



ADULT COMPETITION RULES

GOVERNANCE RULES

1. MANAGEMENT

- (a) The County Competitions shall be under the entire control and management of Bedfordshire FA via the County Cups Committee.
- (b) The Adult County Competitions shall comprise of:
 - Premier Cup
 - Senior Challenge Cup
 - Senior Trophy
 - Intermediate Challenge Cup
 - Junior Challenge Cup
 - Sunday Cup
 - Sunday Junior Cup
 - Sunday Lower Junior Cup
 - Women's Cup
- (c) The Cup can never become the absolute property of any Club. After the Final the winners of the Trophy shall give an undertaking to return the Trophy, in good order, by 1st September following their Final. Clubs failing to return the cup will be fined as per schedule of fines. If a cup is returned damaged, then the club will be responsible for the full cost of repair.
- (d) Entry criteria for all County Competitions shall be set by the County Cups Committee prior to each season and confirmed before draws are made.
- (e) Entry to the Premier Cup will be by invitation only, a club will be nominated to play in a one-off match against the county's most senior club with the game to be played pre-season. The format of the competition is subject to change where necessary.
- (f) The County Cups Committee shall determine the dates on which County Competition matches shall be played.
- (g) Failures by Clubs to comply with the Adult Competition Rules shall be referred to the County Cups Committee and problems concerning referees shall be referred to the Referees Committee.
- (h) If a match is declared void for any reason, the game shall be re-arranged as directed by the County Cups Committee.
- (i) The County Cups Committee shall have power to alter, or add to, any of the Adult Competition Rules as they from time to time deem expedient.
- (j) All decisions made by the County Cups Committee shall be final and binding.

2. METHOD OF ENTRY AND REQUIREMENTS

- (a) All clubs affiliated to Bedfordshire FA are required, unless exempted, to take part in one of the Adult County Competitions, provided one is suitable. Entries must be made on or before the 30th June for Saturday competitions & 31st July for Sunday competitions failure to comply will result in the club not being entered into any Adult County Competition unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

- (b) Where a Club has more than one team eligible for the same competition it may be entitled to enter both or all teams, however no player may play for more than one team in the same competition in any one season.
- (c) Shirts with different numbers must be worn by players (including substitutes).
- (d) In the event of the colours of the two competing Clubs being similar in any tie, the away team must change, except in a final when the second named team shall change.
- (e) In the Intermediate Cup, Junior Cup, all Men's Sunday Cups & the Women's Cup the Away team shall pay the Home team £25 towards the cost of the match expenses in all rounds upto and including the Quarter Finals.
- (f) The County Competitions shall take precedence over all League and other competitions except the Premier League, EFL & FA Competitions.
- (g) Clubs withdrawing or having been expelled mid-season from their domestic competition shall not be eligible to compete in the Adult Cup Competitions unless agreed otherwise.

3. DRAW AND NOTIFICATION

- (a) The Draws shall be made by those designated by the County Cups Committee.
- (b) Draws may be made by hand or via Full-Time as determined by the County Cups Committee.
- (c) Once the draw has been made, no team will be added to a competition unless exceptional circumstances prevail.
- (d) In each round of all adult county competitions Bedfordshire FA shall notify all clubs the name of their opponents and the appointed match official(s) via Full-Time. All ties must be played on the day, and at the time, set by the County Cups Committee. In the Senior Cup ties shall be played during the week set by the County Cups Committee and on the day of that week nominated by the Home club. If a team have a free week agreed by their league which clashes with a County Cup tie they must advise Bedfordshire FA immediately so that the game can be re-arranged.
- (e) The Home Club shall notify its opponents and match officials of usual match particulars at least 5 days prior to the match and when doing so shall give its Opponents, Match Officials and where appointed, Bedfordshire FA Council Representative details of the location of the ground. Failure to do so shall result in the Club being fined as per the schedule of fines. Both clubs shall fulfil the fixture as per rule 3(d).

4. FINAL TIES

- (a) The proceeds of the Final Ties shall be collected by Bedfordshire FA who shall be responsible for the payment of all the match expenses. Any excess Income over Expenditure shall be divided as determined by the Board:
- (b) At the conclusion of the Final Tie both clubs shall be presented with 20 mementoes and each Match Official shall be presented with a memento.

5. APPEALS AND PROTESTS

- (a) All appeals and protests must be made to Bedfordshire FA via email at least 7 days prior to the date of the next round to which the protest relates. Protests from clubs relating to player eligibility should be accompanied by clear photographic or video evidence of the player participating in the fixture. Other evidence may be considered (eg Teamsheet, Social Media Posts) if they clearly indicate participation in the match.
- (b) Protests related to markings, measurements, goalposts etc, will not be entertained unless a protest has been lodged with the Referee before the match.

MATCH RELATED RULES

6. GROUNDS

- (a) The dimensions of the field of play for matches in the Adult County Competitions must comply with The FA Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions and be marked clearly, with corner flags and goal nets provided.
- (b) Home teams shall have the choice of ground, the final tie shall be played on such ground as the County Cups Committee may determine. If there is a clash of pitches then an alternative must be sourced or the game played on the away teams ground. If neither is available Bedfordshire FA will find a venue. Home clubs failing to advise of a pitch clash with more than 7 days notice face removal from the competition if an alternative ground is not available.
- (c) In all Adult County Competitions changing facilities for players and officials must be provided with showers & toilets available. If a Home Team is unable to provide this, an alternative venue must be found, unless both teams agree prior to the date of the match to use the existing facilities.
- (d) Football Turf Pitches (3G) are allowed in the Adult County Competitions provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches. The home Club is also responsible for advising Participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 3 (e).
- (e) In all rounds of the Senior Cup, Senior Trophy and all County Cup Finals the playing pitch must have a railed or roped-off area at least five feet from the goal and touch lines.
- (f) If the ground of the Club having the choice of ground is considered unsuitable for a Cup-tie (excluding due to weather), the opposing Club may appeal to the County Cups Committee. The County Cups Committee may order the match to be played on the ground of the appealing Club or on a neutral ground, with the appealing club becoming responsible for all the match expenses. The County Cups Committee also has power to order a change of venue where the ground of the home team is temporarily unfit, if the venue is changed to the ground of the away team then they shall become responsible for all the match expenses.
- (g) If the Home drawn team requests the match to be switched to their opponents grounds (or a ground on which they do not normally play) then they shall remain responsible for all Match Expenses including Hire of the Ground & Floodlighting (where applicable), Match Officials Fees & Expenses and any Refreshments that are laid on.
- (h) The appointed referee shall decide as to the fitness of a ground for all County Competition matches except where the match is Played on a:
 - (1) Ground rented from a Local Government Authority which, under the terms of letting, reserves to itself, or its delegated officials, the right to determine, whether or not the ground is fit for play.
 - (2) Ground rented from a Club (not competing in the fixture), for the playing of the fixture, who shall have the right to determine and say that its ground is unfit for play.

Each Club must take every precaution to keep its ground in playing condition. If necessary, the home club may request that the referee or his nominated deputy examine the ground and decide its fitness for play in sufficient time to save expenses of unnecessary journeys being incurred by the Clubs.

- (i) All games must be played within the County boundary or up to a maximum of 5 miles by road outside of this, except with the permission of the County Cups Committee. No Club shall mutually agree to change the venue without the permission of the County Cups Committee.

7. DURATION OF MATCHES

- (a) All matches must be completed at the first meeting, the duration of each match shall be 90 minutes (2 x 45 Minute Halves). If the scores are equal no extra time will be played and kicks from the penalty mark shall decide the result according to the procedure laid down in the Laws of the Game. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the completion of kicks from the penalty mark, the game shall be re-played the following weekend (or if scheduled for mid-week then during the following week) at the ground of the Away Team, except in the Senior Cup where games shall be re-arranged between the teams within 7 days with the game to be played on a date within 28 days.
- (b) The half time interval shall be of 15 minutes maximum duration.

- (c) The Kick Off time shall be determined by the County Cups Committee and notified to all clubs via Full-Time, any Club failing to start at the appointed time shall be fined as per the schedule of fines unless exceptional circumstances prevail.
- (d) In cases when the start is delayed, no Club shall leave the ground until at least 30 minutes after the scheduled Kick Off time and after they have attempted to contact their opponents and Bedfordshire FA to try to ascertain the reasons for the late arrival.
- (e) In the event of a match being abandoned, the County Cups Committee may order the match to be replayed, allow the result at the time of the abandonment to stand or remove both teams from the competition, as they consider appropriate.
- (f) In the event of a match being postponed it shall be re-arranged for the following Weekend (or if scheduled for Mid-Week then during the following week) unless clubs are otherwise informed.

After 1 postponement the away team may request, within 48 hours, that the match be switched to their home ground, after 2 consecutive postponements at the same venue the county may insist on a switch of venue. In all instances of a postponement occurring from the following week both teams should make their ground available (where possible) to enable a late switch should there be another postponement to get the game played as soon as possible.

On the second and subsequent weeks of a fixture being due to be played the game should not be postponed before the away club has been consulted regarding a possible switch, failure to adhere to this may result in the home team being removed from the competition. Kick Off times may be delayed by up to 45 minutes to enable last minute switches on the day of a game.

In all circumstances the team playing at home, or on a pitch arranged by their league, will be responsible for the match expenses. Where a neutral venue is sourced by the county then all the match expenses shall be shared equally between the 2 teams.

- (g) In the event of a match being declared void and ordered to be replayed, the County Cups Committee shall decide on how the match expenses are split and inform both clubs and the match officials.

8. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS & TEAMSHEETS (SATURDAY COMPETITIONS)

- (a) Only players that have attained the age of 16 shall be eligible to compete in any Adult Competition i.e. a player will become eligible to play in Open Age football from the date of their 16th Birthday whenever that falls during the season.
- (b) Each player must be a registered member of the team they wish to represent, such registration having been approved by the league in line with their normal league registration rule with the exception of players not able to be signed on later than 2 hours before kick off. For matches played after the date fixed for any round the initial registration deadline remains and is not extended except in the Senior Cup. This includes games mutually re-arranged, abandoned or postponed for any reason. In the Senior Cup the registration deadline will always be the day on the game whenever that takes place, this includes matches re-arranged for any reason.
- (c) No player will be allowed to play for more than one team in the same competition, however players can move up in status for the same or a different club. Any player that has played in a more senior Bedfordshire FA county cup cannot then move down in status.

In the Senior Trophy, Intermediate Cup & Junior Cup the following shall apply:

- (1) Any player who has played 5 or more games for a more senior team or teams, up to the end of October, or 10 or more games for a more senior team or teams, from 1st November onwards, prior to the date of the match shall not be eligible to play. (*League, League Cup(s), FA Competitions, County Cup & any other competitions the more senior team(s) may enter will count*)

In the Intermediate Cup & Junior Cup the following shall also apply:

- (2) No players who have competed in 2 or more rounds of either the FA Cup, FA Trophy or FA Vase combined shall be eligible to play
- (d) In the case of Postponed, Abandoned or Replayed matches, only those players who were eligible on the day fixed for the completion of the round in which the match was originally played shall be allowed to play, except that a player under suspension on the date of the original fixture shall be deemed eligible at the time of replayed or rearranged game, providing their period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.

- (e) Players involved in Semi Finals & Finals must have played at least four times in the current season for the team they wish to represent (League, League Cup, County Cup and FA Competition matches only apply).

In Semi Finals & Finals clubs may use players who have played sufficient qualifying games for the club by means of a combination of, or sole, appearances for teams of a lower status within the club. Registration for the player must have taken place within the required timescales. Players registered under any form of contract with The FA will be eligible to play irrespective of the number of matches they have played.

- (f) If there is any doubt as to the qualification of any player taking part in the adult county competitions, the County Cups Committee shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which they belong, or for which they played, to prove that they are qualified according to the rules and failing satisfactory proof the Association may disqualify such player and remove the Club from the competition and/or impose such other penalty as they think fit.

If a Club is found guilty of playing an ineligible player in a County Competition match, or causing the match to be abandoned, it shall be removed from the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the County Cups Committee prevail, and suffer such other penalties as deemed appropriate. A Club found guilty of playing an ineligible player will be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines.

- (g) In the Senior Cup & Senior Trophy a Club may, at its discretion, use up to a maximum of five substitute players at any time in a match (in the Premier Cup the maximum number of substitutes shall be seven), except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the referee, after the game has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. A maximum of five substitutes may be nominated and must be included on the teamsheet handed to the referee before the match. Substitutes not so named shall not take part in the game.

In the Intermediate Cup & Junior Cup a Club may, at its discretion, use up to a maximum of five substitute players at any time in a match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the referee, after the game has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. A maximum of five substitutes may be nominated and must be included on the teamsheet handed to the referee before the match. Substitutes not so named shall not take part in the game.

In accordance with the preceding paragraph repeated substitutions are permissible as follows:

A player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

The eligibility of a substitute to play in any other County cup-tie shall not be impaired unless they have entered the field of play to participate in the match.

- (h) All Clubs must complete a normal league teamsheet and exchange copies with the Referee and Opponents at least 15 minutes before the appointed kick off time (30 minutes for Senior Trophy ties and 45 minutes for Senior Cup ties and all Cup Finals) listing full names of players taking part in the game (including the nominated substitutes), any player not so listed on the form shall not take part in the match. Any club failing to carry out this provision will be fined as per scheduled of fines in the directory. Where leagues operate electronic teamsheets these can be used as long as the referee & opponents have access or a hard copy can be printed.

9. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS & TEAMSHEETS (SUNDAY COMPETITIONS)

- (a) Only players that have attained the age of 16 shall be eligible to compete in any Adult Competition i.e. A player will become eligible to play in Open Age football from the date of their 16th Birthday whenever that falls during the season.
- (b) Each player must be a registered member of the team they wish to represent, such registration having been approved by the league in line with their normal league registration rule with the exception of players not able to be signed on later than 2 hours before kick off. For matches played after the date fixed for any round the initial registration deadline remains and is not extended. This includes games mutually re-arranged, abandoned or postponed for any reason.

- (c) No player will be allowed to play for more than one team in the same competition, however players can move up in status for the same or a different club. Any player that has played in a more senior Bedfordshire FA county cup cannot then move down in status.
- (d) In the case of Postponed, Abandoned or Replayed matches, only those players who were eligible on the day fixed for the completion of the round in which the match was originally played shall be allowed to play, except that a player under suspension on the date of the original fixture shall be deemed eligible at the time of replayed or rearranged game, providing their period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.
- (e) Players involved in Semi Finals & Finals must have played at least four times in the current season for the team they wish to represent (League, League Cup, County Cup and FA Competition matches only apply).

In Semi Finals & Finals clubs may use players who have played sufficient qualifying games for the club by means of a combination of, or sole, appearances for teams of a lower status within the club. Registration for the player must have taken place within the required timescales.

- (f) If Bedfordshire FA have any doubt as to the qualification of any player taking part in the adult county competitions, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which they belong, or for which they played, to prove that they are qualified according to the rules and failing satisfactory proof the Association may disqualify such player and remove the Club from the competition and/or impose such other penalty as they think fit.

If a Club is found guilty of playing an ineligible player in a County Competition match, or causing the match to be abandoned, it shall be removed from the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Association prevail, and suffer such other penalties as the County Cups Committee deem appropriate. A Club found guilty of playing an ineligible player will be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines.

- (g) A Club may, at its discretion, use up to a maximum of five substitute players at any time in a match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the referee, after the game has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. A maximum of five substitutes may be nominated to the referee before the match. Substitutes not so named shall not take part in the game.

In accordance with the preceding paragraph repeated substitutions are permissible as follows:

A player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

The eligibility of a substitute to play in any other County cup-tie shall not be impaired unless they have entered the field of play to participate in the match.

10. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

- (a) Bedfordshire FA shall appoint referees to all cup ties but competing Clubs shall appoint their own Club Assistant Referees, except when Assistant Referees are appointed [see Rule 10(c)]. Such Referees shall be entitled to charge fees as follows (inclusive of travel):

Competition	Referee	Assistant Referee	Fourth Official
Senior Cup	£60	£45	£45
Senior Trophy	£45	£35	£35
Intermediate Cup Junior Cup Sunday Cup Sunday Junior Cup Sunday Lower Junior Cup Sunday Centenary Cup Women's Cup	£40	£30	£30

- (b) In the Senior Cup and Senior Trophy the Home Club shall be liable for the Fees of the all the Match Officials up to and including the Semi Finals.

In all other competitions the Home Club shall be liable for the Referees Fee upto and including the Quarter Finals. In the Semi Finals (when Assistant Referees are appointed) the Fees of all 3 Match Officials shall be shared equally between the competing clubs. In all cases upto and including the Semi Finals it shall be the responsibility of the Home Club to ensure that payment is made to the Match Officials.

- (c) Assistant Referees shall be appointed for all Rounds in the Senior Cup, Senior Trophy and for the Semi-Finals and Finals of all other County Competitions.

A Club may apply in writing for the appointment of assistant referees in Adult Competition games, other than as set out above, and if such Assistant Referees are available, the Club making the application shall be responsible for the payment of their fees.

- (d) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee, the senior Assistant Referee shall referee the game. He shall receive the Referee's fee and the Clubs must agree to provide an Assistant Referee to take his place. In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee at a game, for which there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, the Clubs must agree upon a person to referee the game. Failure to do so may result in one or both clubs being removed from the Competition. In all cases where an officially appointed Referee or Assistant Referee fails to appear, or is late for the kick-off, the matter must be reported by the home club.

- (e) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control (ie the weather), the match officials (if present) shall be entitled to claim a fee of £10. Where a match is not played owing to one club being in default, that Club (if present) shall pay the officials their full fee within 15 minutes of the decision being made. When the defaulting team is not present Bedfordshire FA shall pay the officials their full fee and recover the money from the defaulting team.

- (f) Match officials are required to report to the ground at least 45 minutes (1 hour for Senior Cup, Trophy and all Cup Finals) before the Kick Off.

- (a) Referees will submit details of rule breaches or any other matter that they consider should be reported to Bedfordshire FA.

11. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- (a) Both clubs will receive an automatic SMS from Full-Time which must be replied to by the Home Club to report the result within one hour of the match ending. If you do not receive the automatic message then you must phone or text the result to 07834 955549. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be fined as per schedule of fines.

- (b) In the event of the ground being declared unfit, the Home Club shall inform Bedfordshire FA immediately. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be fined as per schedule of fines.

- (c) Both Clubs shall complete their teamsheet on Full-Time by 10am on a Wednesday following a weekend game and 10am on Friday following a midweek game. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines.

- (d) Clubs in matches that started but were not completed for any reason must still complete Full-Time as detailed in Rule 11(c). Clubs in matches that didn't take place for any reason do not need to complete Full-Time.

12. NON FULFILMENT OF CUP TIES

- (a) Any Club not intending to fulfil a Cup Tie must give information of their intention to do so to the Secretary of the opposing Club and to Bedfordshire FA at the earliest opportunity, if this is within 7 days of the game County Cups Committee shall have the power to compel them to pay the expenses incurred by their opponents, or of taking such action as they may deem expedient. Clubs failing to fulfil a Cup Tie shall be fined as per schedule of fines.

- (b) Any Club failing to play on the date fixed for a tie, unless a change of date has specifically been agreed, shall forfeit the match.

- (c) A Club withdrawing in a Semi Final or Final of a County Competition shall be deemed guilty of serious misconduct and dealt with in such a manner that the County Cups Committee see fit.

SCHEDULE OF FINES (ADULT)

		OFFENCES		
		1st	2nd	3rd (& subsequent)
3(e)	Late or No Notification of Match Details (Match Official(s), Opponents and/or Beds FA Rep.)	£10	£20	£30
8(h)	No or Late exchange of teamsheet (Saturday Cups only)	£10	£20	£30
11	Notification of Results (a+b) No/Late Result (c+d) No/Late teamsheet submitted on Full-Time (c+d) Incomplete/Incorrect teamsheet submitted on Full-Time	£10	£20	£30

The above offences are all linked so by getting charged for 1 offence you will then incur the next stage of fine for another offence in any of the sections. All Adult teams in the club included.

		FINE
7(c)	Late Kick Off (up to 15 mins / over 15 mins)	£15 / £25
8(f) & 9(f)	Ineligible Player (each offence)	£25
10(a)	No Club Assistant Referee	£20
12(a)	Non Fulfilment of Cup Tie (prior to the day of the match)	£75*
12(a)	Non Fulfilment of Cup Tie (on the day of the Match)	£100*
1(c)	Failure to return Cup / Returning a Damaged Cup	£50 [#]

* This is the minimum fine. Dependent on costs apportioned.

[#] If a cup is returned damaged then the club will be charged the full cost of repair