

COUNTY COMPETITION RULES

1. CONTROL OF COMPETITION

- (a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competitions and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in The Association.
- (b) The Council shall have the power to make, delete and amend regulations for the organisation, control and management of the Competition as it, from time to time, deems expedient (the "Competition Rules") subject only to the authority of the Board where such matters relate to financial or commercial matters.
- (c) All Participants participating in any way in the Competition shall be bound by and comply with the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules).
- (d) The Council shall have the power to annually appoint a Standing Committee (the "Competitions Committee"). The Competitions Committee shall have the power to make decisions on all matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to eligibility and qualification on all participants in the Competition). In relation to these and any other matters not specifically mentioned in the Competition Rules, the Competitions Committee shall, have the power to take such action and make such decisions, orders, rulings and impose such penalties as it deems necessary and following such procedures as it considers appropriate.
- (e) A Club participating in a Competition shall have only such rights in relation to the Competition (and any match in the Competition) as are expressly granted to the Club under the Competition Rules or by The Association in writing.
- (f) In addition to any other action or penalty, the Competitions Committee shall have the power to disqualify any competing Club, or Player for any competing Club(s), which it determines to have breached the Rules of The Association or the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules).

2. ORGANISATION OF THE COMPETITION

- (a) A minimum of 8 teams are required per competition in order for the Committee to consider the viability of a competition.
- (b) The allocation of teams shall be as per the Associations precedence list and/or as the Competition Committee sees fit. For the purpose of this rule ALL Saturday and Sunday Competitions shall be classed as separate Competitions.
- (c) The Competitions shall be competed for annually within each playing season (subject to the requirements of Rule 2 (a)).
- (d) The Cup Winners Cup may be competed for annually between the winners of the previous seasons' Challenge Cup and Leicester City FC.
- (e) All County Competitions matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.
- (f) A team can only play in a competition comprising of teams from the day that they play their league football on, i.e. Saturday teams in Saturday competitions.

3. ELIGIBLE CLUBS

- (a) Participation in the Challenge Cup shall be open to all Clubs competing in Step 5 and above of The FA National League System. The Committee may also add teams (at their absolute discretion) from Step 6 and below based on their final league placing or progress in the previous season's Challenge Cup competition.
- (b) Participation in the Senior Cup shall be open to all Clubs competing in Step 6 and 7 of The FA National League System (excluding those entered in the Challenge Cup). The Committee may also add teams (at their absolute discretion) it deems necessary based on their final league placing or progress in the previous season's Senior Cup competition.
- (c) If a team is removed from the League in which it is playing and the team is suspended by The Association or its League fixtures are suspended, once it has been accepted into the Competition, the Committee has the power to remove the Club from the Competition.

4. ENTRY INTO A COMPETITION

- (a) All Clubs affiliated to the Association and competing in a sanctioned League will be required to enter their affiliated Teams into a Competition where a competition is provided.
- (b) Each affiliated team will be required to pay the applicable entry fee by midnight on 15th August of each season.
- (c) There are no exemptions for entry into a Competition although Saturday and Sunday Open-Aged Male Clubs can choose to opt out their Reserves or 'A' Teams.
- (d) No team will be accepted into a Competition after midnight on 15th August.
- (e) From time to time the winners of a Competition may go forward to represent the Association at a Regional or National event. The team must represent the Association in such events. Any Club refusing to represent the Association may be fined up to £500.00 and dealt with as the Competitions Committee sees fit.

5. PROVISIONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE COMPETITION

- (a) Any Club resigning a team from a sanctioned League will automatically be removed from the Competition and the League shall advise the County Football Association within 7 days of the resignation being confirmed or before the next Round is drawn if earlier.
- (b) Any team withdrawing from a Competition after midnight on the 15th August will automatically forfeit the entry fee and shall be fined up to a maximum of £50.00.
- (c) Any team withdrawing from a Competition prior to midnight on the 15th August will forfeit the entry fee paid.

6. DRAWS FOR ROUNDS, KICK OFF TIMES AND NOTIFICATION

- (a) Unless an alternative format to include a Group Stage has been agreed by the Competitions Committee the Teams competing in each Round of the Competition shall be drawn in couples. The couples shall play a match subject to the Laws of the Game. The winners will compete in the next Round, the ties of which will be drawn in the same manner. This shall be continued until the Final of the Competition. Where a Group Stage Format has been agreed this will be governed by the Group Stage Format Rules set out in Appendix 1 of the County Competition Rules.

- (b) After the draw for each Round is made, notice shall be given to each Club of the name of its opponent Club, and the date and time when the match shall be played. All matches in each Round shall be played on such date as set by the Competitions Committee.
- (c) Any Team that is not available to play the match on the scheduled Round date will be deemed to have withdrawn from the Competition and fined as per Rule 5(b), unless the All Parties including the Competitions Committee agree on the match being played on an earlier date.
- (d) The kick-off times shall be as follows:

Month of Match	Saturday Afternoon	Sunday Morning	Sunday Afternoon
August	14:00	10:30	14:00
September	14:00	10:30	14:00
October	14.00	10:30	14.00
November	13:45	10:30	13:45
December	13:45	10:30	13:45
January	13:45	10:30	13:45
February	13:45	10:30	13:45

For Saturday Afternoon matches only, if a Team has a ground with working floodlights the kick off time may be 14:30 in every month.

For Youth and Girls weekend matches the kick-off time shall be that of the first-named team's normal league kick off time.

The default kick off time for Midweek Competitions shall be 19:00. The kick off time may be altered to no later than 19:45, providing it is agreed by both teams, **all** match officials appointed and the grounds' floodlight regulations allow for potential kicks from the penalty mark. If agreed, The Association are to be notified immediately.

- (e) The home Club shall notify the visiting Club and the appointed match officials of the date of the match, situation of the ground and dressing rooms, colours (including goalkeepers shirt) and the kick off time not less than 7 days (to visiting Club) and 4 days (to match officials) prior to the date of the match. Failure to comply with this rule will incur an administration fine per offence as per rule 24(a).

7. VENUE FOR MATCHES

- (a) *Venue*
 - (i) The venue of each match (except for the Semi Finals and Finals that may be played at a venue selected by the Competitions Committee) will be that of the first named Club unless the consent of the Committee has been obtained to any change of venue.
 - (ii) No monetary or other consideration shall be asked for, offered or paid in connection with negotiations for a change of venue.
 - (iii) A match shall not be played on a neutral ground without the consent of the Committee.
 - (iv) In any event, the Competitions Committee shall have the power to order that any match be played on an alternative ground or date if it is considered appropriate and

necessary. For ties switched from the ground of the Club first drawn, the Committee shall determine the financial conditions in which the tie shall be played.

(b) *Protests Regarding the Suitability of Ground*

- (i) A Club may protest to the Competitions Committee that the ground of the Home Club is unsuitable for the match. Such protest must be made to the Competitions Committee at least 7 days before the proposed fixture and must be accompanied by a fee of £25, which may be forfeited if the protest is not sustained.
- (ii) The Competitions Committee shall have the power to consider the protest in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The Competitions Committee may amongst other things order the match to be played on the ground of the protesting Club, or on a neutral ground. The payment of the costs incurred by either Club or the Association incidental to the protest shall be at the discretion of the Competitions Committee.
- (iii) A protest as to the suitability of an artificial turf pitch, that appears on The Football Association's register of accepted pitches is not permitted.

(c) *Ground Sharing*

After each draw the Competitions Committee will adjust fixtures in order to avoid pitch clashes. The Competitions Committee, where possible, works to the seniority of competitions (see rule 13d) in order to determine who has priority to any given pitch. The decision of the Competitions Committee shall be final and binding.

(d) *Youth Competitions – Respect*

- (i) Except under circumstances authorised by the Competitions Committee, clubs shall provide a designated spectator area in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Football Association.
- (ii) All spectators from both teams must line up behind the Respect Barrier along one side of the touch line.
- (iii) Both sets of each club's full Management team and all substitutes must view the game from the opposite touch line to the spectators.
- (iv) Any club found not adhering to these guidelines may be fined up to £20.00

8. DURATION OF MATCHES

(a) The duration of matches shall be as follows:

All Open Aged Competitions	-	90 Minutes
Veterans	-	80 Minutes
Under 18's & 17's	-	90 Minutes
Under 16's & 15's	-	80 Minutes
Under 14's & 13's	-	70 Minutes
Under 12's & Under 11's	-	60 Minutes
Under 18's Girls	-	90 Minutes
Under 16's & 15's Girls	-	80 Minutes
Under 14's Girls	-	70 Minutes
Under 13's Girls	-	60 Minutes
Under 12's & 11's Girls	-	50 Minutes

(b) The half-time interval shall be 10 minutes for all Competitions.

9. DRAWN, POSTPONED & ABANDONED MATCHES AND CLUBS IN DEFAULT

- (a) If the match is drawn after normal time the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.
- (b) When a match has been postponed, it shall be rescheduled on the same ground. If a match is abandoned before the completion of normal time and neither club being at fault, it will be referred to the Competitions Committee for review.
- (c) Matches abandoned caused through the proven misconduct of a team or its Participants will result in removal of the team from the competition with immediate effect.
- (d) The appointed referee shall be responsible for deciding as to the fitness of the ground. In the event that the appointed referee is unable to inspect the ground, the home club shall make immediate contact with the Association's Referee Appointments Officer, who shall arrange for an inspection to be carried out. If it's proven that the match has been postponed without the above rule being followed the club will be reported the Competitions Committee who shall have the power to remove a team from the Competition who are in breach of this rule.

Referees asked to inspect a pitch, shall be entitled to claim half of the agreed match fee as per rule 17 (c), which is to be paid immediately after the inspection has taken place by the first named team.

No match shall be postponed until the day of the match unless the pitch is hired from a third party, in which case the third party has an over-riding authority on the use of the pitch. The exception to this rule is if the Association decides to postpone all fixtures due to poor weather or expected poor weather.

However the Association may call for official confirmation from the local authority, School or Hirer of their decision to postpone a match.

For Sunday Morning matches only, in the event of a frozen pitch or fog/mist the kick off may be delayed for up to 30 minutes to allow for the pitch to thaw or fog/mist to clear.

- (e) In the event of a match being postponed the home Club shall notify the Opposition, Match Officials, the designated County FA contact (as per the published draw each round) immediately and the respective League in the manner prescribed by the respective league.
- (f) In the event of a match being postponed it will not be played later than 7 days after the scheduled date, without the express permission of the Competitions Committee.
- (g) Excepting where the Association has cancelled all fixtures, in the event of a match being postponed twice, the fixture will automatically be reversed, to be played the following week.
- (h) Clubs who fail to put in an appearance for a match may be removed from the Competition and shall be fined as per Rule 5(b) and shall be liable for the approved expenses.

Clubs shall be deemed to have failed to put in an appearance if they are absent 30 minutes after the scheduled kick-off time and have not notified their opponents of them having been delayed en route. The Match Officials and Opponents shall be free to leave the venue at this time.

Any claim for expenses by the aggrieved Club and Match Officials must be lodged with the Association within four days of the arranged date of the match.

10. REPORTING RESULTS

- (a) Each Club shall submit an online result of the match, with the names of their players competing including all used substitutes, together with the name and marking of the Referee's performance to be received at The Association within 4 days of the match. Failure to complete the online result card correctly will result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a). Failure to submit a result card within 4 days may result in a further charge from the Competitions Committee.
- (b) A delegate from each team is responsible for sending The Association an SMS containing the result of the match as directed by The Association's 'Full-time' system. Failure to do so will result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a).

11. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- (a) *Football Turf Pitches (3G)*
 - (i) Football Turf pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf pitches. For clubs playing at Step 7 and below a pitch 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.
 - (ii) The home Club is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with rule 6e.
- (b) *Ground Facilities*
 - (i) The dimensions of the field of play for all matches must be within the requirements of the Laws of Association Football or as per the guidelines issued by the Football Association in relating to Youth football.
 - (ii) Corner flags and goal nets must be used in all matches.
 - (iii) Goal Line Technology shall be available to assist the Match Official where a tie is played at a ground where Goal Line Technology is installed and the Match Official(s) have been trained in its use. Clubs shall comply with any protocol for use of Goal Line Technology issued by The Association from time to time, and for the avoidance of doubt neither The Association nor any Club or operator of a ground shall be liable for failure of Goal Line Technology where the relevant Goal Line Technology system otherwise complies with all applicable technical, maintenance and licensing requirements.
- (c) *Matchballs*
 - (i) The home club shall provide a match ball suitable for play to the match referee 15 minutes before kick-off to allow enough time for the ball to be inspected. The size of ball played with shall be as stipulated by The Football Association

- (ii) The Multiple Ball System (where more than one ball may be used in a match) will not operate in ties up to and including the Semi-Final.

12. CLUB COLOURS

- (a) Where the Colours (shirts, shorts or socks) of the two competing Clubs are similar (as determined by the Competitions Committee), the Away Club (or second named club) must change.
- (b) In the event of the Clubs not agreeing upon the colours to be worn, the Competitions Committee shall decide. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from the other players, and the Match Officials.
- (c) Clubs' colours must not clash with the black and white outfit worn by the Match Officials.
- (d) Players' shirts shall be clearly numbered on the back in accordance with the Official Team Sheet. No change of numbers during the match shall be allowed except on a change of Goalkeeper or where a player has been required by the Referee to change his shirt because of a blood injury. The Captain of each team shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status.
- (e) Advertising may be worn on player's clothing in accordance with the Association's Rules.

13. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PLAYERS

- (a) Each participating team shall play its full strength of eligible players.
- (b) (i) Each Club shall provide a list of names of players taking part in the game (including the names of the substitutes) to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee before the commencement of the match in matches prior to the Semi-Final and 45 minutes in the Semi-Final and Final before the time of kick off (the "Official Team Sheet"). Any club failing to do so will be liable to an administration fine as per rule 24 (a).

In the Challenge and Senior Cup competitions the Official Team Sheet shall be presented to the referee and a representative of their opponents at least 45 minutes before the time of kick off in all rounds of the Competition.

- (ii) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the Official Team Sheet to the Referee before kick-off, they may be replaced without fine provided the Referee and opponents are informed before the commencement of the match.
- (c) In Adult Male football a maximum of five substitutes may be nominated. A Club may at its discretion use three of those five substitute players at any time in a match. Substitutions can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. The Womens Cup also adopts this method.

In, all Youth, Girls and Veterans football a maximum of five substitutes may be nominated and all may be used and repeat substitutes are permitted. The Womens Plate also adopts this method.

- (d) No player shall be allowed to play for more than one Saturday Adult club, one Sunday Adult club, or one Youth/Junior or one Girls club that is competing during the current season. Members of the team may be changed during the series of matches, thus allowing bona fide members of the Club to be promoted from a team which has participated in a lower rated Competition.

A youth player participating in the U16, U17 or U18 Sunday Youth Cups may also play for a separate club in the U18 Midweek Floodlit Youth Cup.

A Player may play in the 'A' team, the reserve team and afterwards with the first team, but not vice versa The Seniority of Competitions is as follows:

Saturdays: Challenge Cup, Senior Cup, Intermediate Cup, Trophy.

Sundays: Premier Cup, Intermediate Cup, Trophy.

Youth/Girls: In competitions for youth/girls a member of a team having played in any competition may, subject to FA Regulations, play for the same club in a higher age competition, but shall not be permitted to play for the same club in a lower age competition.

To be eligible to participate in County Competitions, a player must have attained the age of 9 years by midnight on 31st August in the relevant playing season.

For the Veterans' Competition no movement of players between teams is allowed.

Any team in breach of this rule will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).

- (e) Each player must be a bona fide registered member of their Club and have a registration for the league of the team in question, having signed at least two clear days before the date of the match.

Match on Played on	Player must be registered by Midnight
Saturday	on the Wednesday prior to the match
Sunday	on the Thursday prior to the match
Monday	on the Friday prior to the match
Tuesday	on the Saturday prior to the match
Wednesday	on the Sunday prior to the match
Thursday	on the Monday prior to the match
Friday	on the Tuesday prior to the match

Any team in breach of this rule will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).

- (f) All players must have been eligible to play on the original date of the match in order to play in a replayed or postponed match; however a player who has been suspended according to the disciplinary procedures under the Rules of The Football Association may play in a postponed or replayed match after the term of their suspension has expired. Any team in breach of this rule will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).
- (g) A substitute who does not play in a match is entitled to play for another Club in the Competition in the same season.
- (h) In the Veterans' Competition players must have attained the age of 35 before the 1st August of the current playing season. Any team in breach of this rule will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).
- (i) In all Youth/Girls Competitions players must be under the age stipulated in the Competition (as per the Football Association Age Limits guide) which they are participating before 31st August of the current playing season. No player shall be allowed to play in any Competition if, during the current season they have played in a higher age group youth/girls Competition. Any team in breach of this rule will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).

- (j) In Youth/Girls/Mini-Soccer Competitions where Clubs have more than one team per Competition a player can only play for a team per competition and cannot move between teams. Any team in breach of these rules will be dealt with as per rule 13(k).
- (k) Any Club found proven to have played a suspended, unregistered or otherwise ineligible player may be removed from the Competition. Their opponents at the time of when the offence took place will take their place in the Competition.
- (l) Matches must be started at the scheduled time of kick off. Any team causing a late start must be reported by the match referee within 4 days of the game. Any team reported for a late start may result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a).
- (m) The minimum number of players to commencing a game shall be:

Nine (9) players for 11-a-side Competitions
Seven (7) players for 9-a-side Competitions
Five (5) players for Mini-Soccer/7v7 Competitions

Any club failing to start a match with a full complement of players will be fined £10.00 per player short.
- (n) Any team that have had three or more players called up for a County Representative team for a game on the day of a County Cup fixture may apply to the Association to have the County Cup fixture postponed. Applications are to be made no later than 7 days before the fixture date.

14. VALIDITY OF PLAYERS' QUALIFICATIONS

- (a) The Competitions Committee shall have power to call upon a Player, and/or the Club to which they are registered, or for which they have played, to prove that the Player is qualified according to the Competition Rules.
- (b) Failing satisfactory proof, the club shall be deemed to have played an ineligible player and shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule 13(k). The Competitions Committee may also impose a fine up to a maximum of £50.

15. PROGRAMME

- (a) A Programme will be produced for all Finals. After winning their Semi-Final match each Finalist is required to submit information as requested by the Association for the programme by the deadline set. Failure to do so will result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a).

16. TEAM BENCHES

Only applicable where a ground has technical areas marked out and/or team benches provided.

- (a) In all Rounds of the Competition, 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.
- (b) Only one person has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the players during the match. This person shall be the Team Manager or the Team Coach. They are allowed to

move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team but then must return to their position on the bench immediately after giving these instructions.

- (c) 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. Only those persons listed on the Official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.
- (d) The occupants of the 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 Association, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.
- (e) 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 team bench. The Team Manager or Team Coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to their team, but must then return to their position on the team bench.

17. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a) Match Officials shall be appointed by the Association. Neither past nor present members of either of the contending Clubs shall be eligible.
- (b) In the event of any of the Match Officials failing to arrive or being incapacitated, the two Clubs shall agree to a substitute who shall have the same powers as any of the appointed Match Officials. Failure to agree upon a substitute will be deemed to be a breach of rule. Your attention is referred to the provisions in Rule 1(f).
- (c) Match Officials appointed by the Association shall be paid the following combined match fee and expenses immediately before the game. Payment shall be made by the away team. If more than one match official is appointed the cost of the combined match fee and expenses shall be split equally between the two teams.

Competition	Referee	Assistant Referee/ Fourth Official
Challenge Cup	£55.00	£35.00
Senior Cup	£45.00	£30.00
All Other Open-Aged Competitions including Veterans	£30.00	£22.00
Midweek Floodlit Youth Cup	£30.00	£25.00
Youth Boys Under 16's, 17's & 18's	£35.00	£25.00
Youth Boys Under 15's, 13's & 14's	£27.00	£22.00
Youth Under 11's, 12's	£25.00	£18.00
Women's Cup	£35.00	£25.00
Girls 11v11 matches	£30.00	£22.00
Girls 9v9 matches	£25.00	£18.00
Girls 7v 7 matches	£15.00	

Fourth Officials are to receive a match fee consistent to that of an Assistant Referee.

All Match Officials appointed to a Final shall receive a suitable memento in lieu of the Match Fee and expenses of £10.

- (d) In the event of a game being postponed through no fault of either club and the Match Officials are in attendance at the ground, the Match Officials shall receive half fee.
- (e) In the event of a game being abandoned the Match Officials shall receive their full fee.

- (f) Clubs must supply an Assistant Referee each for all fixtures before the Semi-Final stage (with the exception of the Senior and Challenge Cup). Such Assistant Referees will not be due any fee for undertaking the role.
- (g) Match Officials shall acknowledge acceptance of appointments for all matches in the Competition to The Association within 4 days of receipt of the appointment.
- (h) The duties of the Match Officials shall be as defined in the Laws of the Game.
- (i) In all Competitions (except the Challenge and Senior Cup) prior to the Semi-Final and Final all Match Officials shall be present at the ground at least 30 minutes prior to the kick-off of the match. For the Challenge and Senior Cup all Match Officials shall be present at the ground at least 60 minutes prior to the kick-off of the match.

In all Semi-Finals and Finals the Match Officials shall be present at the ground at least 60 minutes prior to the kick-off of the match.

18. GATE RECEIPTS

- (a) In all rounds prior to the final, a gate may be taken except where prohibited by local bye-laws, when a collection may be taken. Prior to the Final, it is the responsibility of the competing teams to take a gate collection if they wish. Where a collection is taken it shall be termed as a gate in all rounds prior to the Semi Finals, the gate shall be equally divided between the two competing teams within seven days of the date of the match.
- (b) In the Semi Final a sum equivalent to a third of the gross gate receipts shall be paid to the Association. Both competing clubs are responsible for their own traveling expenses and shall share the expenses of ground and the Match Officials.

The NETT amount remaining shall be equally divided between the two competing clubs.
Any loss shall be equally shared between the two competing clubs. All members and ticket holders of each competing club shall pay the admission charges to the ground and stand.

- (c) In the Final the Association will be responsible for all match expenses. Both competing clubs will be responsible for their own travelling expenses. The admission charge will apply to all with the exception of those entitled to admission passes as per rule 20(b).

19. PROVISIONS FOR THE SEMI-FINALS

- (a) The Association shall decide the pitch for the Semi-Final.
- (b) The first drawn Club shall be deemed the home club and is responsible for the confirmation of the match with the Opposition, Match Officials and Appointed Council Representative.
- (c) Both Clubs shall make immediate contact with the host club to offer any assistance required by the host club in staging the match. (if applicable).
- (d) If a neutral venue is used for staging a Semi Final the hosting organisation shall be entitled to a payment as agreed by the Competitions Committee.
- (e) If a neutral venue is used, the expenses for the ground and the Match Officials' fees will be split equally between the two Clubs. This must be paid in cash to the Council Member (if appointed) in charge before the commencement of the match.

If the fixture is played on the ground of the first named club, the first named club shall be responsible for payment of the ground fee, the Match Officials fees will be split equally between the two clubs and the second named club will be responsible for its own travel expenses.

- (f) A Council Member in charge, when appointed to Semi-Finals, may deal with any queries relating to rules or problems with the ground. The Match Officials are not to enter into any debate relating to Competition rules.
- (g) Both Clubs are required to present to the Match Referee two match balls 30 minutes before the official kick-off time.
- (h) Both Clubs are required to forward a list of all players with dates of birth that are eligible to play in the match to their opponents and The Association at least 10 clear days before the match on the official form provided by the Association. Any players that are not listed are deemed to be ineligible. The clubs are also required to list the amount of qualifying appearances a player has made in the current season.

It is recommended that you include all eligible players on the list of players submitted, as if the original match date is postponed or moved to another date players not included on the list will be ineligible to play.

No objection to the qualification of any player mentioned in such list shall be entertained, unless such notice of such objection, stating the full particulars is given to both the Club involved and The Association at least 2 clear days prior to the date of the match.

- (i) No player shall be eligible to play in a Competition Semi-Final unless, prior to the Semi-Final, they have played at least 4 games for the Club in the current season for all Adult Competitions, at least 3 games for the Club in the current season for all Youth Competitions in the current season, at least 2 games for the Club in the current season for the Veterans Competition.

Girls Competitions Semi-Finals are exempt from a minimum of qualifying matches. A player is still required to meet the requirements of rule 13 (f).

A player who, during a game, enters the field of play as a substitute is deemed to have played in that game for the Club.

In exceptional circumstances the Competitions Committee shall have the power to grant dispensation for a goalkeeper to play in a Semi-Final that has not played in the required amount of qualifying games for the Club. The player the dispensation is being made for must be a registered player for the club as per rule 13(f).

Upon making application for dispensation, the applying club must state in writing the full facts for the request. No application will be considered less than 2 days prior to the game.

Qualifying matches are FA Competitions, League matches, League Cup Matches, County Cup matches and other matches as approved by the Competitions Committee. No other match can be used for the purpose of this rule.

- (j) Any Club refusing to play the Semi-Final on the date and time as set by the Competitions Committee shall be expelled from the Competition and may be fined up to £250.00.

20. PROVISIONS FOR THE FINAL

- (a) The Association shall decide the ground for the Final and shall have direct control of the arrangements.
- (b) Each competing Club will be provided with 25 passes for players and officials of the club to gain entry into the final. Anyone person without a valid pass will be required to pay the set admission fee as determined by Competitions Committee to gain entry into the final.
- (c) If the Final is postponed or abandoned, it shall be played as directed by The Competitions Committee.
- (d) The venue staging a Final shall be entitled to a payment agreed by The Competitions Committee.
- (e) No player shall be eligible to play in a Competition Final unless, prior to the Final, they have played at least 5 games for the Club in the current season for all Adult Competitions, at least 4 games for the Club in the current season for all Youth Competitions in the current season, at least 3 games for the Club in the current season for the Veterans Competition.

A player who, during a game, enters the field of play as a substitute is deemed to have played in that game for the Club.

In exceptional circumstances the Competitions Committee shall have the power to grant dispensation for a goalkeeper to play in a Final that has not played in the required amount of qualifying games for the Club. The player the dispensation is being made for must be a registered player for the club as per rule 13(f).

Upon making application for dispensation, the applying club must state in writing the full facts for the request. No application will be considered less than 2 days prior to the game.

Qualifying matches are FA Competitions, League matches, League Cup Matches, County Cup matches and other matches as approved by the Competitions Committee. No other match can be used for the purpose of this rule.

- (f) Both Clubs are required to forward a list of all players with dates of birth that are eligible to play in the match to their opponents and The Association at least 10 clear days before the match on the official form provided by the Association. The clubs are also required to list the amount of qualifying appearances a player has made in the current season. Failure to do so will result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a).

It is recommended that you include all eligible players on the list of players submitted, as if the original match date is postponed or moved to another date players not included on the list will be ineligible to play

No objection to the qualification of any player mentioned in such list shall be entertained, unless such notice of such objection, stating the full particulars is given to both the Club involved and The Association at least 2 clear days prior to the date of the match.

- (g) Any Club refusing to play the Final on the date and time as set by the Competitions Committee shall be expelled from the Competition and maybe fined up to £250.00.

21. COMPETITION TROPHY / FINALIST MEDALS

- (a) The main trophy for the Competition is the property of The Association. When the winning club has been ascertained, The Association shall deliver the trophy to such Club, which shall be responsible for its return to The Association on or before the last day in January in the ensuing year in good order and condition. The club must within 7 days of winning the trophy return to the Association the completed trophy guarantee form which will be supplied to them upon winning the trophy. Failure to do so will result in an administration fine as per rule 24(a). Should the trophy be lost, destroyed or damaged by fire or any other cause whilst under the care or custody of the Club the latter shall refund to The Association the amount of its current insured value or the cost of thorough repair in addition to any other penalty which the Competitions Committee may impose.

Any Club failing to return the trophy by the aforementioned date shall be automatically fined up to the maximum of £500.00.

- (b) In addition to the trophy, The Association shall present enough medals to both Clubs in the Final to cover those that have been listed in the matchday squad (16/14/12 dependant on format). When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct, the medal to which he may be entitled may be withheld at the discretion of the Competitions Committee.

22. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PROTESTS

- (a) All issues relating to the interpretation of the Competition Rules shall be referred to the Competitions Committee. The Competitions Committee shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The Competitions Committee shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in processing before a Court of Law.
- (b) Where a Club wishes to protest that there has been a breach of the Competition Rules, such protest must be made in writing and must contain the particulars of the grounds upon which it is made. The protest must be received by The Association, accompanied by a fee of £25.00, within four days of the match to which it relates (Sundays included). The fee may be forfeited to The Association in the event of the protest not being sustained.

Match Played on	Protest to be received by
Saturday	5pm on the following Wednesday
Sunday	5pm on the following Thursday
Monday	5pm on the following Friday
Tuesday	5pm on the following Saturday
Wednesday	5pm on the following Sunday
Thursday	5pm on the following Monday
Friday	5pm on the following Tuesday

- (c) The Competitions Committee may make such orders as it considers appropriate in relation to any issue or protest referred to it. The Competitions Committee may make such orders as it considers appropriate as to the costs incurred by the parties or The Association.
- (d) Any protest relating to the ground, goal posts or crossbars or other appurtenances of the game shall not be considered by the Competitions Committee unless an objection has been lodged with the Referee and the Home Club at least 30 minutes before the official time of kick-off. The Referee shall require the Home Club to correct the cause of the objection, if this is possible without unduly delaying the progress of the match.
- (e) Where an objection has been lodged with the Referee and Home Club as above, a protest must be made to The Association and neither objection nor protest may be withdrawn, except by leave of the Competitions Committee.

- (f) The Association shall send a copy of any protest to the Club protested against, which shall lodge a defence to the protest with particulars of the defence within four days of receipt of the protest.
- (g) Members of the Council/Competitions Committee directly connected with a Club concerned in a protest shall not have any involvement in the consideration of the matter.

23. PROVISIONS CONCERNING APPEALS

- (a) A Club may appeal against the decision of the Competitions Committee to an Appeal Board comprising of 3 members selected by the Chairman of Council or his nominee. In order to formally lodge the appeal the Club will need to confirm which of the following options the club are appealing on (more than one can be selected if applicable), and provide all correspondence regarding the appeal along with the £25 appeal fee within 7 days of this letter.
 - (1) Failed to give the appellant a fair hearing
 - (2) Misinterpreted or failed to comply with the rules or regulations relevant to its decision
 - (3) Came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come
 - (4) Imposed a penalty, award, order or sanction that was excessive

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

24. ADMINISTRATION FINES

- (a) All Administration Fines shall be £10.00 per offence which is payable within 14 days of the date of the decision/notification letter.
- (b) All Fines including Administration Fines can be appealed against. Any appeal against a fine must be submitted to the Association in writing within 4 days of the date on the letter notifying the club of the administration fine.

Letter Dated On	Appeal to be received by
Saturday	5pm on the following Wednesday
Sunday	5pm on the following Thursday
Monday	5pm on the following Friday
Tuesday	5pm on the following Saturday
Wednesday	5pm on the following Sunday
Thursday	5pm on the following Monday
Friday	5pm on the following Tuesday

25. NOTICES

All notices required to be given to The Association by any of these Competition Rules shall be addressed to the 'Competitions Committee', at the offices of The Association.

COUNTY COMPETITION RULES (Appendix 1) – GROUP STAGE FORMAT

1. The Competitions Committee may agree an alternative format for a Competition to include a Group Stage.
2. Participating Teams will be drawn into a Group – the number of Groups will be determined by the Competitions Committee
3. In a Group, home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Competitions Committee shall have power to inflict a fine not exceeding £50, deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points from the match in question to the opponents, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals. Notwithstanding the foregoing home and away provision, the Competitions Committee shall have power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent's ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.
4. Team rankings within each Group will be decided by points with three points to be awarded for a win and one point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners.

In circumstances where two or more teams are equal on points team rankings shall be determined by goal difference where the goals scored against by each team shall be deducted from the goals scored by that team and the largest positive difference shall be placed the highest. In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed team shall be the team which has scored the most goals. In the event that two or more teams have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals then the highest placed team shall be the team which has won the most matches.

In the event of the two teams still being equal the team which has the better playing record against the other team in their head to head Competition matches during the Season will be the highest placed team.

If the records of two or more teams are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the teams affected shall play a deciding match or matches as determined by the Competitions Committee.
5. When a Group is completed and team rankings determined – the Competition will proceed as agreed by the Competitions Committee until a Final is achieved
6. Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a match or matches may have any points gained from that match or matches deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points, and may have levied upon it a fine. The Competitions Committee may also order that such match or matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Competitions Committee which may also levy penalty points against the Club in default.

Matches abandoned, caused through the proven misconduct of a team or its participants will be referred to the Competitions Committee for review. The Committee may levy penalty points against the team proven to have caused the abandonment.

In exceptional circumstances the Competitions Committee may, at its discretion, award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

7. With the exception of the preceding rules, the County Competition Rules shall apply to all Competitions which include a Group Stage format.