COUNTY CUP RULES

2021-22 SEASON

CORRESPONDENCE AND TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REFEREE APPOINTMENTS

For all appointments referees must email support@bedfordshirefa.com
to acknowledge receipt of the fixture or advise of any issues

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"...In all Youth & Girls Cups the Away team shall pay the Home team £15 towards the cost of the match expenses in all rounds upto and including the Quarter Finals."

GUIDANCE ON TEAM SHEETS

Clubs should use their normal league team sheet where one exists and exchange with the opposition & referee in the normal manner. Where a league does not operate with teamsheets clubs MUST use the County T1 Form.

Electronic copies of the County T1 Form will be sent to teams via the Full-Time match emails.

Whatever form is used please continue to send that to support@bedfordshirefa.com following the game. Remember to ensure that used subs are indicated and that a mark is given to the referee. (The FA are developing a link to Full-Time League sites so once that is operational & leagues make use of it clubs will be able to complete their return on Full-Time in the normal manner which will be seen by the County & the League)

Reminder about NO Extra Time

Please note that in **ALL COMPETITIONS** there will be **NO EXTRA TIME** played and games level at the end of normal time will go straight to penalties. Should Extra Time be played and the match not then go on to penalties then the game will be declared void and replayed.

If clubs have any questions regarding the rules then they should direct them to Nicholas Snelson on 01582 567712 or 07834 955549.

If clubs have any problems on a match day, including submitting the result, they should contact Nicholas Snelson on 07834 955549 asap and leave a message if necessary.

COUNTY COMPETITION RULES

(Except Youth)

1. NOMENCLATURE

The Bedfordshire Football Association's Adult County Competitions shall comprise of:

Bedfordshire FA Premier Cup
Bedfordshire FA Senior Challenge Cup (hereinafter referred to as the Senior Cup)
Bedfordshire FA Senior Trophy
Bedfordshire FA Intermediate Challenge Cup (hereinafter referred to as the Intermediate Cup)
Bedfordshire FA Junior Challenge Cup (hereinafter referred to as the Junior Cup)
Bedfordshire FA Sunday Cup
Bedfordshire FA Sunday Junior Cup
Bedfordshire FA Sunday Lower Junior Cup
Bedfordshire FA Women's Cup

The Association shall determine the dates on which County Cup matches shall be played and the lengths of its playing season within the limits laid down by the Football Association.

2. OWNERSHIP OF THE CUP

The Cup can never become the absolute property of any Club and, in the event of the dissolution of this Association, it shall again become the property of the donors.

The President and Chief Executive shall be for all intents and purposes the legal owners of the Cup, in trust for the donors.

3. MANAGEMENT

(a) The County Competitions shall be under the entire control and management of the Bedfordshire F.A.

(b) The Draws shall be made by those designated by the Bedfordshire F.A.

(c) Failures by Clubs to comply with the Competitions Rules shall be referred to the Football Operations Committee and problems concerning referees shall be referred to the Referees Committee.

(d) If a match is declared void for any reason, the game shall be re-arranged as directed by the Association

(e) The Association shall have power to alter, or add to, any of the County Competition Rules as they from time to time deem expedient.

(f) All decisions made by the Football Operations Committee shall be final and binding.

4. METHOD OF ENTRY AND REQUIREMENTS

(a) All clubs affiliated to the Association are required, unless exempted, to take part in one of the County Competitions, provided one is suitable. Entries must reach the Association 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 County Competition unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

(b) All Clubs entering the competition shall notify the Association of their distinguishing colours

(c) Shirts bearing different numbers must be worn by players (including substitutes) of the competing teams in the County Competitions.

(d) In the event of the colours of the two competing Clubs being similar in any tie, the home team must change, except in a final when the first named team shall change.

(e) Entries to all County Competitions shall be classified by the Association. All Competitions, at the discretion of the Competitions' Committee, may have a qualifying competition and a competition proper. To enter the Senior Cup, a Club must have regular use of a ground where floodlights to a lux value of 120 are available, where a charge for admission must be made, and where there is a protective walkway from the dressing rooms to the playing area.

(f) Entry to the Premier Cup will be by invitation only, a club will be nominated by the Association 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 by the association where necessary.

(g) 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.

(h) The County Competitions shall take precedence over all League and other competitions except the Premier League, EFL, The Emirates FA Cup, The Buildbase FA Trophy, The Buildbase FA Vase, FA Sunday Cup and The SSE Women's FA Cup.

(i) Clubs withdrawing or having been expelled mid-season from their domestic competition shall not be eligible to compete in the County Cup Competition unless agreed by the Association.

5. DRAW AND NOTIFICATION

(a) The County Competitions shall be conducted and decided on a knock-out basis unless otherwise determined by the Association.

(b) Once the draw notification bulletins have been issued, no team will be accepted into a Competition as a late entrant unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Once the actual draw bulletin has been issued, no team under any circumstances will be added to a competition.

(c) In each round of all county competitions the Association shall notify all clubs the name of their opponents. All ties must be played on the day, and at the time, ordered by the Association. In the Senior Cup ties shall be played during the week ordered by the Association and on the day of that week nominated by the Home club.

(d) 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 exact location of the ground on which the game is to be played and a route to be taken to reach it. 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 5(c).

(e) In the Senior Cup Only, the Away Club shall, for programme purposes, forward team details to the Home Club at least 4 days prior to the match.

6. GROUNDS

(a) The dimensions of the field of play for matches in the Adult County Competitions shall be:

(SENIOR CUP ONLY)
Length - Maximum 110m (120yds) ; Minimum 100m (110yds)
Width – Maximum 75m (80yds) ; Minimum 64m (70yds)

(ALL OTHER ADULT COMPETITIONS)
Length – Maximum 120m (130yds) ; Minimum 90m (100yds)
Width – Maximum 90m (100yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

Grounds must be marked clearly and in accordance with the Laws of the Game, with corner flags and goal nets provided

(b) Clubs first drawn shall have the choice of ground, The final tie shall be played on such ground as the Association may determine. If there is a clash of pitches then an alternative must be sourced or the game played on the away team grounds. If neither is available the association will find a venue. Home clubs failing to advise the association 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 County Competitions, (both Saturday and Sunday), changing facilities for players and officials must be provided, together with washing facilities ie Running Water. 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) All County Cup matches must be played on a natural grass pitch or approved artificial grass pitch, no other surface will be allowed.

(e) In the Senior Cup only, games must be played on a private and enclosed ground where gate money shall be charged (Maximum £8, £3 Conc). A Club which has a private and enclosed ground shall not be allowed to select a ground other than that on which it is accustomed to play without the consent of the Association. Grounds used by teams competing in the Senior Cup must have dugouts provided for both teams and Officials, and must also have a clearly marked out Technical Area.

(f) 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. Where local regulations do not allow this the home Club must find an alternative ground or play on the ground of their opponents, which must comply with the foregoing conditions. Fluorescent tape is not considered a satisfactory replacement for rope. All posts or stakes used must be of material considered satisfactory for players' safety.

(g) 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 Association within three days of receipt of the intimation of the draw. The Association 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 Association 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.

(h) 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.

(i) 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, either Club must apply to the Association for an inspection to be made, and the Association shall require the referee or his nominated deputy to examine the ground and decide its fitness for play in sufficient time to save expenses of unnecessary journeys being incurred by the Clubs. The Club applying for the inspection shall pay the costs of such inspection.

(j) All games must be played within the County boundary, except with the permission of the Association. No Club shall mutually agree to change the venue without the permission of the Association.

(k) In matches where a gate is to be taken, the Home Club shall provide 25 Ground Passes for the visiting players and Club officials.

(l) If the ground is of a standard where there are benches and technical areas, then the following will apply:

(1) The maximum number of persons permitted on the bench will be eight.

(2) Only one person has the authority to convey technical instructions, and must return to their position immediately after giving these instructions.

(3) The manager, coach and other occupants of the bench must conduct themselves at all times, in a responsible manner.

(4) If more than eight persons, including substitutes are observed by a match official to be within the bench / technical area, the Referee shall have the power to stop the game and order the removal of all surplus persons.

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, or as mutually agreed by the two teams and match Referee.

(c) The Kick Off time shall be determined by the Association and notified to all clubs on the Draw Bulletin, any Club failing to start at the appointed time shall be fined at the discretion of the Association.

(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 the Association to try to ascertain the reasons for the late arrival.

(e) In the event of a match being abandoned, the Association may order the match to be replayed or allow the result at the time of the abandonment to stand, as they consider appropriate and expedient.

(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 by the Association. This re-arranged game then takes precedence over any fixture a club may have for the following week [other than those in competitions listed in rule 4(g)] and also any free weeks granted by leagues.

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 upto 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 Association 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 their Club, 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 competition cannot then move down in status.

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

(1) 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

(2) 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)*

(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 his period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.

(e) Players involved in Semi - 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 the Final tie players must have played at least four times in the current season for the team they wish to represent and have been registered as a member of the club for at least twenty - eight days.

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 the Association have any doubt as to qualification of any player taking part in this competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is 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 struck out of the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Association prevail, and suffer such other penalties as the Association deem 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 three substitute players at any time in a match (in the Premier Cup the maximum number of substitutes shall be five), 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 official team sheet (County Cup T1 form) 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 official team sheet (County Cup T1 form) 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) A club participating in County Competitions having players on loan must have written permission from the Parent Club that the player in question is eligible for the competition that they are to play in. Failing to have such permission will result in the player being deemed ineligible and the offending club dealt with accordingly.

(i) All Clubs must fully complete a League Team Sheet or a County T1 Team Sheet 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.

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 their Club, 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 competition cannot then move down in status.

No contract players are eligible to compete in any of the Mens Sunday Cup Competitions

(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 his period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.

(e) Players involved in Semi - 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 the Final tie players must have played at least four times in the current season for the team they wish to represent and have been registered as a member of the club for at least twenty - eight days.

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 the Association have any doubt as to qualification of any player taking part in this competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is 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 struck out of the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Association prevail, and suffer such other penalties as the Association 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 and must be included on the official team sheet (County Cup T1 form) 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 fully complete a League Team Sheet or a County T1 Team Sheet and exchange copies with the Referee and Opponents at least 15 minutes before the appointed kick off time (45 minutes for 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.

10. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

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

Competition	Referee	Assistant Referee	Fourth Official
Senior Cup	£55	£40	£30
Senior Trophy	£40	£30	n/a
Intermediate Cup Junior Cup Sunday Cup Sunday Junior Cup Sunday Lower Junior Cup Sunday Centenary Cup Women's Cup	£35	£25	n/a

(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.

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.

(c) Assistant Referees shall be appointed for all Rounds in the Senior Cup, Senior Trophy (First Round at clubs request and dependent on referee availability) and for the Semi-Finals and Finals of all other County Competitions.

A Club may apply in writing to the Association for the appointment of assistant referees in County 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 eliminated 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 to the Association by the home club.

When Assistant Referees are not appointed, each Club must provide an Assistant Referee who shall report to the Referee fifteen minutes before the appointed time of kick-off.

(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 the Association 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.

(g) Referees will report late starts, no Club Assistant Referees, failure to exchange T1 forms or any other matter that they consider should be reported to the Association.

(h) Officials appointed to the Final Tie shall receive a suitable memento in lieu of any fee.

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 the association on 07834 955549, if you have to leave a message then the following information must be conveyed in a clear manner:

- Competition Name
- Match Details i.e. Match Number & Competing Teams
- Score
- Penalties Score (If Applicable)

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 the Association immediately. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be fined as per schedule of fines.

(c) Both Clubs shall send notice of the result of each match on the County T1 Team Sheet by post, fax or email. Clubs must ensure that the players full names are listed and those substitutes that played are marked accordingly. The Result, Goalscorers and Referees Name & Mark must also be completed before finally signing the form. The T1 forms should reach the Association within 3 days of the match (excluding Sundays). 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 send in the County T1 Team Sheet as detailed in Rule 10(c). Clubs in matches that didn't take place for any reason do not need to send in a T1 Team Sheet.

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 the Association at the earliest opportunity, if this is within 7 days of the game the Association 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 the Association has specifically agreed to a change of date) 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 Association see fit.

13. FINAL TIES, TROPHIES & MEMENTOES

(a) The proceeds of the Final Ties shall be taken by the Association who shall be responsible for rent of ground, Refreshments, printing costs and any other expenditure. Any excess Income over Expenditure shall be divided as follows:

50% to each of the Finalists (When pre-match ticket sales are made available and taken up the clubs shares shall be divided pro-rata on the number of tickets sold i.e. clubs selling no tickets shall not receive a share of the gate)

Clubs failing to deal with passes in the correct manner may have some or all of any share due to them withheld.

Payments to Clubs will be made within 28 days of the last Final being completed.

(b) At the conclusion of the Final Tie both clubs shall be presented with 16 mementoes and each Match Official shall be presented with a memento. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct the memento to which he may be entitled shall be withheld at the discretion of the Association.

(c) After the Final the winners of the Trophy shall sign a receipt and give an undertaking to return the Trophy, in good order within 14 days of the Final. Clubs failing to return the cup will be fined as per schedule of fines. Clubs will be able to sign the Trophy back out for events as and when required.

14. APPEALS AND PROTESTS

(a) All appeals and protests (including those relating to players) must be made to the Association within 3 days of the match taking place (Sundays not included), accompanied by a deposit as per schedule of payments, which shall be forfeited if the Association think the appeal or protest to be groundless. Protests from clubs relating to player eligibility should be accompanied by clear photographic 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. If the protest be sustained, the amount of the deposit shall be repaid by the offending Club, who may also be ordered to pay other expenses incurred in hearing or deciding the protest.

(b) Protests against the appurtenances of the match such as markings, measurements, goalposts etc, will not be entertained unless a protest has been lodged with the Referee before the match.

COUNTY YOUTH COMPETITION RULES

1. NOMENCLATURE

Bedfordshire Football Association's Youth County Competitions shall comprise of:

Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Floodlit Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 16 Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 14 Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Saturday Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 16 Saturday Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 14 Saturday Youth Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Girls Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 16 Girls Challenge Cup
Bedfordshire FA Under 14 Girls Challenge Cup

All competitions shall be subject to a minimum of 8 entrants unless exceptional circumstances prevail and the Association agree a reduction down to a minimum of 6.

The Association shall determine the dates on which County Cup matches shall be played and the lengths of its playing season within the limits laid down by the Football Association.

2. OWNERSHIP OF THE CUP

The Cup can never become the absolute property of any Club and, in the event of the dissolution of this Association, it shall again become the property of the donors.

The President and Chief Executive shall be for all intents and purposes the legal owners of the Cup, in trust for the donors.

3. MANAGEMENT

(a) The County Competitions shall be under the entire control and management of Bedfordshire F.A.

(b) The Draws shall be made by those designated by Bedfordshire F.A.

(c) Failures by Clubs to comply with the Competitions Rules shall be referred to the Football Operations Committee and problems concerning referees shall be referred to the Referees Committee.

(d) If a match is declared void for any reason, the game shall be re-arranged as directed by the Association

(e) The Association shall have power to alter, or add to, any of the County Competition Rules as they from time to time deem expedient.

(f) All decisions made by the Football Operations Committee shall be final and binding.

4. METHOD OF ENTRY AND REQUIREMENTS

(a) All clubs affiliated to the Association are required, unless exempted, to take part in one of the County Competitions, provided one is suitable. Entries must reach the Association on or before the 31st July failure to comply will result in the club not being entered into any County Competition, unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

(b) All Clubs entering the competition shall notify the Association of their distinguishing colours

(c) Shirts bearing different numbers must be worn by players (including substitutes) of the competing teams in the County Competitions.

(d) In the event of the colours of the two competing Clubs being similar in any tie, the home team must change, except in a final when the first named team shall change.

(e) Entries to all County Competitions shall be classified by the Association. All Competitions, at the discretion of the Competitions' Committee, may have a qualifying competition and a competition proper.

(f) Where a Club has more than one team at an age group it may be entitled to enter both or all teams, however no player may play for more than one team in any of the county competitions in any one season.

(g) The County Competitions shall take precedence over all League and other competitions except the FA Youth Cup & the FA County Youth Cup

(h) Clubs withdrawing or having been expelled mid-season from their domestic competition shall not be eligible to compete in the County Cup Competition unless agreed by the Association.

5. DRAW AND NOTIFICATION

(a) The County Competitions shall be conducted and decided on a knock-out basis unless otherwise determined by the Association.

(b) Once the draw notification bulletins have been issued, no team will be accepted into a Competition as a late entrant unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Once the actual draw bulletin has been issued, no team under any circumstances will be added to a competition.

(c) In each round of all county competitions the Association shall notify all clubs the name of their opponents. All ties must be played on the day, and at the time, ordered by the Association.

(d) 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 exact location of the ground on which the game is to be played and a route to be taken to reach it. 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 5(c).

6. GROUNDS, FOOTBALLS

(a) The dimensions of the field of play for matches in the Youth County Competitions shall be (excluding Finals):

U14 Youth Cups – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 7ft by 21ft*
Length – Maximum 91m (100yds) ; Minimum 73m (80yds)
Width – Maximum 56m (60yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

U16 Youth Cups – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 8ft by 24ft*
Length – Maximum 101m (110yds) ; Minimum 82m (90yds)
Width – Maximum 64m (70yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

U18 Youth – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 8ft by 24ft*
Length – Maximum 120m (130yds) ; Minimum 90m (100yds)
Width – Maximum 90m (100yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

All Grounds must be marked clearly and in accordance with the Laws of the Game, with corner flags and goal nets provided.

(b) Clubs first drawn shall have the choice of ground. The final tie shall be played on such ground as the Association may determine. If there is a clash of pitches then an alternative must be sourced or the game played on the away team grounds. If neither is available the association will find a venue. Home clubs failing to advise the association 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 County Youth Competitions changing facilities for players and officials are highly recommended but not compulsory, Home Teams shall advise their opponents of what facilities are or aren't on offer when confirming the game.

(d) All County Cup matches must be played on a natural grass pitch or approved artificial grass pitch, no other surface will be allowed.

(e) In 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. Fluorescent tape is not considered a satisfactory replacement for rope. All posts or stakes used must be of material considered satisfactory for players' safety.

(f) If the ground of the Club having the choice of ground is considered unsuitable for a Cup-tie, the opposing Club may appeal to the Association within three days of receipt of the intimation of the draw. The Association 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 Association 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) and Match Officials Fees & Expenses.

(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, either Club must apply to the Association for an inspection to be made, and the Association shall require the referee or his nominated deputy to examine the ground and decide its fitness for play in sufficient time to save expenses of unnecessary journeys being incurred by the Clubs. The Club applying for the inspection shall pay the costs of such inspection.

(i) All games must be played within the County boundary, except with the permission of the Association. No Club shall mutually agree to change the venue without the permission of the Association.

(j) If the ground is of a standard where there are benches and technical areas, then the following will apply:

(1) The maximum number of persons permitted on the bench will be eight.

(2) Only one person has the authority to convey technical instructions, and must return to their position immediately after giving these instructions.

(3) The manager, coach and other occupants of the bench must conduct themselves at all times, in a responsible manner.

(4) If more than eight persons, including substitutes are observed by a match official to be within the bench / technical area, the Referee shall have the power to stop the game and order the removal of all surplus persons.

(k) **Footballs** - Size 5 balls will be used in the Under 18 and Under 16 sections
Size 4 balls will be used in the Under 14 section

7. DURATION OF MATCHES

(a) The duration of play in County Youth Competitions shall be as follows:

U18 section - 90 Minutes (2 x 45 Minute~~s~~ Halves)
U16 section - 80 Minutes (2 x 40 Minute~~s~~ Halves)
U14 section - 70 Minutes (2 x 35 minute~~s~~ Halves)

By arrangement between the Managers of the opposing Clubs. the duration of each match, except in the semi-final and final ties may be reduced by up to a period of 10 minutes each half, such arrangements must be notified to the Referee prior to the commencement of the match.

(b) All matches must be completed at the first meeting, If at the end of Normal Time 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 Association Football. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the completion of kicks from the penalty mark, the game shall be re-played the following weekend at the ground of the Away Team.

(c) The half - time interval shall be of 10 minutes duration, or as mutually agreed by the two teams and match Referee.

(d) The Kick Off time shall be determined by the Association and notified to all clubs on the Draw Bulletin, any Club failing to start at the appointed time shall be fined at the discretion of Association.

(e) 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 the Association to try to ascertain the reasons for the late arrival.

(f) In the event of a match being abandoned, Council may order the match to be replayed or allow the result at the time of the abandonment to stand, as they consider appropriate and expedient.

(g) 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 by the Association. This re-arranged game then takes precedence over any fixture a club may have for the following week [other than those in competitions listed in rule 4(g)] and also any free weeks granted by leagues.

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 upto 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.

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

8. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS & TEAMSHEETS

(a) The qualifying date for players in all competitions shall be 31st August. A player in the Under 14 age group must not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match where any other player is older or younger by 2 years or more than that person.

The eligibility is summarised as follows (This relates to both Boys & Girls Cups):
Under 18 Cups - Players born between 1st September 2003 and 31st August 2006
Under 16 Cups - Players born between 1st September 2005 and 31st August 2007
Under 14 Cups - Players born between 1st September 2007 and 31st August 2009

(b) Each player must be a registered member of their Club, 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 in more than one team in any one season including other age groups for the same club within competitions played on the same day. Players may play for the same or a different club on a Saturday & Sunday.

(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) In the Final tie players 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) and have been registered as a member of the Club for at least twenty - eight days.

(f) If the Association have any doubt as to qualification of any player taking part in this competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is 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 struck out of the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Association prevail, and suffer such other penalties as the Association deem appropriate. A Club found guilty of playing an ineligible player will be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines.

(g) In all competitions a Club may, at its discretion, use up to a maximum of five substitute~~s~~ players at any time in a match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee after play 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 official team sheet (County Cup T1 form) 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 fully complete a League Team Sheet or County T1 Team Sheet and exchange copies with the Referee and Opponents at least 15 minutes before the appointed kick off time (45 minutes for 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 schedule of fines in the directory.

9. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

(a) The Association shall appoint referees to all cup ties but competing Clubs shall appoint their own Club Assistant Referees, except when Assistant Referees are appointed by the Association (Semi Final & Final Ties). Such Referees shall be entitled to charge fees as follows (inclusive of travel):

Competition	Referee	Assistant Referee
Youth / Girls (U18)	£35	£25
Youth / Girls (U16)	£30	£22
Youth / Girls (U14)	£25	£19

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.

In all Youth & Girls Cups the Away team shall pay the Home team £15 towards the cost of the match expenses in all rounds upto and including the Quarter Finals."

(b) A Club may apply in writing to the Association for the appointment of assistant referees in County Competition games, other than as set out in rule 9(a), and if such Assistant Referees are available, the Club making the application shall be responsible for the payment of their fees.

(c) 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 substitute to referee the game. Failure to do so may result in one or both clubs being eliminated 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 to the Association by the home club.

When Assistant Referees are not appointed, each Club must provide an Assistant Referee who shall report to the Referee five minutes before the appointed time of kick-off.

(c) 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 the Association shall pay the officials their full fee and recover the money from the defaulting team.

(d) Match officials are required to report to the ground at least 45 minutes (1 Hour for Semi Finals & Finals) before the Kick Off.

(e) Referees will report late starts, no Club Assistant Referees, failure to exchange T1 forms or any other matter that they consider should be reported to the Association.

(f) Officials appointed to the Final Tie shall receive a suitable memento in lieu of any fee.

10. 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 the association on 07834 955549, if you have to leave a message then the following information must be conveyed in a clear manner:

- Competition Name
- Match Details i.e. Match Number & Competing Teams
- Score
- Penalties Score (If Applicable)

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 the Association immediately. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be fined as per schedule of fines in County Directory.

(c) Both Clubs shall send notice of the result of each match on the County T1 Team Sheet by post, fax or email. Clubs must ensure that the players full names are listed and those substitutes that played are marked accordingly. The Result, Goalscorers and Referees Name & Mark must also be completed before finally signing the form. The T1 forms should reach the Association within 3 days of the match (excluding Sundays). Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines in County Directory and in default of payment, shall be struck out of the competition.

(d) Clubs in matches that started but were not completed for any reason must still send in the County T1 Team Sheet as detailed in Rule 10(c). Clubs in matches that didn't take place for any reason do not need to send in a T1 Team Sheet.

11. 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 the Association at the earliest opportunity, if this is within 7 days of the game the Association 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 Council has specifically agreed to a change of date) 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 Association see fit.

12. FINAL TIES, TROPHIES & MEMENTOES

(a) The proceeds of the Final Ties shall be taken by the Association who shall be responsible for rent of ground, Refreshments, printing costs and any other expenditure. Any excess Income over Expenditure shall be divided as follows:

50% to each of the Finalists (When pre-match ticket sales are made available and taken up the clubs shares shall be divided pro-rata on the number of tickets sold i.e. clubs selling no tickets shall not receive a share of the gate)

Clubs failing to deal with passes in the correct manner may have some or all of any share due to them withheld.

Payments to Clubs will be made within 28 days of the last Final being completed.

(b) At the conclusion of the Final Tie both clubs shall be presented with 16 mementoes and each Match Official shall be presented with a memento. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct the memento to which he may be entitled shall be withheld at the discretion of the Association.

(d) After the Final the winners of the Trophy shall sign a receipt and give an undertaking to return the Trophy, in good order within 14 days of the Final. Clubs failing to return the cup will be fined as per schedule of fines. Clubs will be able to sign the Trophy back out for events as and when required.

13. APPEALS AND PROTESTS

(a) All appeals and protests (including those relating to players) must be made to the Association within 3 days of the match taking place (Sundays not included), accompanied by a deposit as per schedule of payments, which shall be forfeited if the Association think the appeal or protest to be groundless. Protests from clubs relating to player eligibility should be accompanied by clear photographic 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. If the protest be sustained, the amount of the deposit shall be repaid by the offending Club, who may also be ordered to pay other expenses incurred in hearing or deciding the protest.

(b) Protests against the appurtenances of the match such as markings, measurements, goalposts etc, will not be entertained unless a protest has been lodged with the Referee before the match.