitters in Birmingham where it had been placed on display. It was never recovered. The present trophy, played for since 1992, is the competition's fourth and an exact replica of the third. Forty-two different clubs have won it.

Every season the competition throws up unique moments of drama and excitement. Few could forget the incredible scenes when Burton Albion celebrated holding the mighty Manchester United to a draw in the 2005/06 season's Third Round.

And Colchester United will long remember the day they threatened to upset Premiership champions Chelsea by taking the lead in a thrilling Cup tie at Stamford Bridge.

The 2005/06 FA Cup has had plenty of these unique memories and the financial benefits of Cup success can also leave a legacy for years to come.

Colchester chief executive Marie Partner explains: "From reported losses of approximately £300,000 for last year, our successful Cup run in reaching the Fifth Round this season should realise a healthy return of around £750,000.

"Income such as this will go a long way in reducing the anticipated loss again this season, allowing a financial cushion to be put in place to assist us in our plans to retain many of our key players during the summer."

The FA's stated objective is to use The FA Cup to redistribute funds throughout the game. Through the Cup prize fund and payments paid for television appearances, The FA made a £30 million investment in this season's Competition.

Burton Albion's achievement in taking United to a replay at Old Trafford has had a huge impact on the future on the club. Burton Chairman Ben Robinson, speaking after his team's 0-0 draw with United, said: "It's like winning the lottery and the pools on the same night! I would imagine the total figure would be something like £800,000 and it will help the club to take a big step forward."

Colchester United's run to the Fifth Round saw them defeat Championship sides Sheffield United and Derby County on the way to a meeting with Chelsea.

Manager Phil Parkinson says: "We were twelve minutes away from bringing the Premiership Champions back to Layer Road for a Fifth Round replay in the greatest cup competition in the world. That statement kind of puts our performance into perspective, doesn't it?

"It was a fantastic day for me personally and, overall, I think the day made a lot of people sit up and take notice of Colchester United Football Club."

Marie Partner adds: "I feel that it has certainly placed 'little old Col U' on the map for plenty of years to come.



## 6.1 THE FA CUP

"The magic of The FA Cup is about quenching your thirst for ambition and recognition. Our cup success this year afforded Colchester United with a moral and financial victory as well as a host of catalogued memories along the way."

First Winners: Wanderers (1872)  
Current Holders: Liverpool  
Most Wins: Manchester United (11)

The FA has an extensive competition portfolio which extends well beyond The FA Cup. The FA is also responsible for the administration of nine other competitions.



## 6.2 THE FA COMMUNITY SHIELD

Formerly known as the Charity Shield, The FA Community Shield is the traditional curtain-raiser to the domestic season between the League and FA Cup Champions.

The first Charity Shield match was played in 1908 between Manchester United, reigning Football League Champions, and Queens Park Rangers, then Southern League Champions with Manchester United claiming a 4-0 victory in a replay.

First Winners: Manchester United (1908)  
Current Holders: Chelsea  
Most Wins: Manchester United and Arsenal (11 outright victories)

## 6.3 THE FA AMATEUR CUP

The introduction of professional football ultimately led to a decline in the performance of amateur clubs in The FA Cup. For this reason, it was deemed necessary to create a competition specifically aimed at amateur clubs.

The FA Amateur Cup cost less than £30 to purchase and in its inaugural season the competition attracted 81 entrants. A crowd of 3,500 witnessed Old Carthusians defeat Casuals 2-1 at Richmond's Athletic Ground.

The FA Amateur Cup was in existence for 80 years and was effectively replaced by The FA Vase in 1974.

First Winners: Old Carthusians (1894)  
Last Winners: Bishop's Stortford (1974)  
Most Wins: Bishop Auckland (10)



## 6.4 THE FA WOMEN'S CUP

The FA Women's Cup began in the 1970-71 season and was originally called The Women's Football Association Mitre Challenge Trophy. Southampton WFC were the most successful team in the competition, winning the title eight times in the 70's and 80's. The Doncaster Belles have competed in the final a record thirteen times, winning six, but Arsenal have been the most successful recently winning five of the last nine.



First Winners: Southampton (1971)  
Current Holders: Arsenal  
Most Wins: Southampton (8)

## 6.5 THE FA TROPHY

The FA Trophy was introduced in 1969 as a knock-out competition for senior non-League clubs.

Entries for the first Trophy competition in 1969-70 included eight clubs who were destined to enter the Football League: Barnet, Cambridge United, Hereford United, Kidderminster Harriers, Macclesfield Town, Scarborough, Wimbledon and Wigan Athletic. Four clubs have now won the Trophy two years in a row: Scarborough (1976 and 1977), Woking (1994 and 1995), Kingstonian (1999 and 2000) and Grays Athletic (2005 and 2006).

First Winners: Macclesfield Town (1970)  
Current Holders: Grays Athletic  
Most Wins: Scarborough, Telford United and Woking (3)



## 6.6 THE FA VASE

In 1974, with many of the top amateur players receiving unofficial payment for playing, The FA abolished the distinction between professional and amateur players and introduced The FA Vase for the majority of clubs who had previously played in the now-scrapped Amateur Cup.

Over 200 clubs entered in the first season (1974-75) and Hoddesdon Town of the Spartan League beat Epsom and Ewell of the Surrey Senior League 2-1 in the final at Wembley before a 9,000 crowd.

First Winners: Hoddesdon Town (1975)  
Current Holders: Nantwich Town  
Most Wins: Billericay Town (3)



## 6.7 THE FA NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM CUP

The winner of The FA National League System Cup qualifies for the UEFA Regions Cup. The UEFA Regions Cup was established in 1999 as a biennial tournament to provide an opportunity for amateur players playing at the lower levels of the game to compete in a European competition.

The FA National League System Cup is limited to leagues at Step 7 of the National League System and other leagues as decided by The Football Association.

When they triumphed over the Cambridgeshire County League in May 2006, The Isle of Man League created history by becoming the first offshore team to win an FA competition.

First Winners: Mid Cheshire League (2004)  
Current Holders: Isle of Man League  
Most Wins: Mid Cheshire League, Isle of Man League (1)



## 6.8 THE FA YOUTH CUP

The Football Association launched the Youth Cup in 1952 as the ideal breeding ground for footballers of the future. In its first season, entry was restricted to the youth teams of clubs, both professional and amateur, who were in direct membership with The FA. Paul Gascoigne, Ryan Giggs, David Beckham, Nicky Butt and George Best have all played in FA Youth Cup-winning sides.

First Winners: Manchester United (1953)  
Current Holders: Liverpool  
Most Wins: Manchester United (9)



## 6.9 THE FA COUNTY YOUTH CUP

The County Youth Cup, originally known as the County Minor (Youths') Championship, was launched in 1944-45 by The Football Association to provide representative football for the best young players who had not signed up with professional clubs. Players under the age of 18, be they at school or playing in leagues affiliated to County Football Associations, are eligible. The Army, Navy and RAF are also entitled to enter a team each.

First Winners: Staffordshire (1945)  
Current Holders: Bedfordshire  
Most Wins: Liverpool (7)



## 6.10 THE FA SUNDAY CUP

Prior to 1955, The Football Association did not permit clubs or players under its jurisdiction to take part in competitive football played on Sunday. A change of heart by the governing body in 1960 allowed Sunday leagues to become affiliated to County Associations and, four years later, The FA introduced The Sunday Cup for non-contract amateur players playing for clubs in the top division of their Sunday league.

The FA Sunday Cup began as an inter-county competition with London defeating Staffordshire 6-2 on aggregate in the first final. However in the 1965-1966 season, it became a competition solely for Sunday league teams.

First Winners: Ubique United (1966)  
Current Holders: Hetton Lyons CC  
Most Wins: Carlton United, Newtown Unity, Fantail, St Joseph's (Luton) and Nicosia (2)



## 6.11 THE FA FUTSAL CUP

The steady growth in interest in FIFA five-a-side, or Futsal, led to the formation of 26 leagues that provide 16 finalists who contest The FA Futsal Cup. The Cup winner then has the chance to become England's representative in the UEFA Futsal Cup.

Futsal is essentially five-a-side but with some twists on how the game is currently played across most of England and has been designed by FIFA to provide a high paced, energetic, fast flowing game.

First Winner: Sheffield Hallam (2003)  
Current Holders: London White Bear (Team USSR)  
Most Wins: London White Bear (Team USSR) (2)