**Subsidiary Competitions**

**Guidance Notes**

**March 2021**

INTRODUCTION

Following the announcement on 24 February 2021 detailing the curtailment to the 2020/21 league season at Steps 5 to 6 of the National League System (“the NLS”), and outside of the NLS, a number of queries have been received from Leagues, Clubs and County FA’s in relation to the potential for subsidiary Competitions being created in order to allow Clubs at this level of the game to gradually return to organised football.

At the time of writing, the potential dates for the lifting of restrictions in relation to a return of spectators are not clarified for ‘recreational sport’, which is relevant to Grassroots Football. The following guidance therefore sites only the operational matters of games being played. Clubs and Leagues are advised to reference any future Coronavirus guidance set out by The FA and/or DCMS.

**For the avoidance of doubt, all proposed Competitions or fixtures for teams Outside National League System must be completed by 30th June.**

Set out within this document are some considerations and guidance for **Grassroots** Leagues and Clubs who may be seeking to introduce Competitions or fixtures which are categorised as follows:

**1. Existing** League Cup Competition in its existing sanctioned format (using existing member Clubs)

**2.** Alternative competition ran by a League in any format not previously sanctioned. With any affiliated Clubs.

**3.** County Cups

**4.** Club-led competition/cup between other Clubs

**5.** Friendly fixtures (one-off games)

The following information is aimed at providing the framework for games to be played during this period and all stakeholders are asked to ensure all aspects have been considered before progressing.

Clubs are reminded that they must always follow the FA and DCMS Guidance and ensure they undertake and review the relevant risk assessments. Clubs must always also abide by any spectator limits in force. These may be altered from time to time by a clubs Local Authority.

Under FA Rules a Competition must be sanctioned. The following table identifies the sanctioning route for Competitions proposed to be played between March 29th (or any proposed start date) and June 30th2021.

SANCTIONING OF A COMPETITION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Sanctioning Authority** |
| **1. Existing** League Cup in its existing sanctioned format (using existing member Clubs) | The Sanctioning Authority is **The County FA,** but this may already be covered under the 2020/21 sanction, providing a League included this with their submission. |
| **2. Alternative** Competition to be run by a League not previously sanctioned with any affiliated Clubs. | **The County FA** would sanction any new Competition. Notice of the intention to hold a new Competition must be emailed to the relevant CFA prior to its proposed start date. Please fill in the form by clicking on this link: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kCXJRcbM-UaA_5_I2e3eOVRWgt6Sd45Fn1PGTyVy-49URVpaVjJGSFFGRjA2VDFZOTRQRktBVUpVUS4u> |
| **3.** County Cups | The relevant **County FA ^** |
| **4.** Club-led competition/cup | The relevant **County FA** \* ^ |
| **5.** Friendly fixtures (one-off games) | N/A – Providing both Clubs are affiliated, no Sanction is necessary. |

*\* Relevant County FA is determined by the County with the highest number of participating teams*

*^ When sanctioning the Competition, the County FA should notify all relevant parties (including match officials) of the correct Competition name. This will aid with the smooth operation of any cases of misconduct that are to be reported.*

Match Officials

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Match Official appointments** | For any League wishing to run their cup competitions or one of an alternative format (**1 and 2 above)**, officials would appointed by the League in the normal manner.  If you are a club who are organising games/tournaments you would need to source your own officials. This can be done with support of your County FA or your local appointments officer. |

Discipline

All Discipline would need to be reported to the relevant County FA in line with current regulations by match officials.

The criteria as to whether matches in Types 1 to 4 are a matter solely for the sanction authority, (i.e. the relevant County FA), as to whether the level of game can be used to serve suspensions.

Under no circumstances can friendlies be used to serve competitive sanctions.