

ESSEX COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
SENIOR CUP RULES 2025-26

DEFINITIONS

1. (A) In these Rules:

“Affiliated Association” means an Association accorded the status of an Affiliated Association under the rules of The FA.

“AGM” shall mean the Annual General Meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Essex County Football Association Limited.

“Club” means a club for the time being in membership of the Competition.

“Competition” means the Essex County Football Association Cup Competition.

“Competition Match” means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Competition.

“Contract Player” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

“Deposit” means a sum of money deposited with the Competition as part of the requirements of membership of the Competition.

“Fees Tariff” means a list of fees approved by Council to be levied by the Competition for any matters for which fees are payable under the Rules.

“Fines Tariff” means a list of fines approved by Council to be levied by the Competition for any breach of the Rules.

“Ground” means the ground on which the Club’s Team(s) plays its Competition Matches.

“Management Committee” means in the case of a Competition which is an unincorporated association, the management committee elected to manage the running of the Competition and where the Competition is incorporated it means the Board of Directors appointed in accordance with the articles of association of that company.

“Match Officials” means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Competition Match.

“Non-Contract Player” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

“Officer” means an individual who is appointed or elected to a position in a Club or Competition which requires that individual to make day to day decisions.

“Participant” shall have the same meaning as set out in the rules of The FA from time to time.

“Player” means any Contract Player, Non-Contract Player or other player who plays or who is eligible to play for a Club.

“Player Registration System” means The FA system to register players as determined by The FA from time to time.

“Playing Season” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the Competition is played each year until the date on which the last competitive fixture in the Competition is played.

“Rules” means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

“Sanctioning Authority” means the Essex County Football Association Limited.

“Scholarship” means a Scholarship as defined in The FA rules.

“Season” means the period of time between one AGM and the next AGM.

“Secretary” means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition.

“SGM” means a special general meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Competition.

“Team” means a team affiliated to a Club, including where a Club provides more than one team in the Competition in accordance with the Rules.

“Team Sheet” means a form provided by the Competition on which the names of the Players taking part in a Competition match are listed.

“The FA” means The Football Association Limited.

“Transmission-Free Period” means the period determined by The FA from time to time pursuant to Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes and the Regulations Governing the Implementation of Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes.

“Virtual Meetings” means meetings held electronically.

“written” or “in writing” means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise.

“Youth Football” means those participating at ages under 11s to under 18s.

- (B) Unless stated otherwise, terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and also the other way around.

GOVERNANCE RULES

COMPETITION NAME, CONSTITUTION

2. (A) The Competition will be known as “The Essex County Football Association Senior Challenge Cup,” but for all media, broadcast and publication purposes shall be referred to as “BBC Essex Senior Cup.” The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Competition. A Club which ceases to exist, or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall automatically cease to be a member of the Competition.
- (B) This Competition shall consist of teams of Clubs approved by the Essex County Football Association (the Association).

All Senior affiliated Clubs at Step 6 and above whose Sanctioning Authority is the ECFA shall enter the Essex Senior Cup. Any Club in the Premier League or Football League desiring to be exempt from competing in the Essex Senior Cup shall, in lieu of competing, contribute the sum of £1,000 to the funds of the Association. The claim for exemption, together with the sum of £1,000, shall be forwarded to the ECFA office by the first day of July, previous to the season in which the Club claims exemption.

- (C) It is expected matches will be played on grounds within the geographical County of Essex, as defined in Association Rule 1. Only in exceptional circumstances may permission be granted by the Council for matches to be played outside of this area.
- (D) The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Council in accordance with the rules, regulations and policies of The FA.
- (E) All Clubs shall adhere to the Rules. Every Club shall be deemed, as a member of the Competition to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Council in relation to them, subject to the provisions of Rule 7.
- (F) The Rules are taken from the Standard Code of Rules (the “Standard Code”) determined by The FA from time to time. In the event of any omissions from the Standard Code then the requirements of the Standard Code shall be deemed to apply to the Competition.
- (G) For all matches the normal ground of the home club, or any other ground used in the Competition, must as a minimum, conform to Category ‘H’ Grade of The FA National Ground Grading (appropriate to entry to Step 6 of The FA National League System).
- (H) Inclusivity and Non-discrimination
- (i) The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination and should abide and adhere to The FA Equality Policy and any legislative requirements (including those contained in the Equality Act 2010).
- (ii) This Competition and each Club must make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital

status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability or otherwise.

(iii) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate Sanctioning Authority for investigation.

(I) Clubs must comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA which are adopted by the Competition including, but not limited to, England Football Accredited and RESPECT programmes. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(J) All Participants shall abide by The Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children and Regulations for Safeguarding Adults at Risk as determined by The FA from time to time.

CLUB NAME

3. Any Club wishing to change its name must obtain permission from the Sanctioning Authority. In the event that permission is granted, the Club must advise the Competition Secretary. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

4. (A) Applications by Clubs for admission to this Competition must be made in writing to the Association and must be accompanied by an Entry Fee for each Team, as decided by the Directors and set out in the Fees Tariff, which shall be returned in the event of non-acceptance. Applications must be made on the form provided by the Association or by completing entry through the FA Club Portal.

(B) The entry fee shall be payable on or before the 31st July in each year.

MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

5. (A) The Officers of the Competition shall be determined by the Association Council (Council).

(B) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their Officers and sent to the Competition Secretary.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

6. (A) The Council may appoint sub-committees and delegate such of their powers as they deem necessary. The Council shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of The FA or Affiliated Association.

(B) The Council shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce these Rules and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competition. Any action by the Competition must be taken within 28 days of the Competition being notified.

With the exception of Rule 6(E), for all alleged breaches of a Rule a formal written charge shall be issued to the Club concerned. The Club charged shall be given 7 days from the date of notification of the charge to reply. In such reply a Club may:

(i) Accept the charge and/or submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Council; or

(ii) Accept the charge and notify the Competition Secretary that it wishes to put its case of mitigation at a hearing before the Council; or

- (iii) Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Council; or
- (iv) Deny the charge and notify the Competition Secretary that it wishes to have a hearing before the Council.

Where the Club charged fails to respond within 7 days, the Council shall determine the charge in such manner and upon such evidence as it considers appropriate.

Having considered the reply of the Club (whether in writing or at a hearing), the Council shall make its decision and, in the event that the charge is accepted or proven, decide on the appropriate penalty (with reference to the Fines Tariff where applicable).

Where required, hearings shall take place as soon as reasonably practicable following receipt of the reply of the Club as more fully set out above.

All fines levied shall be in accordance with the Fines Tariff. When setting any fine, the Competition must ensure that the penalty is proportional to the offence, taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

No Participant under the age of 18 can be fined.

- (C) All decisions of the Council shall be binding subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7.

Decisions of the Council must be notified in writing to those concerned within 7 days.

- (D) A Club must comply with an order or instruction of the Council and must attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition to the satisfaction of the Council. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (E) Subject to a Club's right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7 below, all fines and charges must be paid within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision. Any Club failing to do so will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Further failure to pay the fine including the additional fine within a further 14 days will result in the Club being placed under sine die suspension until such time as the outstanding fines are paid.
- (F) The Council shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the closing date and the commencement of the Competition.
- (G) The business of the Competition as determined by the Council may be transacted by electronic mail or facsimile.

PROTESTS, CLAIMS, COMPLAINTS, APPEALS

- 7. (A) (i) All questions of eligibility, qualification of Players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Council or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Council.
- (ii) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities will not be entertained by the Council unless a protest is lodged with the referee prior to the commencement of the Match.
- (B) Except in cases where the Council decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged with the Chief Executive within five days (excluding Sundays) of the Competition Match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Council. A member of the Council who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of their Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.

- (C) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Council unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Chief Executive of the Association a sum in accordance with the Fees Tariff. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the inquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties.
- (D) All parties to a protest or complaint must receive a copy of the submission and must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement at least 7 days before the protest or complaint being heard. All protests will be dealt with as correspondence, unless either party requests a Personal Hearing when forwarding the written response. If a Personal Hearing is requested, all parties must have received a minimum of seven days' notice of the hearing should they be instructed to attend.
- (E) The Council shall also have power to compel any party to the protest to pay such expenses as the Council shall direct.
- (F) An intention to appeal against a decision of the Council must be lodged with the Chief Executive of the Essex County Football Association, with a copy sent to the Competition Secretary, within 3 days of the written notification of the decision.

A notice of appeal against a decision of the Council must be lodged with the Chief Executive of the Essex County Football Association, with a copy sent to the Competition Secretary, within 7 days of the written notification of the decision, accompanied by a fee of £35, which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld, for adjudication of a Board of Appeal. The grounds of the Appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority.

The decision of the Board of Appeal is final and binding on all parties concerned.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 8. Not in use

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- 9. Not in use

AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED

- 10. Each Club shall confirm they shall conform to the Rules and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the Council, by completing the form provided for entry to the Competition or by completing entry through the Club Portal.

CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP, WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

- 11. (A) A Club shall not be allowed to withdraw any or all of its teams from the Competition after the draw has taken place. Any Club infringing this Rule shall be liable to a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (B) Should any Club, owing to its suspension, or the suspension of Club members, by The Football Association or any County Football Association, be unable to play any County Cup game, they will be expelled from the relevant Competition.

EXCLUSION OF CLUBS, TEAMS. MISCONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS

12. Not in use

TROPHY

13. (A) The Board of Directors of the Association shall be, for all intents and purposes, the legal owners of the cups and trophies, in trust for the Association and shall also have responsibility for the financial management of all Competitions.
- (B) When the winning Club has been ascertained the Senior Challenge Cup shall be handed to the representatives of that Club on the understanding that within three days of its receipt an Agreement (subscribed by three persons) shall be sent to the Association as follows:

“We [name], [name] and [name], being members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of an Essex County Football Association Cup/Trophy as specified and the said Cup/Trophy having been delivered to us by the said Association do hereby on behalf of the said Club individually and conjointly engage to return the same to the County Office, in good order, and condition, on or before the 1st day of December next, or at any other time when called upon to do so. If the cup or trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care, we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair.”

Failure to comply will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

Any Club failing to return the trophy in a clean state and ready for re-presentation by the due date shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

The Association is responsible for all engraving.

ALTERATION TO RULES

14. (A) Notice of proposed alterations to be considered by the Council shall be submitted to the Chief Executive by 1st March in each year. The proposals shall be circulated to the Council for a decision at the first Council Meeting following the closing date for implementation for the following season.
- (B) These Rules will be automatically updated by any mandatory changes to the Standard Code of Rules and Youth Standard Code of Rules.

FINANCE

15. (A) ROUNDS PRIOR TO FINAL

- (i) Admission

All persons shall pay for admission to the ground, enclosures and stands, unless they are players or officials of the Club who are playing in or carrying out duties in connection with the match, Essex County Football Association Officials and any invited guests.

- (ii) Gate Receipts

The two competing Clubs in all matches prior to the final match, shall agree mutually on the Admission Fee for each individual match in the Senior Cup. The Admission Fee shall not exceed that of the home club's usual Admission Fee.

In all Senior Cup matches, up to the semi-finals, the home club will retain all the revenue and be responsible for all the expenses, with the exception of the away club's travel expenses.

A copy of the statement of receipts and expenditure is to be sent to the Competitions Department, within fourteen days of the match. Clubs failing to comply shall be dealt with by the Council.

For the Semi-Final ties, a full statement of receipts and expenditure with a remittance settlement shall be sent to the Secretary of the visiting Club within fourteen days of the match.

(iii) Match Expenses for the Semi-Final Ties

The following expenses in connection with the match shall be paid from the gate receipts: The expenses of the visiting Club, together with the fees and travelling expenses of the Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official (when appointed), postage, police, gatemen and floodlights. The floodlights, however, shall not exceed a charge of seventy-five pounds (£75). In all rounds, the travelling expenses of the visiting Club, actually incurred, must not exceed three pounds (£3) per coach mile or, if private cars are used, then the expenses which can be claimed will be for a maximum of five cars at 40p per mile. The total mileage must be agreed between both Clubs prior to the match.

(iv) Match Expenses Not Admissible

The cost of preparing the ground or protecting the ground from inclement weather or the cost of removal of snow and ice shall be borne by the home Club and shall not be admissible as a deduction from the gate receipts of the match.

(v) Gate Receipts Insufficient to Meet Cost of Match

Where the gate receipts are insufficient to meet the cost of the expenses of the match, any deficit shall be equally shared by the two competing Clubs.

(vi) Sale of Tickets Prior to Match

The home Club may arrange for tickets of admission to be provided for sale prior to the day of the match. The expenses of the distribution and sale of the tickets shall not be admissible as an expense of the match under Rule 15 (A)(iii)

(viii) Postponed Match

Where a match is postponed for reasons for which neither Club is at fault, any expenses incurred under Rule 15 (A)(iii) shall be charged against the match receipts of the re-arranged match.

(ix) Matches Arranged by The Association

In all matches arranged by the Association under Rule 15(B) the whole proceeds shall be taken by the Association, who shall be responsible for the payment of the expenses of the match.

(x) Match Programmes

In ties prior to the Final of the Senior Cup the home Club must produce a match programme to be available to spectators. Any price must not exceed that for the Club's normal programme. The home Club, along with their completed team sheet, must return a copy of the programme to the County Football Association Office. Failure to comply with this rule shall incur a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(xi) First Aid

In all Senior Cup matches it is the responsibility of the home Club to ensure that first aid facilities, equipment and a stretcher are available for all ties and a fully qualified person is available to administer first aid. In addition, each Club shall have a recognised physiotherapist in attendance at all matches. Clubs in default shall be dealt with by the Council.

(B) FINAL

The Council shall make the arrangements for the final ties and take entire control of them.

- (i) All finals shall be played on such ground as the Council may determine, the Association taking the receipts and paying the expenses. The admission charges shall be determined annually. Any Club failing to play without showing a good and sufficient reason for such failure shall forfeit the tie, be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff and be reported to the Council for having been guilty of serious misconduct and liable to be dealt with under the Association Rule 11.
- (ii) The Association shall present mementoes to the Players and substitutes taking part in the final tie with a maximum of twenty (20) mementoes being provided for each team, with no additional mementoes possible. The Council may also present a memento to the Clubs participating in the final ties, with no additional mementoes possible. The Association may, at its discretion, withhold the memento to which a player is entitled where a player has been ordered from the field of play.

INSURANCE

16. (A) All Clubs must have valid public liability insurance cover for a minimum of ten million pounds (£10,000,000) at all times.
- (B) All Clubs must have valid personal accident cover for all Players registered with them from time to time. The Players' personal accident insurance cover must be in place prior to the Club taking part in any Competition Match and shall be at least equal to the minimum recommended cover determined from time to time by the Sanctioning Authority. In instances where The FA is the Sanctioning Authority, the minimum recommended cover will be the cover required by the Affiliated Association to which a Club affiliates.

Failure to comply with Rule 16(A) or 16(B) will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

DISSOLUTION

17. Not in use.

MATCH RELATED RULES

QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

18. (A) A player is one who, being in all other respects eligible, is a bona fide member of the Club and [i] in the case of a player under written contract, is registered with The Football Association, or [ii] in the case of a player without a written contract, is registered for the Club with a League in which the Club competes, in the current season.

For all matches, up to and including the Semi-Final tie, all registrations must have been received by the appropriate League as defined in Rule 22(F) and/or The Football Association by 12:00 noon on the day prior to the date of the match. In order to be eligible for the final tie, players must have been correctly registered and eligible to have been able to participate in the later Semi-Final played in the Competition.

The Football Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) must also have confirmed in writing to the Club submitting the application to register the player that the registration has been accepted in order for the player to be eligible to play in the match. The player must also still be registered with the Club which submitted the application as at the date of the match. The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) may confirm its acceptance of a registration after the Registration Deadline provided that such registration was received, along with all relevant documents, by the Registration Deadline. However, if The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) has not confirmed in writing its acceptance of a registration 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match, the player shall not be eligible to play in the match.

A player who is registered on a Scholarship for work experience may play for another Club, provided that the player is registered for that Club by the Registration Deadline for that match.

In the case of a postponed or replayed tie, a player who has been suspended may, if otherwise qualified, play in re-arranged matches after the terms of their suspension has expired.

In all cases, onus shall be on the Club to produce evidence of registration, if required and requested by the Council.

- (B) (i) Contract players are permitted to play in the Essex Senior Cup Competition. A contract player may only play for the Club that holds their contract.
- (ii) It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any Player registered to the Club has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate. Clearance is required for any Player aged 10 and over crossing borders including Wales, Scotland and Ireland.
- (iii) A Loan player is eligible to play in the Competition if permission to do so has been received in writing by the lending Club and can be provided if requested by the Competition Secretary.

(C) AGE RESTRICTIONS

Players must have attained the age of 16 by the date of the match.

(D) Not in use

- (E) A player recalled, at any time prior to the date of the Round, to their original Club from temporary (loan) transfer, in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement, may represent their original Club.

- (F) It shall be a breach of Rule for a player to play for more than one team in any Competition in the same season.

(G)-(I) Not in use

- (J) A Club shall keep a list of the Players it registers and a record of all matches in which those Players have played for the Club and shall produce such records upon demand by the Council.

(K)-(L) Not in use

- (M) Any team playing an ineligible player may be fined and the team shall be removed from the Competition.

If, upon a protest raised from a Club or otherwise, the Council has doubt as to the qualification of a player taking part in the Competition, it shall have the power to call upon such player and/or Club of which they are a member, or for which they played, to prove that they are qualified according to Rule 18. Failing satisfactory proof, the Council may disqualify the player and fine the Club and shall remove the Club from the Competition.

- (N) The following clause applies to Competitions involving Players in full-time secondary education: -
 - (i) Priority must be given at all times to activities of schools and school organisations. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
 - (ii) The availability of children and young people must be cleared with the Head Teachers or Principals (except for Sunday leagues competitions).
 - (iii) To play open age football the player must have achieved the age of 16.

(O) Not in use

CLUB COLOURS

19. (A) Where the colours of the competing Clubs are similar, the away Club shall change, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

In the final tie, if the colours of the two competing teams are similar, both Clubs shall change. In the event of the Clubs not agreeing upon the colours to be worn by their respective teams, the Council shall decide.

Advertising may be worn on players' shirts where previously sanctioned by the Association.

- (B) Shirts must all be numbered and no two shirts shall have the same number. Numbers must be easily readable and recognisable. Teams failing to comply with this rule shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

PLAYING SEASON. CONDITIONS OF PLAY, TIMES OF KICK-OFF. POSTPONEMENTS. SUBSTITUTES

20. (A) All Competition Matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

PITCHES

All Competition Matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the Council. A Club shall not be able to select a ground other than that which it is accustomed to play, without the consent of the Competition Secretary. Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their Grounds in a playable condition. If through any fault of the home Team a match has to be replayed, the Council shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

The Council shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for Competition Matches and to order the Club concerned to play its Competition Match(es) on another ground.

Artificial Football Turf Pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches - <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>. All Football Turf Pitches used must be tested (by a FIFA accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The FA will give a decision on the suitability for use and add the pitch to the Register. The home Club is also responsible for advising Participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 20(C).

If a Club has any concerns over the fitness of the ground, they may appeal to the Council within three days of the receipt of the official intimation of the draw. Should the appeal be upheld, the Council shall order the match to be played on the ground of the appealing Club, if suitable, otherwise on a neutral ground. If the appeal be not sustained the complaining Club may be called upon to pay the expenses incurred in deciding to appeal. Each Club must take precaution to keep its ground in playable condition. If the Competition Secretary is satisfied the ground of a Club drawn at home will not be fit for play, they may order the tie to be played on the ground of the opposing Club, or any other ground that is transfer. The home Club will, in these circumstances, meet any cost in connection with the use of a neutral pitch. All Clubs in Adult Competitions are required to provide adequate changing facilities. All Clubs in Youth Competitions are required to provide adequate changing facilities where possible.

Where a match is played on the ground of the second drawn team, they will be deemed to be the Home Club and shall be responsible for meeting the ground costs.

MATCH DURATION

The duration of each match shall be ninety (90) minutes, two equal periods of forty-five (45) minutes. If at the expiration of this period, the scores are equal, the result of the match shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.

Extra-time is not played in any round of the Senior Cup.

KICK-OFF TIMES

Kick off times shall be 3:00pm for Saturday matches or 7:45pm for midweek matches, unless mutually agreed otherwise.

APPURTENANCES

In accordance with the Laws of the Game, the responsibility for ensuring that the appurtenances are fitted shall be that of the Club on whose ground the game is played. A fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff shall be imposed if the appurtenances are not provided, or if they are not fitted to the satisfaction of the Referee. Goal nets must be provided. The absence of the appurtenances shall not prevent the match being played.

The home Club shall supply to the Referee, in their dressing room, for approval prior to kick-off, at least three match balls conforming to the Laws of the Game.

Teams failing to comply with this rule shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (B) The Council shall determine the dates for the completion of the ties. The dates for the playing of ties up to and including the semi-finals will be mutually agreed between the two competing Clubs and are to be arranged by the date determined by the Council. The Essex County FA must have at least seven days' notice of the arranged date. The mutually agreed dates will be confirmed to the Competitions Department as soon as they have been arranged and then confirmed IN WRITING by both Clubs within three days of receiving the draw. If Clubs are unable to mutually agree on a date for the playing of the tie, the Competitions Department must be informed at once, when they will set a date for the tie to be played.

No match will be postponed without the prior authority of the Competition Secretary, as stated on the draw sheet. The Competition Secretary will have the authority to order a change of match date, ground, kick-off time or team colours for any fixture. In the case of a revised fixture date, the Clubs must be given by the Competition 5 clear days' notice of the match (unless otherwise mutually agreed).

The Competition Secretary shall, at least seven days before the dates prescribed for the ties to be played, where possible, send to all Clubs concerned details of the draw together with a result sheet.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (C) An Officer of the home Club must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the Ground, match date, time of kick-off and kit colours (including goalkeeper) to the Match Officials and an Officer of the opposing Club and ECFA Council Member, where appointed, at least five clear days prior to the date of the match. The opposition Club must confirm receipt and give notice of its kit colours (including goalkeeper) at least five days prior to the playing of the Competition match. The home Club shall also confirm admission charges for the match. If either is not provided, the relevant Club and/or Match Officials shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the Competition.

The away Club shall, when confirming the match, send, not later than five days before the scheduled date of the tie, a list of probable players who will represent the Club in team list order for inclusion in the matchday programme.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (D) Providing that both teams have a minimum of seven players ready to play, one of whom is the goalkeeper, the Referee shall order the match to commence at the appointed time or as soon as possible thereafter.

In the event of a Club starting the match with less than eleven players, they shall be liable for a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (E) (i) The competition shall be decided on an elimination basis. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Council shall have power to impose a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. The Council shall decide whether the defaulting team(s) shall be expelled from the Competition and to what extent the claims for expenses by a non-defaulting team shall be met by their opponents.
- (ii) Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a fixture has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the Competition's Department, the Secretary of the opposing Club, the Match Officials and the ECFA Council Member, where appointed. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (iii) In the event of a Competition Match not being played or being abandoned (i.e. where full ordinary time has not been played or the prescribed period of extra time has not been started or completed, or a prescribed penalty Competition has not been played) both Clubs and the Referee concerned shall send a report of the circumstances to the Competition Secretary within 24 hours. Any claims for expenses arising from the match must reach the Competition Secretary not more than seventy-two (72) hours after the time fixed for the match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

If the reports disclose that the engagement was not fulfilled or was abandoned due to circumstances over which neither competing team has control, the competing teams must make arrangements for the match to be played not later than seven days after the date fixed for the match, unless otherwise ordered by the Council or Sub-Committee. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition, the Council shall also be empowered to order the score at the time of an abandonment to stand. If a match is postponed or abandoned in ordinary time, the choice of ground shall be that of the home Club. If a match is abandoned when extra time has not been started or has not been completed, the choice of ground shall transfer to the away Club.

- (iv) The Council shall review all Competition matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Council shall order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Council are satisfied that a Competition Match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one Team or its Club member(s) they shall award the match to the opponent. In cases where a Competition Match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both Teams or their Club member(s), the Council shall remove both teams from the Competition. No fine(s) can be applied by the Council for an abandoned match.
- (v) The Council shall review any Match that has taken place where either or both Teams were under a suspension imposed upon them by The FA or Affiliated Association. In each case the Team that was under suspension would be dealt with in the same manner as if they had participated with ineligible players in accordance with Rule 18(M) above. Where both Teams were under suspension the game must be declared null and void and shall not be replayed.
- (vi) If, upon a protest raised from a Club, or otherwise, the Competition Secretary is made aware that a match has not been played in accordance with the Rules of the Competition or the Laws of the Game, the Council may order the match to be replayed.

The Competition Secretary shall have the power to order the replayed Competition match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent Club's ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.

- (F) In the Senior Cup, a Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use substitute Players in any Competition Match. A Club may name up to 5 substitute Players of whom 5 may be used. A player substituted shall take no further part in the match.

The referee and a representative of the opposing Club shall be informed of the names of the Players taking part in the Match (including the substitutes) in accordance with Rule 20(J) below and a Player not so named may not take part in that Competition Match.

A Player who has been named as a substitute before the start of the Competition Match but does not actually play in that game shall not be considered to have been a Player in that Competition Match within the meaning of Rule 18 of this Competition.

- (G) The half time interval shall be of 10 minutes' duration, but it shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.
- (H) The Teams taking part in a Competition Match shall identify a Team captain who may wear an armband and shall have a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of their teammates. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (J) All competing teams will be supplied with team sheets, which shall be submitted to the Referee and to a representative of the opposing Club in the presence of the Referee in their dressing room not later than 45 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time. The Players names shall correspond with the numbers worn by the Players. The Referee shall report any Club that fails to comply with this section of the Rule, and any defaulting Club shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Any Club that alters the composition of its team or changes the numbers of players after the team sheets have been handed over shall incur a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the team sheet to the Referee and before kick-off, he may be replaced providing the Referee and opposing team are informed.
- (K) In all Competition Matches, the number of Clubs Players and officials seated on the team benches, in the designated technical area, must not exceed 11 unless the team bench facility provides more than 11 individual seats.

Only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the Players during the match from within the technical area. All team officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the official Team Sheet when it is submitted to the Match Officials.

If there is no dug-out but there is a technical area only two persons are allowed to stand in that area at any one time and only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the players.

All persons in the dugout/technical area must meet the age of that required to play in the match.

If there is no dug-out or technical area then all persons must stay behind the barrier, if one exists, throughout the match.

Only those persons listed on the official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the dugout/technical area. The occupants of the dugout/technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times.

Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to The FA, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit. Any occupant dismissed from the dugout/technical area shall immediately go to a location within the ground from which they cannot view the remainder of the game.

With the exception of the team manager, the team coach and any substitutes who are warming up or warming down, all other personnel are to remain seated on the trainer's bench. The team manager or team coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to their team.

Referees are asked to report any breach of the above to the Competition Secretary.

- (L) Match Streaming by a Club
 - (a) Unless determined otherwise by the Association, a Club participating in a Competition match may offer a live stream of that match online subject to compliance with the following conditions:
 - (i) consent of the Competition Secretary of the live stream taking place must be obtained,
 - (ii) the two competing Clubs must consent to the live stream taking place and agree any associated live streaming arrangements (including the costs &/or profits associated with those arrangements, if applicable),
 - (iii) subject to Rule 20(L)(iv), the live stream cannot take place during the Transmission-Free Period,
 - (iv) where the live stream is to take place during the Transmission-Free Period, it must be geoblocked so that it is not accessible in the UK (or any Crown Dependency of the UK),
 - (v) a copy of the live stream footage must be provided to the Association or the opposing Club upon request following the Competition Match.
 - (b) A Club must provide evidence of the compliance with the conditions set out in 20(L)(a) upon request of the Competition Secretary.
 - (c) Failure to comply will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

REPORTING RESULTS

21. (A) The Competition Secretary must receive within three days of the date played, the result of each Competition Match in the prescribed manner. This must include the forenames and surname of the Team Players and marking of the Referee required by Rule 23, and any other information requested by the Competition Secretary. Clubs failing to comply shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. If the tie is not played, a report giving the circumstances must be submitted by both Clubs to the Competition Secretary.

The prescribed manner is by using the F.A Full-Time System unless directed otherwise by the Competition secretary. Other information required by the Competition is the names of the goal scorers plus any other information required by the competition. Both Clubs shall list all players who started the match, and all substitutes who were nominated to the referee prior to the match. All substitutes should be indicated as used or unused.

- (B) The home Club shall notify the result of each Competition Match to the Competition Secretary immediately after the end of the match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (C) The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by an Officer of the Club, or as prescribed by the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

COMPETITION SPECIFIC INFORMATION

22. (A) The Competition shall be the Essex Senior Cup.
- (B) The Competition will be competed for annually.
 - (C) The Council shall have power to decide whether the entrants shall be seeded and/or grouped and the stage at which such seeding and groupings shall cease to apply. The Council shall make draws for each Competition by drawing the names of the entrants in pairs, each pair being termed a "tie". In each tie the Club first drawn is referred to in these rules as the

“home” Club, and shall have the choice of ground, unless mutually agreed by the Competition Secretary, and the second drawn Club as the “away” Club. The Club winning the tie shall proceed to the next stage.

- (D) The Council may decline entry of any Club if it deems such a course desirable or transfer such entry to an appropriate Competition.
- (E) A club shall only be able to enter one team into the competition. A Reserve team playing within the National League System shall not be eligible to enter.
- (F) Eligible teams are senior Clubs affiliated to the Association who participate at Step 6 of the National League System or above.

MATCH OFFICIALS

23. (A) Registered referees and assistant referees for all Competition Matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Council. All appointed Officials must be in attendance at the match venue at least one hour before the scheduled time of kick-off.

Assistant Referees shall be appointed to all Senior Cup Matches.

All appointed Match Officials are required to wear the Association badge.

Officials appointed must be neither past nor present members nor officers of the competing Clubs and should an official receive such an appointment they must immediately notify the facts to the Referee Appointments Officer.

- (B) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee the appointed senior assistant referee shall take charge and a substitute assistant referee appointed by the competing Teams. In cases where there are no officially appointed Match Officials in attendance, the Clubs shall agree upon a referee. An individual thus agreed upon shall, for that Competition Match, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered referee. Individuals under the age of 16 must not participate either as a referee or assistant referee.

Clubs who default on this requirement shall be fined a sum in accordance with the Fines Tariff and may be removed from the Competition.

- (C) Where assistant referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club assistant referee. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

In the event of the non-appearance, or injury to, an appointed Assistant Referee, a substitute Assistant Referee shall be agreed by the competing teams. Clubs who default on this requirement shall be fined a sum in accordance with the Fines Tariff and may be removed from the Competition.

- (D) (i) The appointed referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the Ground and that decision shall be final, which must be accepted.
- (ii) No Club may postpone the playing of a cup game because of alleged unfitness of its ground. The Referee appointed for the game shall be the only arbiter on the fitness of the ground, which they will inspect before coming to a decision, unless the weather conditions and ground condition are such as to make extremely unlikely that a game could be played. In such emergency the home Club, with the permission of the Referee appointed for the game, or the Competitions Department, must arrange for an early inspection of the ground by a local Referee of a level equivalent to or higher than the appointed Referee or, by permission of the Competitions Department, one of the appointed Assistant Referees. They will give their opinion as to the fitness of the ground

to the Match Referee and the Competitions Department, if the ground is then declared unfit by the Match Referee or Competitions Department for that game, the home Club must notify its opponents, Match Officials, Essex County FA Representative and Competitions Department forthwith, to avoid all unnecessary travel expenses. If the Match Referee or Competitions Department does not declare the ground unfit after considering the early inspection report, a final decision shall be made by the Match Referee on their arrival at the ground. Any Clubs failing to comply shall be liable to a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Where a match is postponed, in accordance with this rule, it shall be played on the same ground by the Saturday of the week following that date arranged for the original match. Any Referee making an early inspection shall be able to claim allowable travelling expenses at the stipulated rate for the competition.

- (E) Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be entitled to the match fees and expenses in accordance with the Fees Tariff. In all final ties of the Competition, the Match Officials, including reserve Officials if appointed, shall be presented with mementoes in lieu of a match fee but may claim travelling expenses, in accordance with the Fees Tariff, if they so desire.

Match Officials will be paid their fees and/or expenses by the home Club immediately after the Competition Match, in the Referees' dressing room. Where there are no gate receipts, the away Club must pay the home Club fifty per cent (50%) of the payments made to the Match Officials only. Payments must be made by the away Club on the day of the match. In matches where there are gate receipts, the home Club should pay the Officials their fees, and then deduct from the gate receipts. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (F) In the event of a Competition Match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to half fee plus expenses. Where a Competition Match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Match Officials, if they attend the Ground, their full fee and expenses. If neither team is present at the ground the Match Officials may submit their claims to the Competition Secretary. The Council may order the defaulting team to reimburse the expenditure, or part of the expenditure, incurred. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (G) A referee not keeping their engagement and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be dealt with by Council.
- (H) Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The FA, award marks to the referee for each Competition Match and the name of the referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed form provided. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined (in accordance with the Fines Tariff) or dealt with as the Council shall determine.
- (I) Not in use.
- (J) The team sheet, supplied by both teams, should be retained by the Match Official for at least one month in case of query or protest. Upon request by the Competition Secretary the Match Official must supply a copy of the team sheet either in hard copy or by email.
- (K) The Referee Appointments Officer shall notify the Officials of their appointments, and the Officials must acknowledge receipt within five days of receipt of the appointment notification.

SENIOR CUP FEES TARIFF

RULE	DESCRIPTION	FEE
4 (A)	Entry Fee	£ 80
7 (C)	Protest Fee	£ 35
23 (E)	Referee Fee: All rounds up to and including Round Two (inclusive of expenses) Round Three up to and including Quarter-Final (inclusive of expenses) Semi-Finals (inclusive of expenses) Final	£ 75 £ 85 £ 95 Souvenir + travel
	Referee travelling expenses rate (where indicated above)	40p /mile
23 (E)	Assistant Referee Fee: All rounds up to and including Round Two (inclusive of expenses) Round Three up to and including Quarter-Final (inclusive of expenses) Semi-Finals (inclusive of expenses) Final	£ 55 £ 60 £ 65 Souvenir + travel
	Assistant Referee travelling expenses rate (where applicable)	40p /mile

SENIOR CUP FINES TARIFF

RULE	DESCRIPTION	MAX. FINE
2 (I)	Failure to comply with FA initiatives	£ 100
3	Failure to obtain consent for change of Club name	£ 100
5 (B)	Communications conducted by persons other than nominated officers	£ 50
6 (D)	Failure to comply with an instruction of the Council	£ 250
6 (E)	Failure to pay a fine within the required timeframe	£ 20
11 (A)	Withdrawal of team from Competition	£ 1000
13 (B)	Failure to submit the required trophy agreement	£ 50
13 (B)	Failure to return trophy in a clean state by the due date	£ 50
15 (A)(x)	Failing to produce/return programme	£ 50
15 (B)(i)	Failing to play a Final	£ 1000
16 (A)	Failure to have the required public liability insurance	£ 250
16 (B)	Failure to have the required personal accident insurance	£ 250
18 (M)	Playing an ineligible player	£ 500
18 (N)(i)	Failure to give priority to school activities	£ 0
19 (B)	Failure to wear uniquely numbered shirts	£ 10
20 (A)	Late kick-off	£ 50
20 (A)	Failing to provide goal nets, corner flags, suitable footballs	£ 10
20 (B)	Failure to play matches on the date fixed	£ 100
20 (C)	Failure to provide details of a fixture	£ 20
20 (D)	Playing match with less than eleven players	£ 20 /player
20 (E)(i)	Failure to keep engagement	£ 1000
20 (E)(ii)	Failure to notify postponement	£ 20
20 (E)(iii)	Failure to notify of abandoned match	£ 50
20 (H)	Failing to identify a team captain	£ 50
20 (J)	Failure to submit completed team sheet	£ 50
20 (L)	Failure to comply with Match Streaming requirements	£ 500
21 (A)	Late result sheet	£ 50
21 (B)	Failure to provide result	£ 20
21 (C)	Incorrect result sheet	£ 50
23 (B)	Failure to agree on a referee	£ 30
23 (C)	Failure to provide club assistant referee	£ 10
23 (C)	Failure to agree a substitute assistant referee	£ 30
23 (D)(ii)	Failure to comply with postponement procedure	£ 50
23 (E)	Failure to pay match officials' fees and expenses	£ 250
23 (F)	Failure to pay match officials where a match is not played	£ 250

23 (H)	Failure to provide referee's mark	£ 100
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