

10 - RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION

THE PLAYING SEASON AND THE CLOSE SEASON

B21 **B21.1** *The Playing Season*

B21.1.1 Subject to Rule B21.1.2, the playing season will commence on the date set by the Board each year and end on 31 May of the following year, unless otherwise extended in accordance with Rule B23.

B21.1.2 Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic it has been necessary for some Competitions to obtain the permission of the Board and /or Council to extend their playing seasons. The Board shall have the power to set the start date of a season at a time when some Competitions may still be completing their previous playing season. Any such Competition must comply with Rule B21.2 when setting the dates for its new playing season.

B21.2 *Time frame for Competitions to commence and conclude*

B21.2.1 Subject to Rule B21.2.2, each Competition will set the dates of its own playing season provided that it starts no sooner than the date set by the Board and concludes no later than 31 May of the following year, unless otherwise extended in accordance with Rule B23.

B21.2.2 In relation to those Competitions comprising the National League System, Council (including through the relevant committee of Council) has the power to set an end date for such Competitions to conclude by, provided it is within the limit set by the Board at Rule B21.1.1.

B21.3 *The Close Season*

No Matches other than the following may be played in the Close Season:

B21.3.1 Small-sided Matches and competitions (not more than 7-a-side), mini-soccer Matches or Matches played according to "The Laws of the Game – 9 v 9" and those organised in connection with works clubs' sports days on private grounds and at fetes and similar sports functions.

B21.3.2 Matches between Army, Navy and Royal Air Force teams and teams of the Auxiliary Forces in Competitions whilst in camp. Such Competitions shall be strictly confined to the units concerned and gate money shall not be taken.

B21.3.3 Matches involving members of scouts, guides and similar organisations in Competitions whilst in camp.

B21.3.4 Matches for national representative teams or clubs played under the auspices of FIFA or UEFA.

B21.3.5 Matches between Clubs in the Premier League, the EFL, FAWSL and FAWC for the following season. This sub-paragraph B21.3.5 shall also apply to any successor in title to any of the Competitions specified.

B21.3.6 11v11 matches in authorised Competitions that meet the criteria in accordance with the "Regulations for the Sanction and Control of Competitions" and are approved by The Association or authorising Affiliated Association.

B21.3.7 Single day, weekend and bank holiday competitions and festivals meeting the criteria and receiving authorisation.

B21.3.8 Pilot projects granted dispensation by The Association or authorising Affiliated Association.

B21.4 *Matches that may be played prior to the commencement of the Season*

Following conclusion of the Close Season, and prior to the commencement of the playing season, Matches may be played between teams of the same Club or between teams of different Clubs.