

# Lancashire Football Association Challenge Trophy Rules 2025/2026

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## **1. Name of the Competition**

1.1 The competition shall be known as the Lancashire Football Association Challenge Trophy.

## **2. Cup Ownership**

2.1 The Cup remains the property of the Lancashire Football Association.

2.2 The Cup cannot be won outright.

2.3 The competition shall be held annually unless otherwise directed.

2.5 A replica will be presented to the winning club for keepsake.

## **3. Medals**

3.1 20 medals will be awarded.

3.2 Match officials will also receive medals.

3.3 Medals may be withheld for misconduct at the discretion of the County Cup Forum.

## **4. Control of the Competition**

4.1 The County Cup Forum controls all rights and rules of the Competition.

4.2 All decisions are final and binding, including eligibility and conduct.

4.3 The County Cup Forum may amend, delete, or add Competition Rules as needed.

4.5 Clubs have rights only as granted under these Rules or in writing by the Association.

4.6 The Association retains access rights to all matches.

## **5. Eligible Clubs**

- 5.1 Open to 32 clubs affiliated to the Association as of 1 July each year.
- 5.2 Eligibility and approval are subject to the County Cup Forums discretion.
- 5.3 Participation is non-transferable without prior written approval.
- 5.4 Clubs removed from their league after acceptance may be removed.
- 5.5 Clubs from specified leagues (**National League, NPL, NWCL**) may enter if approved.

## **6. Entry Date and Fees**

- 6.1 Entry must be completed by 1 August each year.
- 6.2 Teams must be affiliated by the 7<sup>th</sup> August
- 6.3 Entry fees must be paid within 14 days of the invoice.

## **7. Organisation of the Competition**

- 7.1 The Competition is knock-out based.

## **8. Draws**

- 8.1 Clubs are drawn into individual ties.
- 8.2 Preliminary rounds will reduce teams to 16; exemptions may apply.
- 8.3 Tie details and deadlines will be communicated by the Association.
- 8.4 The first-drawn team will host unless otherwise agreed and approved.
- 8.5 All finals must be played by 31st May in each year

## **9. Venue for Matches**

- 9.1 Home clubs must have an enclosed ground or play away.
- 9.2 No incentives may be exchanged to alter venues.

- 9.3 Neutral venues require County Cup County Cup Forum approval.
- 9.4 The County Cup Forum may order alternative venues/dates.
- 9.5 Clubs must regularly use a ground where admission is charged.
- 9.6 Separate changing and washing facilities must be provided.
- 9.7 Separate toilets must be provided for players and officials.
- 9.8 Unsuitable ground appeals must be lodged within 3 days, with £25 fee.
- 9.9 Appeal expenses are at the County Cup Forum's discretion.
- 9.10 Clubs must maintain pitch condition.
- 9.11 Pitch fitness must be assessed by a qualified referee 2 hours pre-match (fine: £40).
- 9.12 Early pitch inspections are encouraged.
- 9.13 Replay expenses fall on the defaulting club.
- 9.14 Admission fees may be charged: Final pricing set by The County Cup Forum.
- 9.15 Goal nets and corner flags are mandatory (non-compliance may be fined).
- 9.16 Clubs refusing to play will forfeit and be fined £50.
- 9.17 Home clubs must notify opponents of match details within 7 days (fine: £10).

## **10. Club Colours**

- 10.1 Away team must change if colours clash.
- 10.2 Black & predominantly black kits are not permitted – a copy of the kit must be submitted to the County FA before the competition commences.
- 10.3 County Cup Forum decides in case of disagreement.
- 10.4 Goalkeepers must wear distinct colours.
- 10.5 No duplicate shirt numbers permitted.
- 10.6 Shirts must match the official team sheet.
- 10.7 Shirt number changes are limited to goalkeepers or blood injuries.
- 10.8 Captains must wear armbands.

10.9 Shirt advertising must comply with FA rules.

## **11. Duration of Matches**

11.1 Matches are 90 minutes (2 × 45).

11.2 Half-time is a maximum of 15 minutes.

11.3 No extra time will be played.

11.4 Late kick-offs must be reported within 48 hours.

## **12. Playing of Matches**

12.1 No friendly may replace a Cup tie.

12.2 Drawn ties go straight to penalties.

12.3 Postponed matches are replayed at the original venue unless agreed otherwise.

12.4 Abandoned matches not due to misconduct will be replayed.

12.5 Misconduct-related abandonments will be reviewed.

12.6 Failure to fulfil a fixture result in a £50 fine.

12.7 Uncompleted ties after 14 days will be reassigned by the Association.

## **13. Reporting Results**

13.1 Results must be emailed to [Andrea.Gratton@LancashireFA.com](mailto:Andrea.Gratton@LancashireFA.com) or submitted to FA Full-Time within 12 hours (fine: £20).

13.2 Team sheets and scorers must be submitted within 2 working days of the fixture (fine: £15).

## **14. Semi-Finals**

14.1 Scheduled as directed by the County Cup Forum.

14.2 Team lists and colours must be submitted 7 days prior (fine: £15).

## **15. Final**

- 15.1 Final venue approved by Lancashire FA
- 15.2 If postponed, it will be replayed as directed.
- 15.3 Team lists and colours are due 7 days prior.

## **16. Withdrawal**

- 16.1 Teams that withdraw before the first-round draw will not be subject to a fine. No fine will be imposed on teams that fold during the season.
- 16.2 Withdrawal after the first-round draw will incur a £50 fine.
- 16.3 Offending clubs may face further penalties.
- 16.6 Semi-Final or Final no-shows may be deemed serious misconduct.

## **17. Players**

- 17.1 Eligibility issues referred to the Forum.
- 17.2 Players must be registered under Association rules.
- 17.3 Clubs must field their best available team.
- 17.5 Players may only represent one club per season in the Challenge Trophy.
- 17.6 Players must be registered before the round they participate in.
- 17.7 County Cup Forum may request proof of eligibility.
- 17.8 Trialists and loan players are allowed.
- 17.9 Full team details, including substitutes, must be submitted within 2 days.
- 17.10 Up to 5 substitutes may be used from 7 nominated.
- 17.11 Ineligible players result in £100 fine and disqualification.
- 17.12 Players registered in time for revised ties become eligible.

## **18. Disqualification**

- 18.1 The County Cup Forum may disqualify clubs for rule breaches.

## **19. Match Officials**

19.1 Officials appointed by the Association.

19.2 Fourth Officials are appointed for Semi-Finals and Finals.

19.3 Replacement officials must be mutually agreed and qualified.

19.4 Replacement officials have equal authority.

19.5 Match officials are paid by the home club.

19.6 Fees:

**Referee £80; Assistant Referees £55; Fourth Official £35; Travel £0.40/mile.**

19.7 If a match is cancelled, officials receive half fees and full travel costs.

19.8 Officials must confirm appointments.

19.9 Home club must confirm match arrangements at least 5 days prior.

19.10 Officials' duties follow the Laws of the Game.

19.11 Match officials' kit guidelines are specified (e.g., black preferred, coordinated shirts).

19.12 When the referee initiates "Captain Only", only one player from each team – usually the captain – is allowed to approach the referee and, when doing so, they must always interact respectfully.

## **20. Protests**

20.1 Protests on rule interpretation go to the County Cup Forum; their decisions are final.

20.2 Protests must be submitted within 7 days with a £25 fee.

20.3 No appeals allowed against referee decisions.

20.4 County Cup Forum may order costs or dismissals.

20.5 Protests on facilities must be made to the referee before kick-off.

20.6 Player eligibility protests must name players and include evidence.

20.7 Objections must be lodged with both the referee and the Association.

20.8 Legal representation is limited and must be pre-approved.

20.9 Mutual rule breaches may result in disqualification.

## **21. Appeals**

21.1 Clubs may appeal expulsions only.

21.2 Appeals must be made in writing within 4 days with a £25 fee.

21.3 All evidence must be submitted with the appeal.

21.4 A hearing will be held within 5 days (timings flexible based on schedule).

21.5 The hearing decision is final.

## **22. Match Proceeds**

22.1 Net gate receipts are total ticket sales minus VAT, match expenses, and travel.

22.2 Maximum home club expenses (excluding travel and officials): £150.

22.3 Proceeds split 50/50 prior to the Final.

22.4 If postponed, costs are carried to the rescheduled game.

22.5 Clubs at fault for replays may be denied revenue.

22.6 If receipts are insufficient, losses are shared equally.

22.7 Home clubs must maintain full financial documentation.

## **23. Floodlighting**

23.1 Matches may be played under lights if approved.

23.2 The referee decides when to use the lights.

23.3 Max floodlighting expense claim: £70.

## **24. Travel Expenses**

**24.1 Coaches: £4.00/mile; Cars: up to 5 at £0.40/mile.**

24.2 Mileage must be agreed between clubs.

## **25. Admission Charges**

25.1 All spectators must be charged.

25.2 Prices (unless agreed otherwise):

- Rounds to Semi-Final: £6 adults / £3 concessions

- Final: £10 adults / £5 concessions

## **26. Ticketing**

26.1 County Cup Forum may require all-ticket matches.

## **27. First Aid**

27.1 Home club must provide First Aid equipment, stretchers, and qualified personnel.

## **28. Team sheet**

28.1 A squad list must be made available to spectators and officials.

## **29. Team Benches**

29.1 Max 8 people are allowed unless more seats are provided.

29.2 Only the Manager or Coach may issue instructions.

29.3 Only those listed on the team sheet may occupy the technical area.

29.4 Misconduct will be reported and sanctioned.

29.5 Others must remain seated except when warming up/down.

29.6 Final Tie: permitted personnel limits will be communicated.

### 30. Documentation

30.1 Home clubs must retain receipts, ticket counts, and attendance records.

30.2 Clubs must store documents for statutory periods and provide access on request.

### 31. Religious Observance

31.1 No one may be forced to play during bona fide religious observances unless:

- They have consented.
- They are contracted.
- The dates were pre-agreed and published.

### 32. Notices

32.1 All notices must be sent to:

Chief Executive, Lancashire FA, County Ground, Leyland, PR25 2LF

### 33. Other Matters

33.1 The County Cup County Cup Forum reserves final authority on any matter not covered.

***\*\*The County Cup Forum is the provision of an independent body to provide decisions on County Cup Rules and County Cup Rule Breaches\*\****

#### Fine Tariff Table

Rule Number	Description	Maximum Fine
9J	Failure to have a Referee inspect the pitch	£40
9O	Failure or refusal to play	£50
9P	Failure to notify match details to opponent	£10
12F	Failure to fulfil a tie	£50
13A	Failure to report result within 12hrs	£20

13B	Failure to submit team sheets within 2 working days	£15
14B	Failure to provide match details to Association 7 days prior to the SF	£15
16A	Withdrawing from the competition	£50
17M	Playing an ineligible player	£100