

Information Regarding County Cup Competitions for the 2021-22 Season

Key Changes to County Cup Administration

As you are probably aware, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting financial impact upon the Football Association, there has been a reduction in funding support to County Football Associations. Hertfordshire Football Association has been affected by this which has resulted in a reduction of staff directly employed, including the Football Services Administrator whose role covered County Cups.

However, it has always been our intention to reintroduce County Cup competitions for next season and in consultation with the Association's Board of Directors it was agreed that the administration of the 2021-22 County Cup Competitions would be handled by the volunteer members of the Competitions Committee. These will work alongside our office staff on a reduced format, with the intention that for the 2022-23 season a return to a full programme of competitions would result.

The COVID-19 pandemic played havoc with the grass roots football over the last two seasons and with the abandonment of County Cup competitions for season 2020-21, it was thought that a gradual return to competitions would be appropriate.

Changes to County Cup Competitions for Season 2021-22

For the 2021-22 season only, we are offering a reduced programme of competitions due to the extra workload on volunteers and finding our way out of the pandemic. Therefore, there will be no Charity Cup and Charity Shield competitions and the Veterans Cup will not be staged. Charity competitions for many years have commenced in pre-season and with a later start we felt clubs wouldn't want to compete in these as well.

For Saturday and Sunday Adult Competitions, the Senior and Junior Cups will be the only Adult male competitions - there will not be a Saturday or Sunday Intermediate Cup competition. Entry into these Cups will be determined on the club's placings in their League constitutions. The Women's Cup will continue to be staged as before.

Youth Cup competitions will be organised for the Under 14 age groups and above for both boys and girls at the 11 v 11 format. The current Under 12 and Under 13 age groups have had no County Cup involvement to date and they traditionally have the largest entrant numbers, so for next season only these competitions will not operate as it was felt they could place an extra strain on the volunteer team.

Key changes to Entry to County Cup Competitions

For the 2021-22 season only, entry to County Cup competitions will be free of charge to all clubs and teams, entry will be optional and fines will not be imposed if a club decides not to enter. Teams will also be able to withdraw without penalty in respect to Sunday Adult Competitions if they feel that they have been allocated a place in a Cup competition they were not expecting to be in.

Free Cup entry is in addition to Hertfordshire FA offering free affiliation for clubs and teams, along with discounted Public Liability Insurance premiums.

Affiliation will be open from 1st June 2021 and will close on 31st July 2021. Any entry applications for County Cups received after this closing date will not be accepted under any circumstances, as it is felt that a two month notice period should be enough time to decide if a team wishes to enter or not.

Proposed rule changes have been made and have been accepted by the Hertfordshire FA Council.

There is a new rule regarding postponements due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (something that we hope will not need to be implemented) but if a match is called off due to teams requiring a member(s) to self-isolate, the match will be forfeited and not replayed. This will help with the expediency of the competition.

Every County Cup competition will have its own set of Rules and these will be published on the website along with Guidance Notes for Clubs, Leagues and Referees.

Key Changes to Youth County Cup Competitions

For the 2021-22 season only, entry to the Youth County Cup competitions will be free of charge to all clubs and teams, entry will be optional and no fines will be imposed if a club decides not to enter. Free Cup entry is in addition to Hertfordshire FA offering free affiliation for clubs and teams, along with discounted Public Liability Insurance premiums.

The following changes are set out below:

- Only 11 v 11 competitions will be organised
- Youth teams will be limited to a maximum of three (3) teams at any one age group and gender (for example a club can still have 3 teams in the Under 14 Boys and 3 teams in the Under 14 Girls competitions)
- Only matches affected by weather will be re-arranged, any other issue for not fulfilling the fixture may mean the team shall forfeit the match
- If the scores in a match are level at the end of full time then the game will be decided by penalty kicks. No extra time will be played

Competitions Committee Members

The members of the Competitions Committee are:

- Tony Butler (Chairman)
- Paddy Donovan (Secretary)
- Keith Hicks (Assistant Secretary)
- John Burlison
- Steve Trulock
- Jamie Cooper (Youth Competitions Secretary)
- Chris Spriggins
- Bob Spooner (Referees Committee).

Paddy Donovan will head up the Saturday Adult Competitions, Keith Hicks will head up the Sunday Adult Competitions and Jamie Cooper will head up the Youth Competitions.

There will be a dedicated Hertfordshire FA email address for competitions which will be monitored daily by Jamie Cooper and all questions will be re-directed to the relevant individual for reply. It is also hoped that an updated telephone system currently being introduced at the Hertfordshire FA headquarters will assist in directing any queries and ensuring any questions can be answered as quickly as possible. Contact numbers and email addresses will be made available in due course.

These are only a synopsis of the changes to the 2021-22 County Cup Competitions which are envisaged to be a gradual re-introduction of County Cup football in Hertfordshire with a view to a full return for the 2022-23 season.

Tony Butler
Chairman - Competitions Committee

May 2021