

**RULES OF THE AFA**  
**YOUTH CUP COMPETITION SEASON**  
**2017\_2018**

**1.     Trophies**

- (a) The Amateur Football AFA (hereinafter referred to as the AFA) will provide permanent mementoes for all finalists in each of the competitions, for retention by the players.
- (b) In addition to the permanent mementoes, The AFA will also present a Cup to the winning Clubs, to be held for one year only.
- (c) The President and Honorary Treasurer shall be the legal owners of all trophies in trust for the Amateur Football AFA.
- (d) The winning Club shall be responsible for the custody of the trophy. The AFA will be responsible for the engraving. On or before 1st February in the year following, the trophy shall be returned in a presentable condition. Failure to return a trophy as directed, in time and condition, may result in a fine as detailed in the Schedule of Fees and Fines (hereinafter referred to as the Schedule) attached as Appendix 1 at the end of these Rules.
- (e) Should a trophy be lost or damaged whilst in the custody of a Club, the Club shall forthwith report this to the AFA and may have to refund to The AFA the cost of replacement or complete repair. The AFA may additionally impose such other penalty as it may think fit in accordance with the Schedule.
- (f) A player sent off the field of play for misconduct in a Cup Final shall not be presented with a medal for playing in that Final; neither shall any Player who wilfully refuses to attend the Presentation Ceremony to receive a medal be presented with such medal, nor, being the Captain, shall he be presented with the Cup or Club Memento, but it shall be received by his deputy. In all such cases the Cup Committee shall decide subsequently whether to make any award.

**2     Control of Cup Competitions**

- (a) The entire control and management of the Youth Cup competitions shall be vested in the Council who will delegate authority to the Cup Committee, herein after referred to as the Committee.
- (b) The Council shall have the power to interpret any existing Rule and to alter or add to these Rules as they may from time to time deem expedient
- (c) Clubs or any of their teams infringing the Cup Rules shall be liable to a fine and such other sanction as from time to time may be decided by Council. Such fines are detailed in the Schedule.
- (d) In all matters relating to or arising from an AFA Cup Competition, not otherwise provided for in these Rules, an Appeal against a decision of the Committee may be made by a Club, within 14 days of the date of the decision, to the AFA Council whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further Appeal (see Rules of The Football Association). The fee for any appeal is detailed in the Schedule.

**3     Laws of the Game**

- (a) All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

**4     Cups to be Competed for Annually**

- (a) The cups shall be competed for annually at each age group from U12 to U18. There will be competitions run on both Saturdays and Sundays. They will henceforth be referred to as the Competitions.
- (b) The Competitions will be open to all teams affiliated to The AFA.
- (c) The Committee at their discretion, may accept an entry from any club whose parent association is another recognised Football Association, provided such club is also in membership of one of the Associations and provided the assent of the Parent Association is provided.
- (d) The Committee shall have the power to decide not to run any individual section should the number of entries, in its opinion, not make it viable.
- (e) The Committee shall have the power to refuse the entry of any Team/Club should they consider that the past conduct of such a Team/Club and/or its officials make it desirable to do so.
- (f) 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 Competition values the contribution of match officials, players and spectators and ensures that they are treated with courtesy and fairness by opposing players, club officials and spectators. The Competition and its Clubs will seek to play fixtures in a fair, competitive but not antagonistic environment.

## **5 Entry of Club and Withdrawal**

- (a) Applications to enter the Competitions shall be made in writing or via the Whole Game System by 30th July each year and shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee as detailed in the Schedule. The Committee will liaise over any late entries. Late entries will not be allowed once the first round draws have been made.
- (b) The entry fee shall be decided from time to time by the Committee in consultation with the Chief Executive and is per team.
- (c) If, after having submitted an entry in accordance with the foregoing provisions, a Club wishes to withdraw a team from any section of the Competition a written application must be sent to the Committee. If the application is received before the draw has been published, the Committee may permit withdrawal without penalty. If the application is received after the draw, the arranged match shall be dealt with as an unfulfilled engagement and the defaulting club shall be fined in accordance with the Schedule.
- (d) The Committee may expel a team for any violation of the Rules of the Competition and may impose any other penalty thought fit.
- (e) In the event that a club has more than one team in an age group, each team must be clearly designated. In such cases each player may play for one team only.

## **6 Qualification & Eligibility of Players**

- (a) Children who have attained the age of ten but are under the age of twelve as at midnight on the 31st August in each season may be permitted to play in a match between sides with a maximum of nine players and shall play according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.
- (b) Children who have attained the age of twelve as at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> August in each season may play in a match between sides with a maximum of eleven players and shall play according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.

- (c) FA Rules state that children shall not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match between sides of more than the following number of players, according to their age group:

Under 12 – 9 v 9

Under 13 – Under 18 – 11 v 11

Guidance re age bands can be found in appendix 3. All matches shall be played according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.

- (d) For the purposes of this competition the following formats will apply:

Saturday and Sunday - Under 12 – 9 v 9

Saturday and Sunday U13 – U18 - 11 v 11

- (e) Notwithstanding the above, a child is permitted to “play up” in the age group above his or her chronological age, irrespective of any difference in format or competition structure.
- (f) For the purposes of this Competition a table has been provided in Appendix 2 that clearly shows the age qualification dates for each of the relevant age groups.
- (g) Children permitted to play 11 v 11 but who are under the age of fifteen as at the 31st August in the playing season shall not be permitted to play in a match where any other player is older or younger by two years or more than that person.
- (h) The above qualification dates are subject to the provisions contained in FA Rule C.4(A) in its entirety.
- (i) To play in an U18 competition, a child must have attained the age of fifteen by midnight on the 31st August of the playing season.
- (j) A child in the age ranges U10 to U18 may play in a match involving boys and girls.
- (k) The AFA Cup Competitions are not open to Contract players who are registered with The Premier League or Football League Academies under the elite player performance plan or in The FA Programme for Excellence. Eligible players are non-contract players who must be bona-fide members of his or her club for at least 7 (seven) days before taking part in the competition.
- (l) A player will be permitted to play for no more than one team in the Saturday competition and no more than one team in the Sunday competition in the same season. All players will be cup-tied to the team for which they first played.
- (m) The AFA may, at any time, require a club to produce a Registrar's Birth Certificate, or any other satisfactory documentary evidence, in order to verify the correctness of the date of birth of any player.
- (n) All teams must have personalised Identity Cards for each player which includes a passport-type photograph and date of birth which shall be available for inspection by the opposing team manager on match days. Such a card issued by a League is acceptable provided it has been signed and dated by the authorized League Secretary(s) at least seven days before the match. Failure to produce these registration cards will make the player(s) ineligible to play in the match. Teams who do not have such cards should contact the AFA Office for a set of identity cards for all players enclosing copies of their birth certificates, passport-size photographs plus an administrative charge (see Schedule) per card, not less than seven days before the match.
- (o) Any team failing to produce Identity Cards before any match shall forfeit the game, be disqualified from the competition and pay the full fees of the match official(s). They may also be liable to a fine as per the Schedule.

- (p) In all rounds of the Cup competitions, a player taking part must have been a recognised playing member of their Club. A recognised playing member is someone who has been registered as a player of their Club with the League in which the Club competes. That registration must have been received and accepted by the League 7 days preceding the fixed date for playing the match and the registration must be continuous through to the date of the match
- (q) Players shall not be permitted to register with a participating team after 28th February of the current season, nor will any player be permitted to play in a semi-final tie unless he/she has played in three or more League, League Cup or County Cup games. The three qualifying games must be played before the semi-final tie for a player to be eligible for the final tie. An exception to this rule may be made by the Cup Committee where the first tie to be played in the Cup in question is a Semi Final.
- (r) Objections which relate to the qualifications of any players who may have taken part must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the provisions of Rule 18 below, to be received within four days of the tie in question. The Cup Committee shall have power to call upon any player or Club concerned and may require either to prove qualification to their satisfaction. In the event of failure to give such proof, the Committee shall have power to act as it thinks fit: such power to include awarding the tie, ordering a rematch and/or initiating disciplinary action in respect of the player and/or the Club.
- (s) For 9 v 9 formats the minimum number of players required to start or continue a game is 6. For 11 v 11 formats the minimum number of players required to start or continue a game is 8.
- (t) Clubs or teams that are found to be in breach of any part of Rule 4 may be liable to a fine as per the Schedule and may be removed from the competition. Such decisions will be decided by the Committee.
- (u) A player who has been suspended may play in postponed or replayed ties after the term of his suspension has expired. For the purposes of Rule 8 a substitute shall be regarded as having played, if at any time in a match he actually participates therein. Substitutes who do not participate shall not be regarded as having played.
- (v) Any Club that includes in any of its teams a player who is ineligible or is not qualified in accordance with this Rule may have a fine, as detailed in the schedule levied in respect of each such player. In addition, the Club shall be expelled from the section of the Competition in which the offence occurred. Any Club, Club Official or other person within the Parent County Football Association who is deemed to have induced a breach of this Rule may be charged with misconduct and penalised in accordance with the Rules of The Football Association.

## **7. Arrangement of matches, dates of ties and kick off times**

- (a) The AFA will draw the Ties, and fix the dates each round shall be played.
- (b) No ties shall normally be played on the Christmas, New Year or Easter weekends. If any club in the competition will have their squad diminished due to other religious festivals they should inform the AFA as soon as possible after notification of the date of the tie but in any event in accordance with Rule 7 (f) below.
- (c) With the exception of the Final Tie, the arranged kick-off times for matches must be no earlier than 10.00am and no later than 2.00pm for all age groups. During November to February U15 to U18 teams kick off no later than 1.30pm to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to complete extra time and penalties if required. Notice of kick-off time and venue must be given to match officials and the opposition at least 7 days in advance of the tie. Any breach of this rule may result in a fine in accordance with the Schedule. If there is a dispute in relation to kick-off times when one club tries to arrange kick-off outside of the given times the clubs must contact the Committee. The Home team shall determine the

exact kick-off time. The one exception to this rule is Final Ties where the kick-off shall be decided by the Committee.

- (d) If a team wish to play a match at a later kick-off time, under floodlights, special permission must be sought, in writing, from the Committee. Permission will only be granted with the agreement of both participating teams.
- (e) In each tie the first drawn team is referred to in these rules as the “home team” and the second drawn team as the “away team”. The team winning the tie shall proceed to the next stage.
- (f) Any Club wishing to change the date of a match, up to and including semi-final ties, must send a written request to the Committee. Such request must be made no later than 35 days prior to the scheduled date of the match. In any event fixtures can only be brought forward. Detailed reasons for the change in fixture date must be provided by the Club and the final decision shall rest with the Committee.
- (g) Teams failing to appear for a fixture shall be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule and shall be liable to pay match expenses. They are also liable to pay travelling expenses to the non-defaulting team, as the Committee decides. They may also be subject to having their application for entry into future competitions refused.
- (h) Teams may, in advance of the match, agree to forego the playing of extra time and proceed straight to penalty kicks. This must be notified to the Referee and the AFA in advance. In the event of a dispute clubs must refer to the AFA no later than 2 days preceding the tie. This rule has been introduced to accommodate clubs that can only book pitch slots for a certain period of time and should be read in conjunction with Rule 11 (d) (vii)

## **8. Choice of Ground, condition of ground and postponed/abandoned ties**

- (a) The home team shall have choice of ground.
- (b) The recommended pitch and goal post sizes are contained in Appendix 2. Pitch sizes may be modified but clubs are advised where possible to meet the recommended dimensions.
- (c) Goal nets must be used in all competitions.
- (d) The size of the ball to be used is as follows:
  - i. U12 to U14 – Size 4
  - ii. U15 to U18 – Size 5
- (e) If the home team is unable to provide a ground with suitable facilities, the choice shall transfer to the away team. The home team must inform the away team immediately that they are unable to provide a ground and that the choice has been transferred. The AFA must also be informed. Should this not be done the defaulting club may be fined in accordance with the Schedule.
- (f) In the event of the Away team also not having a ground available on the prescribed date, both teams concerned must make every effort to obtain a ground including approaches to Local Authorities and to the Leagues in which the teams compete. In the event of a ground not being available on the prescribed date, both teams concerned must inform the AFA, which may prescribe another date. Should both teams wish to play the tie on a date earlier than that prescribed or to change the venue, both teams must write to the AFA at least 10 days before the suggested alternative date giving reasons for the request. Failure to comply with this rule may result in a fine being levied against the defaulting Clubs in accordance with the Schedule.

- (g) The Club having choice of ground shall send in writing to the Honorary Secretary of the opposing Club and to the Referee (and any Assistant Referees) all particulars necessary for the playing of the tie, including agreed kick-off time, colours and directions, to be received at least 7 days prior to the date of the tie. Defaulting clubs shall be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- (h) The away club and the match officials must acknowledge receipt of these particulars by first class mail, email or other approved means, to reach the sender at least 48 hours after receipt. A club failing to acknowledge particulars may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule. In relation to both Rules 8 (g) and (h), Clubs should note that the match is still on unless otherwise notified by the AFA.
- (i) Artificial Football Turf pitches are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of 3G (Third Generation) Football Turf pitches. To meet the criteria a Football Turf pitch must pass a test every three years as defined in the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf. The Home Club is responsible for advising participants and match officials of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements."
- (j) Notification of any appeal as to the unsuitability of a ground shall be intimated to the referee prior to the commencement of the game, but shall additionally be forwarded to The AFA, in writing, so as to be received within three days (Sundays included) of the date of the tie. The Honorary Referees' Secretary shall be notified by noon on the day following the game.
- (k) If the ground of the Club having the choice of ground is considered unsuitable for a Cup-tie, its opponent may appeal to the AFA within 2 days of receipt of the particulars mentioned in 7(g) above. The AFA may thereupon order the tie to be played on the ground of the appealing Club, or on a neutral ground. If such an appeal is not sustained, the appellant club may be required to pay the expenses incurred in deciding the appeal.
- (l) The Referee shall, subject to the decision of the authority controlling the ground, have the power to decide as to the fit condition of the ground in all ties. If deemed necessary, either team having doubts as to the fit condition of the ground may require the Referee or another person approved by the administering County to visit the ground at least 2 hours before kick-off to decide the fitness of the ground.
- (m) Clubs shall advise the AFA of any known school holidays, educational trips, Schools FA Competitions etc. which may affect the completion of the Competition.
- (n) Matches which are postponed or abandoned:
  - i. If a match is postponed or abandoned in circumstances over which neither competing team has control, the competing teams must make arrangements for the match to be played no later than 7 days after the date of the fixture.
  - ii. When a match has been postponed or abandoned before the completion of the match and neither team being at fault, it shall be played on the same ground. This rule is subject to vi below.
  - iii. In drawn matches if extra time has not been commenced or a match has been abandoned during extra time and neither team being at fault, the result at the end of the match will stand and the match shall be replayed on the ground of the team second drawn. This rule is subject to vi below.
  - iv. If the match be again postponed or abandoned it shall be played as directed by the AFA.
  - v. Matches abandoned through the fault of the teams shall be dealt with by the AFA.

- vi. In the cases of matches being abandoned before the conclusion of normal time or extra time, the AFA shall have the right to decide whether the score at the time of the abandonment should stand as the result or to order that the match be replayed.
- vii. In the event of any match in the Competition not being completed as per v. and vi. above both Clubs concerned shall send a report of the circumstances to the AFA, to arrive not more than 72 hours after the time fixed for the match. Failure to do so may result in a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- viii. Where the match is postponed due to severe weather conditions, the AFA may exempt Clubs from the requirement to send a report advising of the postponement providing that the postponement has been reported by text following the instructions that will be received by the nominated individual by text from Full-Time. It is the responsibility of the Secretary or other nominated individual of both clubs to report this fact to the AFA via the Full-Time text service. The Home Club Secretary must inform the Match Referee and any Assistant Referees and the Away Club Secretary by telephone. The Secretary must receive an acknowledgement from the Referees/Assistant Referees and Away Club Secretary that the message has been received. Clubs in default of this Rule may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- ix. If the match is postponed less than 3 hours before the arranged kick-off time and it is not possible to get hold of the Match Officials or Away Club for any reason then a representative of the Home Club must be at the ground to inform them of the postponement upon their arrival. Defaulting Clubs may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- x. Matches may only be postponed due to severe weather and/or pitch conditions as follows:
  - By the ground authority where control of the ground is not with the Home team
  - After inspection by the appointed match referee if control of the ground is with the Home team.

If the appointed match referee is unable to make the inspection then another registered referee may make the decision subject to the agreement of the appointed referee.
- xi. The Home Club shall notify the Match Officials and Away Club of the revised arrangements for the playing of the tie.
- xii. The Referees Appointments Officer must be notified immediately by the home club of any postponed game and any abandoned games must be similarly advised by noon on the following day.
- xiii. Any club in default of the above rules may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule for each breach of this Rule.

## **9. Conditions of Play**

- (a) In all sections of the Competition, the field of play shall conform to the Laws of the Game. Matches may be played on grass or any other artificial surface approved by The Football Association as per Rule 8(i).
- (b) All lines must be clearly defined according to Law 1 of the Laws of Association Football
- (c) In all matches the field of play must be equipped with goal nets attached to the goal and a pole with a flag must be placed at each corner of the field of play. The responsibility to ensure

this rule is complied with shall lie with the Home team on whose ground the game is played. A fine in accordance with the Schedule for each breach of this Rule may be imposed if no goal nets are provided or if they are not fitted to the satisfaction of the Referee and less than 4 corner posts and flags are in position.

(d) The duration of each match shall be as follows:

- i. U18 and U17 – ordinary time of 90 minutes with a half-time interval of 10 minutes and extra-time if necessary, of 20 minutes.
- ii. U14 and U13 – ordinary time of 70 minutes with a half-time interval of 10 minutes and extra-time if necessary, of 14 minutes.
- iii. U12 - ordinary time of 60 minutes with a half-time interval of 10 minutes and extra-time if necessary, of 14 minutes.
- iv. Plus any additional time allowed by the Referee and subject to 11 (e) below.

(e) Extra-time shall be played in all ties except, with the exception of the Final Tie, where both teams agree, in the presence of the match Referee before the start of the game, to go straight to the taking of penalty kicks in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the International Board to determine the result of the tie, if the score is level at the end of the match. Otherwise if, at the end of the expiration of extra-time, the scores remain equal the result of the tie shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the International Board.

(f) In all rounds of the Cups the duration of each match shall be as stated above in Rule 9 (d) or, except in the Semi-final and Final ties, by agreement between the competing teams a shorter period not less than the times prescribed below may be agreed. Both teams must agree in the presence of the match Referee, before the commencement of the match. The minimum time for any game will be not less than;

- (i) 40 minutes for players in the age groups of U12 to U14
- (ii) 50 minutes for U15 and U16 age groups
- (iii) 60 minutes for U17 and U18 age groups.
- (iv) In the U15 to U18 age groups extra-time may be reduced to 14 minutes in total.

(g) Whenever extra-time is necessary, unless otherwise agreed by the teams as per 9 (e) above, it must be started and completed.

(h) The team having scored the greater number of goals at the conclusion of extra-time shall be declared the winner. When a tie has resulted in a draw after extra-time, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark as defined in the FIFA Regulations.

(i) The half-time interval may only be altered with the consent of the match Referee.

(j) Provided that both teams have the minimum number of players ready to play, the referee shall order the match to commence at the appointed time or as soon as possible thereafter. Should a match start after the appointed time, the referee must give details on the report card submitted in accordance with Rule 13 (h). Any team causing a match to start up to and including 10 minutes late may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule. Any team causing a match to start more than 10 minutes late may be fined in accordance with the Schedule.



- (k) If a team is not ready to start by 30 minutes after the appointed time, it shall be deemed to be absent and the match shall be dealt with as an unfulfilled engagement. The defaulting team may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- (l) Numbered shirts shall be worn by all players in all sections of the Cups. No 2 players from the same team shall wear shirts bearing the same number. Teams failing to comply with this requirement may be fined in accordance with the Schedule.
- (m) If the ground is of a standard where there are benches and technical areas, only named substitutes and club officials will be allowed in the technical area in accordance with Rule 8 (o). They must remain seated at all times, except that one person at a time is authorised to convey technical instructions from the technical area. Persons in the technical area must conduct themselves in a responsible manner at all times. If more than the permitted numbers of persons are observed by a match official in the technical area, the referee shall have the power to stop the game and order the removal of all surplus persons. Any Club that breaches this Rule may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- (n) Substitutes and squads shall be as follows:
  - i. For U12 games each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age. Any number of substitutes may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.
  - ii. For U13 to U18 games a team may, at its discretion, use a maximum of 5 substitutes who must be named to the referee before the kick-off. Such substitutes may be used at any time in the match to replace an existing player but not to replace a player who has been dismissed from the field of play by the referee for misconduct after play has commenced. A player who has been replaced can return to the field of play as a substitute for another player (roll-on/roll-off substitution).
- (o) Clubs will be supplied with a link to a team-sheet which must be completed with player's details and printed off and taken to the game and handed to the referee and opposition. This must be read in conjunction with the rule below.
- (p) Each team is responsible for ensuring that a list of names of players taking part in the tie (including nominated substitutes) is given in all rounds of the Cups to the Referee and to a representative of the opposing club in the presence of the Referee at least 20 minutes before kick-off except in the Final Ties where team sheets must be exchanged 45 minutes prior to kick-off. Each player must be numbered on the list. Any team which fails to hand over its list by the specified time or which alters the composition of its team or changes the number of players after its list has been handed over will be subject to any appropriate action decided upon in accordance with the Schedule for each breach. Handwritten amendments can be made to the team sheet where necessary prior to handing it over to the opposition and referee.
- (q) Competing Clubs must each nominate a responsible adult, aged 18 years or over, to act on their behalf as a Match Delegate. Failure to comply with any section of this Rule may result in a fine as per the Schedule. The responsibility of the nominated individual to be as follows:
  - i. To report to the match referee at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the match to introduce themselves.
  - ii. To ensure the needs of the referee are met before, during and after the match.
  - iii. To ensure the appropriate behaviour of all club members, parents and spectators before, during and after the match.

- iv. To assist the referee, as requested, in dealing with any problems that may arise.

(r) **Respect:**

- . 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 AFA. 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.
- ii. The participating clubs taking part in the fixture shall identify a member of the teams coaching staff to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of the team as per (q) above
- iii. 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 3 yards from the touchline and be on the opposite side of the pitch from the club officials and substitutes. This 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 to best meet these requirements.
- iv. Any club failing to comply with the Respect rules may be fined in accordance with the Schedule.

**10. Team Colours**

- (a) Teams must play in colours registered with The AFA. Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with The AFA shall notify the colours in which they will play to its opponents and match officials at least 7 days before the match.
- (b) When colours to be worn by both Teams are similar, the Away Team shall change unless mutual arrangements are made to the contrary – except where matches are played on a neutral ground, when both Teams shall change into contrasting colours.
- (c) Each goalkeeper must wear colours that distinguish him/her from the other players, the Referee and the Assistant Referees.
- (d) Team Captains are required to wear an identifying arm-band.
- (e) No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.
- (f) Any club in breach of these rules may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.

**11. Referees**

- (a) In ties prior to the Final, Referees will be appointed by The AFA. In the event of a Club being advised by The AFA that it is not possible to make an appointment or in the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee, it shall be the responsibility of the Home Club to provide a Referee which must be agreed upon by both clubs. A Referee thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered Referee. The provision of Assistant Referees shall be at the discretion of The AFA.
- (b) In Final ties all Match Officials will be appointed by The AFA.
- (c) Match Officials are appointed until a tie is decided and will be required to officiate in postponed games unless otherwise directed by The AFA.

- (d) Match Officials shall inform the AFA and/or league or competition directly responsible if unable to referee a team or teams for any reason. Officials appointed to matches must be neither past nor present members or officers of the competing clubs. Should a match official receive an appointment that puts them in breach of this rule they must immediately notify the AFA.
- (e) Match Officials must acknowledge in writing by electronic mail or by first-class post, appointments made by the AFA within 5 days of the appointment and must also acknowledge receipt of match details from the Home Club within 48 hours of receipt.
- (f) The appointed match official must be present at the ground no later than 45 minutes prior to the advertised time of kick-off.
- (g) Referees must be handed each Club's Team Sheet as required by Rule 9(p) and shall return both sheets to the AFA. The report must include the following:
  - (i) The number of players in each team that took part
  - (ii) The scheduled and actual kick-off times, together with the reason for any late kick-off.
  - (iii) Any reduction in the scheduled match duration.
  - (iv) In the case of matches not completed, details as to why such match was not completed.
  - (v) Whether Club Assistant Referees were provided by the competing teams.
  - (vi) Whether the corner posts with flags and goal nets were satisfactory.
  - (vii) The date that the appointment was confirmed by the Home Club.
  - (viii) The result of the match.
  - (ix) Marks for any neutral Assistant Referees where appointed.
  - (x) If a club reported that ID Cards were not made available to them.
  - (xi) If a match delegate was made available from both sides.
  - (x) Any other information required by the AFA.
- (h) The team(s) responsible for a late start must be informed they are being reported.
- (i) Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be entitled to charge fees and reasonable travelling expenses as per the Schedule. In the event of a match being postponed due to causes beyond the control of either team, the Match Officials shall be entitled to charge half the match fee plus full travelling expenses if they attend the ground.
- (j) If a match is not played owing to the default of one of the competing teams, the team that is present at the ground shall pay to the Match Officials their full fees and full travelling expenses. If neither team is present at the ground the Match Officials may submit their claims to the AFA. If both teams have been found to be in default of this Rule the AFA shall order both teams to reimburse one half each of the Match Officials' fees and expenses.
- (k) A Match Official who fails to attend at a match to which he or she has been appointed under section (a) of this Rule, shall send a written explanation to the Referees' Appointments Officer. If the explanation is deemed unsatisfactory the facts shall be reported to the Referees Committee of the AFA.

- (l) Where a Referee fails to attend the match, the teams must agree on a Referee. If Assistants have been appointed one shall replace the Referee. If a match is not played as a consequence of the teams failing to agree an appropriate person to officiate the match shall be dealt with as an unfulfilled engagement.
- (m) In Final ties, fees, travelling expenses and a medal/plaque shall be awarded and paid for by the AFA.
- (n) All payments under this Rule (except 11 (l) above) shall be made by the Home team immediately after the conclusion of the match. The Away team must pay to the Home team 50% of the payments made to the Match Officials only. Payments must be made by the Away team on the day of the match. Clubs in default may be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- (o) Referees under the age of 16 are only eligible to officiate in competitions where the players age band is at least one year younger than the age of the referee, e.g. a 15 year old referee may only referee in competitions where the age banding is 14 or younger.
- (p) The Scale of Fees for match officials are contained in the Schedule.

## **12. Reporting Results**

- (a) Clubs shall forward written notification of the result on the electronic form provided within 3 days of the match. The form must be completed in its entirety, including the Referee's name and marking which, if less than 60, must be justified by a written report to be submitted within 7 days of the date of the match. Each Club must submit match results by SMS text message to the FA Full-Time system, by 7.00pm on a Saturday, or within 2 hours of the completion of a match played on any other day in. Clubs failing to do so shall be liable to a fine in accordance with the Schedule.
- (b) Fines levied for breaches of Rule 12(a) will be doubled if not paid within fourteen days and, in default of Payment, Clubs may be barred from the Competition in the season following.

## **13. Disqualification**

- (a) In addition to any other action or penalty, the AFA shall have the power to disqualify any competing team, or player of any competing team(s), which it determines to have breached the Rules of the Association or the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules), and the decision of the AFA shall be final and binding.
- (b) If a team is removed from the League in which it is playing once it has been accepted into a Cup competition the AFA shall have the right to remove the team from the Cup competition.
- (c) The AFA shall consider any reports received within 7 days of the date of the tie of serious misbehaviour, abandoned matches, or late starts beyond the stipulated time and shall disqualify, fine or take no action against the team(s) allegedly responsible. For the efficient management of the competition, such action will not be dependent on the outcome of any misconduct hearings that may be pending or the consequent result of any disciplinary hearings.

## **14. Liability of Clubs in Final Ties**

- (a) In the Final Ties, any team failing to play, without showing a good and sufficient cause for such failure, may be adjudged by the AFA to have been guilty of serious misconduct and liable to be dealt with by the AFA.

## **15. Protests**

- (a) All protests must be set out in full and shall be made in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive at the Office of The AFA so as to be received not later than four days from the date originally arranged for the match in question. Such protests shall be accompanied by a deposit (see Schedule) which shall be forfeited if the protest is deemed unjustified. The fee will be returned if the protest is upheld.
- (b) Any protest relating to the ground or its appurtenances must comply with the provisions of Rule 8(j) above. If a complaint is lodged with the Referee of the match prior to the commencement of the match regarding the ground or the appurtenances of the game which the Referee is unable to have rectified without delaying the start of the match, the complaining team shall be required to set down details of the complaint in writing and hand it to the Referee who shall forward the document to the AFA. The complaining team may then proceed to lodge a protest in accordance with Rule 15 (a).
- (c) The AFA will set up a Committee to consider any protest and shall arbitrate, decide whether the deposit shall be forfeited to the funds of the Cup (and be put towards the costs of the Final) or returned and also may order the parties to a dispute to pay any expenses incurred in the arbitration. Any members of the AFA connected with the parties to the protest shall not sit on the Committee set up to deal with the protest.
- (d) In all protests a copy of the statements lodged must be sent to the other parties and all parties shall be afforded an opportunity of making oral submissions to the Committee.
- (e) No protest shall be withdrawn without the consent of the Committee.
- (f) The decision of the Committee shall be final and binding except in relation to 15 (g) below.
- (g) Provisions concerning appeals:
  - (i) A Club that is expelled from the Competition may appeal against that decision to an appeal board comprising 3 members of AFA Council selected by the Chairman of Council or his nominee. Any such appeal shall only be permitted on one or more of the following grounds:
  - (ii) The Cup sub-Committee misinterpreted/failed to comply with the procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge.
  - (iii) The Cup sub-Committee came to a decision on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached; or
  - (iv) The Cup sub-Committee imposed a sanction that is excessive.
  - (v) Any appeal must be made in accordance with such procedures as may be determined by the Association from time to time.
  - (vi) For the avoidance of doubt, a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

## **16. Provision for the Final Tie**

- (a) The Cup Committee shall arrange grounds for the Final ties of all Competitions and shall have direct control of all the arrangements, receipts and disbursements in connection with these matches.
- (b) When the Winners and Runners-Up have been determined, The AFA shall present the Cup, with a Club Memento, to the Winners and Medals to up to 16 participating Players of each Team.

## **17. Trophies**

1. When the winning Club shall have been ascertained, the relevant Cup shall be handed to the Representatives of the Club and the following agreement signed:

"We, ..... the Secretary of .....Football Club, and ..... and ..... Members of and representing the said Club, having been declared the winner of the AFA (insert Cup name) Competition and the Cup having been delivered to us in good order do hereby, on behalf of the said Club and individually and collectively engage to return the Cup to the AFA on or before the 1st February in good order and condition in accordance with the Rules of the Competition to which we also have subscribed our respective names provided always that if the said Cup is destroyed or damaged by fire or by any other cause or lost whilst in our care we agree to refund to the Association the amount of its value or the cost of thorough repair as the case may be. Failure to return the Cup by the due date may result in a fine in accordance with the Schedule."

**18. The AFA may alter the rules**

- (a) These rules may be altered, expunged, added to as they see fit from time to time. Such alteration, expunction or addition shall not come into force until the season following that in which the AFA shall have agreed upon it.
- (b) Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the AFA have to adopt emergency measures to complete the Competitions in a season, such alteration, expunction or addition shall come into force forthwith.
- (c) All decisions made by AFA in relation to Rule 16 above are final and are not subject to a further appeal.

**19. Any matter not covered by the rules above**

Any matter not included in these rules will be dealt with at the discretion of the AFA. Such decision shall be final and binding.

## Appendix 1 - Schedule of Fees and Fines

| <b>Fees</b>                    | <b>Relevant Rule</b> | <b>Amount</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Entry fee for all Competitions | 5 (a)                | £21           |
| Appeal Fee                     | 2 (d)                | £50           |
| I.D Cards                      | 6 (n)                | £1 per card   |
| Match Officials Fees           |                      |               |
| Referees                       |                      |               |
| 9 v 9                          | 11 (i)               | £25           |
| 11 v 11                        |                      | £32           |
| Assistant Referees             |                      | £20           |
| 9 v 9                          |                      | <u>£25</u>    |
| 11 v 11                        |                      |               |
| Protest Fee                    | 15                   | £50           |

## Fines

| <b>Schedule of Offences</b>   | <b>Relevant Rule</b> | <b>Fine</b>                                    |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Withdrawal of a team  | 5 (c)                | Up to £50 and forfeit of entry fee             |
| Non-compliance of player qualification rules                        | 6 (u)                | Up to £20 per player and team disqualification |
| Failure to notify teams of kick off times                           | 7 (c)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to appear for a match                                       | 7 (g)                | Up to £20 fine and disqualification            |
| Failure to provide suitable facilities                              | 8 (e)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to inform the AFA of change of Venue                        | 8 (f)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to notify Away club of match details                        | 8 (g)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to acknowledge particulars                                  | 8 (h)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to notify reasons of postponement/abandonment               | 8 (n) vii            | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to text postponement notice                                 | 8 (n) viii           | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to attend the match to inform the Referee of a postponement | 8 (n) ix             | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to provide nets and corner flags                            | 9 (c)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Causing a late kick off   | 9 (j)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Causing an unfulfilled engagement                                   | 9 (k)                | Up to £20 fine and disqualification            |
| Breach of technical area rules                                      | 9 (m)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to provide a team sheet for the opposition                  | 9 (p)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to provide a match day delegate                             | 9 (q)                | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to adhere to Respect Rules                                  | 9 r(iv)              | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to adhere to the Team Colours rules                         | 10 (f)               | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to notify the result  | 12 (a)               | Up to £10 fine                                 |
| Failure to return a Trophy  | 17                   | Up to £250 fine                                |

## Appendix 2 – Pitch Layouts and Goalpost Dimensions

| Age Grouping                  | Type  | Recommended size without runoff (safety area around pitch) |    | Recommended size including runoff (safety area around pitch) |    | Recommended size of goal posts |      |
|-------------------------------|-------|--|----|--|----|--------------------------------|------|
|                               |       | Length x width (yards)                                     |    | Length x width (yards)                                       |    | Height x width (ft)            |      |
| Mini-Soccer<br>U9/U10/U11/U12 | 7v7   | 60   | 40 | 66   | 46 | 6                              | 12   |
| Youth U13                     | 9v9   | 80   | 50 | 86   | 56 | 7                              | 16   |
| Youth U14                     | 11v11 | 90   | 55 | 96   | 61 | 7                              | 21 * |
| Youth U16                     | 11v11 | 100  | 60 | 106  | 66 | 8                              | 24   |
| Youth U18                     | 11v11 | 110  | 70 | 116  | 76 | 8                              | 24   |

If a pitch is to be provided for U14 it is recommended that 7 x 21 goalposts are used. However, it should be noted that 8 x 24 is also acceptable as not all sites will provide specifically for this age group.



### Appendix 3 – Age Bands

| Age Group | Born between             |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| U12       | 01/09/2003 to 31/08/2005 |
| U14       | 01/09/2001 to 31/08/2003 |
| U16       | 01/09/1999 to 31/08/2001 |
| U18       | 01/09/1997 to 31/08/2000 |