

**Cumberland Football Association**  
**U18 County Cup Competition Rules**  
**Season 2025-2026**

**Constitution**

1. The Competition will be played within the rules and regulations of the Cumberland Football Association and the Football Association and will be in accordance with the 'laws of the game' (as determined by the International Football Association Board).

**Entry**

2. Entry into the competition is optional for all affiliated Clubs/Teams. Clubs/Teams wishing to enter the competition must follow the criteria stipulated by the CFA. Teams withdrawing from the competition following the first-round draw will be fined £20. Clubs having more than one team may enter additional teams on notification to the County FA.
3. Participation in the Competition shall be open to all Teams who are eligible to take part in the relevant age group in the current season and whose Team is participating within a recognised youth League sanctioned by The Cumberland Football Association.
4. In line with regulations around Competition Structure outlined within The FA Standard Code of Rules for Youth Football, Teams must be registered within a specified Youth League to participate within this competition.
5. The Cumberland Football Association may reject the application of any Club/Team to participate in the Competition at its entire discretion. If a Club/Team is removed from the league in which it is playing or its league fixtures are suspended, once it has been accepted into the competition, The Cumberland FA has the power to remove the Club/Team from the Competition.

**Qualification of Players**

6. To play in this competition a player must have attained the age of 15 as at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> August of the relevant playing season.  
Clubs and or teams found to play ineligible players will be dismissed from the competition.
7. A player would be considered as registered for a Club/Team in this competition if they are currently registered with that specific Club/Team as a registered player.  
A player can only play for one team in this competition.  
A player signing for or playing for more than one club and/or team(s) will be banned from taking part in the competition and the offending club and or team will also be expelled from the competition.  
In the event of a postponed or replayed match, only those players shall be allowed to play who were registered to play at the time fixed for playing the original round or CFA approved game date, except by special permission of the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee.
8. Transferred players are permitted to play for their new Club/Team within this competition providing they have been approved by their relevant league's management committee and have not appeared on a team sheet as a starting player or used substitute for a previous club/team within this competition.

A player representing a Club/Team without the appropriate transfer will be banned from taking part in the competition and the offending team will also be expelled from the competition.

9. All registrations must comply with the regulations of the specific Club/Team's associated league rules.
10. In order to be eligible for the Semi-Final and Final, the players must have been correctly registered and eligible for the Quarter Final of the Competition, except by special permission of the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee.
11. In accordance with FA regulations, A Player registered with a Premier League or EFL Academy under the Elite Player Performance Plan contained within Youth Development Rules will not be permitted to play in this Competition. Trial players are not considered to be registered with a Premier League or EFL Academy for these purposes and therefore, the prohibition on playing in the Competition does not apply to them. Details of the Youth Development Rules are published on The FA website. A Player registered with an FA Emerging Talent Centre or an FA Professional Game Academy may play in this Competition subject to the FA Girls' Emerging Talent Centre Operating Criteria and Professional Game Academy Youth Development Rules.

### **Conditions of Play, Times of Kick off, Postponements, Substitutes**

12. Matches will be 11 v 11 with a minimum number of 7 players and the match ball used will be a size 5
13. Matches can be played on FA approved 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation artificial surfaces. The home Club/Team is responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements at least 3 days prior to the tie.
14. The dates for each round indicated with the draw for the competition are binding.

However:

- a) Clubs wishing to play their ties prior to the end date specified are eligible to do so if the proposed date is mutually agreeable with both clubs, the CFA appointed match official and the authorising authorities (league and CFA competition committees). Clubs wishing to play prior to the specified draw date must submit a written request to the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee at least 7 days prior to the specified draw date. The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee will then make a decision, which is final and binding.
- b) Any club wishing to play after the specified draw date must submit a written request to the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee (outlining the reason for the application) at least 7 days prior to the specified draw date. The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee will then make a decision, which is final and binding.
- c) In line with FA regulations priority must be given to schools' organisations activities or representative matches (where teams have three or more players, or a player in a specialist position e.g. goalkeeper, have been called on for schools' representative teams). Any club wishing to apply to postpone a game due to any such activities should make an application at least 7 days prior to the specified draw date. This should include details of what impact this has on the team against your squad size, a list naming player(s) effected and formal confirmation (e-mail or letter) of such activities/attendance from a designated teacher/school. The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee will then make a decision, which is final and binding.

Clubs/Teams not complying with these dates or a decision made by the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee will be dismissed from the competition.

15. The date and venue for the Final tie will be specified by the County FA.
16. Games will be played on either a Saturday or Sunday. Start times for games will be determined by the home team's designated League kick off time.

Clubs/Teams can agree mutual arrangements; however, these must be in compliance with Rule 14.

Any proposed changes to venue and/or designated kick off time must be mutually agreed by both Clubs/Teams. Both Clubs/Teams must notify the CFA of the requested change for their approval by 12pm on the Friday proceeding the stipulated match date. Any CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee decision is final and binding

Clubs/Teams not complying with these dates or a decision made by the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee will be dismissed from the competition.

17. Both secretaries are to contact each other to confirm colours and directions to the ground and all other fixture information. When colours clash the away Team will change unless alternative arrangements are mutually agreed by the competing Clubs/Teams. In the event of a colour clash in the final the first named Team is classed as the home Team.
18. The duration of the game will be 90 minutes (45 minutes each way), any reduction must be mutually agreed with the referee prior to kick off.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> Round stage through to the Quarter-Final stage, should the game be tied at full time, then kicks from the penalty mark will decide the winners.

In the Semi-Final and Finals, should the game be tied at full time, 20 minutes extra time will be played (10 minutes each way). If the game is still tied, then kicks from the penalty mark will decide the winners. Extra time can be dispensed with if this is agreed mutually between both teams and notified to the match official.

The half time interval shall not exceed 10 minutes and can only be altered with the consent of the match referee.

19. A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use 5 substitute players in any match in this Competition who may be selected from 5 players. A player who has been substituted becomes a substitute and may replace a Player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football. All substitutes must be named on the team sheet following the tie.
20. The home team must also provide at least 2 footballs that are 'fit for play'.
21. Clubs/Teams reported for late kick off may be fined, at the discretion of the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee, the sum of £15.
22. Any competition matches postponed on account of the ground conditions should comply with FA procedures. Should the ground be declared unfit it is the responsibility of the home Club/Team to immediately advise the visiting Club/Team, the Match Officials (if known), and the County FA. Contact the County FA Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm via 01900 511800 or e-mail [CountyCups@CumberlandFA.com](mailto:CountyCups@CumberlandFA.com).

Notification of postponements after 5pm or during the weekend should be made to the County FA Officer on 07786363035 followed up with an email to [CountyCups@CumberlandFA.com](mailto:CountyCups@CumberlandFA.com).

23. If, ahead of the fixture date the designated venue is considered unplayable then Clubs/Teams are encouraged to, wherever practically possible, make alternative arrangements. The options available are:

- a) the 'home' team to find an alternative venue and inform the CFA and the opposing secretary/team contact of the new arrangements
- b) Agree with The CFA and opposing secretary/team contact to travel to the opposing team's ground to fulfil the fixture
- c) The CFA finds an alternative venue and will inform both club secretaries of the new arrangements

Games cancelled due to ground conditions will be rescheduled for the following week at the home club's venue.

If, after the second week, the ground is still not playable and there is no alternative arrangement, as stipulated above, available then the tie will be transferred to the opposing Club/Team's ground to fulfil the fixture. If, following this action, the game is once again cancelled due to ground conditions then, based on no alternative arrangements being available, it will be re-scheduled for the following week once again at the opposing team's venue.

The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee shall have the power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponents' ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances. Any decision made is final and binding.

24. The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee shall review all matches abandoned and rule in line with FA regulations. Any clubs found to be in default of these rules may be subject to any action decided by the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee.

25. Differently numbered shirts must be worn.

## Reporting Results

26. Within 2 hours of completion of the game, the home club secretary or a designated contact is responsible for notifying the result to the County Office. This should be done by the automated SMS service.

Results which exceed single digits, for example 12-3, will be published by The CFA as a single digit score line, for example 9-3. If both teams score ten or more goals, for example 14-12, the result will be recorded as 9-8.

Where a text has not been received, or you have been instructed otherwise, Clubs/Teams should ensure that the result is confirmed by sending an e-mail to [countycups@CumberlandFA.com](mailto:countycups@CumberlandFA.com)

Failure to comply will result in the offending Club/Team being fined £5. Clubs should also communicate the result of the game to their relevant league secretary.

27. Within 72 hours of the conclusion of the game (Sunday accepted), each club secretary or designated contact is responsible for ensuring that the team sheet is fully completed on Fulltime or Match Day, including details of scorers, substitutions, referee's name, marks awarded, Respect marks, any

cautions or dismissals highlighted against the player concerned and any other information requested. Failure to complete this within the allotted time, will result in that club being fined £5.

## **Referees**

28. All County Cup games must be officiated by a registered and appointed referee. This referee must have been approved by the CFA Appointments Officer or a designated Appointments Officer.
29. In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee the competing clubs/teams can agree upon a substitute who is acceptable to both sides. A referee thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status, and authority of a registered referee.  
If clubs are unable to agree upon an acceptable substitute, then the match will be abandoned and refereed to the CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee for their deliberation. The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee's decision is final and binding.
30. The match officials' fees will be £35, (where appointed, assistant referees' fees will be £15). These fees will be shared equally between both Clubs/Teams with the club secretary or designated contact of the Club/Team drawn at home being responsible for payment to the match officials as quickly as possible following completion of the game, but no later than 30 minutes after this.
31. In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs/Teams have no control, the match officials, if present, shall be entitled to half their match fee.
32. A Referee not keeping their engagement must be reported to the CFA.

## **Protests**

33. Any protests must be received at the County Office within 72 hours of the completion of the game (Sundays accepted). These must be received in writing, signed and accompanied with a £25 appeal fee.
34. A Club/Team that is expelled from the Competition may appeal in writing within 7 (seven) days against that decision to an appeal board comprising of 3 (three) Members of CFA selected by the Chairman of CFA or their nominee.
35. Any such appeal shall only be permitted on one or more of the following grounds:
  - (i) The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee or appointed Sub Committee misinterpreted / failed to comply with the procedures relevant to dealing with the charge.
  - (ii) The CFA Sanctions & Competitions Committee or appointed Sub Committee came to a decision on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached; or imposed a sanction that is excessive.

Any appeal must be made in accordance with such procedures and appeal fee as may be determined by The Association from time to time.

For the avoidance of doubt, a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

## **Trophy**

36. The CFA shall present a trophy and medals to the winners and runners up (match day squad only) in the competition.

The trophy is the property of the Company and may never be won outright.

The Recipient Club/Team must sign an agreement with the CFA and shall be responsible for engraving their details on the trophy.

Any Club not returning the Competition trophy by the due date, returning them in poor condition or without being engraved may be fined.