



**LEAGUE
PROGRAMME**
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

League Rules & discipline

Support Guidance

Contents

Introduction	3
CFA Rule Checking Process	4
How Leagues should submit rule changes	5
Rule change Flowchart	6
Template for submitting proposed rule changes	7
League/Competition and County FA Disciplinary Roles	8
League charging process – the rule	10
League charging process – flowchart	11
Consideration when dealing with charges	12
League Charge – Template	13
League Charge – Decision Template	14
Leagues fine – flowchart	15
League fine – letter/email template	16
Leagues taking action against poorly behaved Clubs and Individuals	17
Club Appeals against League Disciplinary Decision	18
Exclusion of Clubs or Teams	19
Abandoned fixture process	20
3G / 4G Pitches	21



Introduction

The Standard Code (SCOR) is mandatory for all competitions at Regional National League System (NLS) Feeder League level and below, and The FA *Women's Pyramid, excluding the Barclays FA Women's Super League (BFA WSL), FA Women's Championship (FA WC). All youth leagues* (under-7 to under-18) must use the FA Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions (SCORY).

Leagues are to make clubs aware of the process of submitting rule changes to the league, so that the league can apply for the changes to be presented for approval at the League AGM. Following the League AGM, the league should incorporate all approved rule amendments into their League Rules and submit to the County FA the final version.

Sometimes, Leagues may have to deal with some discipline issues. Leagues can only deal with matters that as a general rule, relate to the competition off the field which may include not attending a league meeting, not completing match sheets and not playing fixtures. A League cannot be involved with any cautions or sending off matters that occur on the field of play.

Leagues should issue charges as soon as possible, following the process guide. They should also ensure any conflicts of interest are managed correctly. When determining any sanction, leagues must make sure it is appropriate to the offence. For example, if reaching the decision on the first occasion to use the maximum fine amount possible, this gives no wriggle room should the offence occur again. Leagues must communicate the decision of any charge (proven or not proven) to the teams/club charged.

A League's main responsibility is to enforce their competition rules, allowing players to participate in the correct environment and ensure that everyone is treated fair and equally. Leagues must manage any potential conflict of interest so that they follow the principles of natural law. Should a team or club breach a competition's rules then the League may charge those concerned.

It would be advisable to talk to your County FA to go through the discipline process or to seek advice if not sure on a matter.

CFA Rule Checking Process

The rules can be checked by one of two methods.

1. A County FA Officer can check the rules; or 2. A County FA Working Group/Committee can do this.

The sanctioning County FA should decide which method works best for them.



How Leagues should submit rule changes

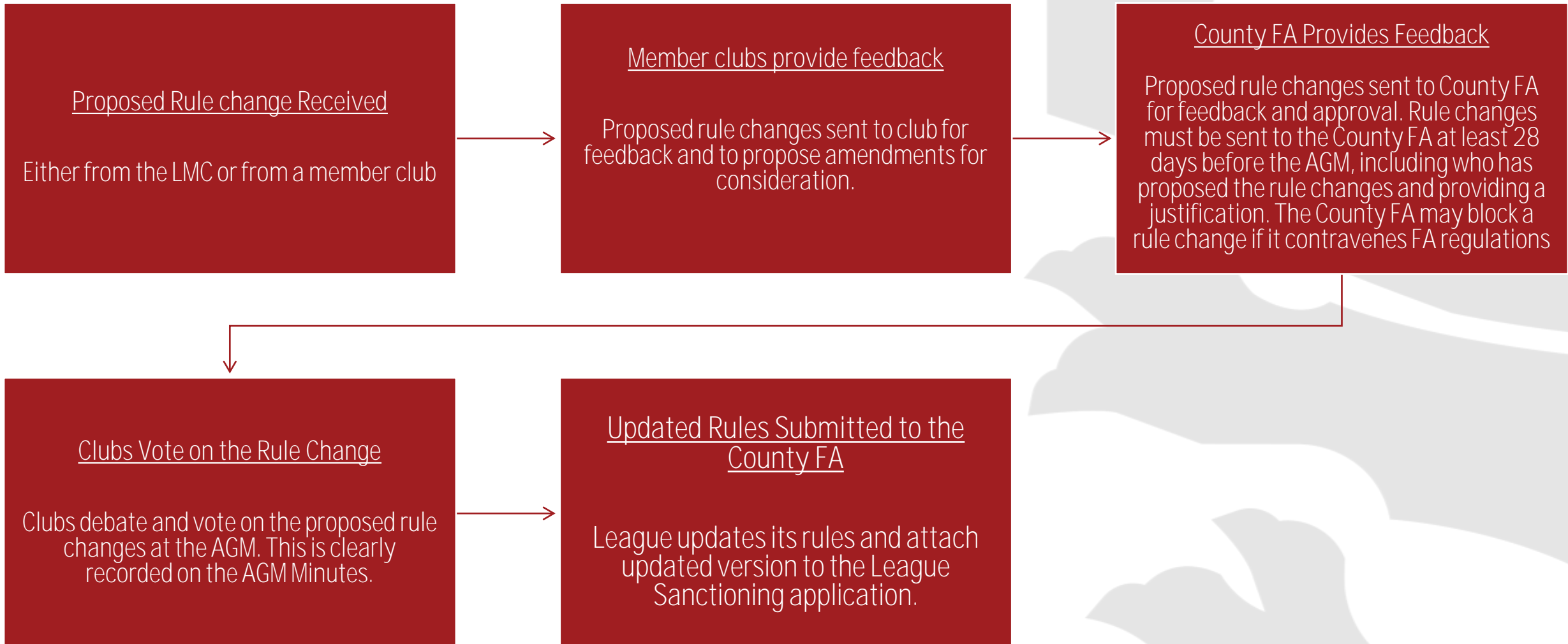
Standard Code of Rules: *All league rules should be in line with the reformatted Standard Code of Rules ('SCOR') and Standard Code of Rules for Mini Soccer and Youth Football Competitions ('SCORY'). Annual updates to the Standard Codes will continue to be forwarded to leagues when* received by the County FA and must be incorporated into league rules for the following season.

Alteration to rules (rule 14): Under the Standard Codes, proposed rule changes can be submitted annually by the League Management Committee or member clubs. All clubs within the league must be notified of proposed changes to the rules prior to the AGM, and offered an opportunity to provide feedback and propose amendments to them. The deadlines for this process are set by Leagues under SCOR/Y Rule 14. Note, Some CFA's may advise the date that leagues have to use, to help the CFA support leagues around this process.

Submission of proposed rule amendments: Once the league has received feedback and proposed amendments to rule changes, they must be submitted to the County FA at least 28 days prior to the AGM to confirm they are compliant with the Standard Codes and receive consent from the County FA. Any proposed rule which does not comply with the Standard Codes must be amended or withdrawn prior to the AGM. The proposed rule changes must be set out clearly alongside the existing rule with an explanation for the proposed change, and state whether the change has been proposed by clubs or the League Management Committee.

Submission of updated rules: Following the league AGM, the league should incorporate all approved rule amendments (including updates to the Standard Code of Rules) into their league rules and submit to the County FA. Note: Some County FAs request they receive two copies – one copy with changes *marked, and one 'clean' copy with changes incorporated.*

Rule change Flowchart



Template for submitting proposed rule changes

League

Season

RULE	PRESENT WORDING	PROPOSED BY	PROPOSED WORDING	EXPLANATION	VOTING RESULTS
Insert the number of the rule, e.g. 1.1	Please insert the current wording of the rule here	Club name, or League Management Committee	Please enter the proposed wording here, with additions or changes highlighted in red, and deletions marked with a red Strikethrough	The rationale for a change submitted by a club or the League Management Committee should be included here	Seconders: For: Against: Abstentions:
					Seconders: For: Against: Abstentions:
					Seconders: For: Against: Abstentions:
					Seconders: For: Against: Abstentions:
					Seconders: For: Against: Abstentions:

League/Competition and County FA Disciplinary Roles

The following guide provides clarification over which incidents Leagues and Competitions have jurisdiction for, and what must be reported to the County FA. Please note that where the County FA is involved, the County FA must have completed its disciplinary procedures before the League or Competition can act.

Offence	CFA	League / Competition
Any player/official/spectator uses abusive, threatening or discriminatory language or behaviour	YES	NO
Any player/officials/spectator commits an act of violent conduct or assault (which is not dealt with by a red or yellow card)	YES	NO
Red and Yellow cards	YES	No
Team fields a suspended player	YES – 1st	YES – 2 nd after CFA have dealt with
Team fields an unregistered player	NO	YES
Team fields an otherwise ineligible player (e.g. too many appearances in a higher competition)	NO	YES
Match is abandoned due by the referee to misconduct	YES – 1st	YES – 2 nd after CFA have dealt with
Match is abandoned due to a team refusing to continue or walking off	YES – 1st	YES – 2 nd after CFA have dealt with
Match is abandoned by the referee due to player injury	YES – 1st	YES – 2 nd after CFA have dealt with
Match is abandoned by the referee due to weather conditions	NO	YES*
Team/official receives a low Respect rating from opposition/referee	NO	YES*
Illegal approach for a player	YES	NO

*Make sure the County FA are also informed of this.

League/Competition and County FA Disciplinary Roles

Withdrawing a team from a game:

The referee has sole authority to abandon a match based on player welfare, whether this is due to the conduct of the opposition, weather conditions or player injury. If a manager withdraws a team from the field of play against the instruction of the referee, this may be considered an act of misconduct

Team/official receives a low Respect rating from opposition/referee:

Leagues need to monitor and share the monitoring data with the County FA. Leagues could invite low-scoring teams in for a meeting to discuss ways of how they can improve. When reviewing any reports about low Respect scores, the league officials have to be mindful if the report contains possible misconduct.

General Principle:

Any report containing misconduct must go to the County FA..



League charging process – the rule

A sanction cannot be imposed on a club, except for when a non-paid fine is doubled or failing to attend an AGM (rule 8.H) or SGM (rule 9), or for an additional fine (rule 6.I) on a non-paid fine. All other sanctions can only be imposed by charging the club/team.

The Rule: 6B: The Management Committee 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 Rules 6(I), 8(H) and 9, for all alleged breaches of a Rule the Management Committee shall issue a formal written charge 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:-

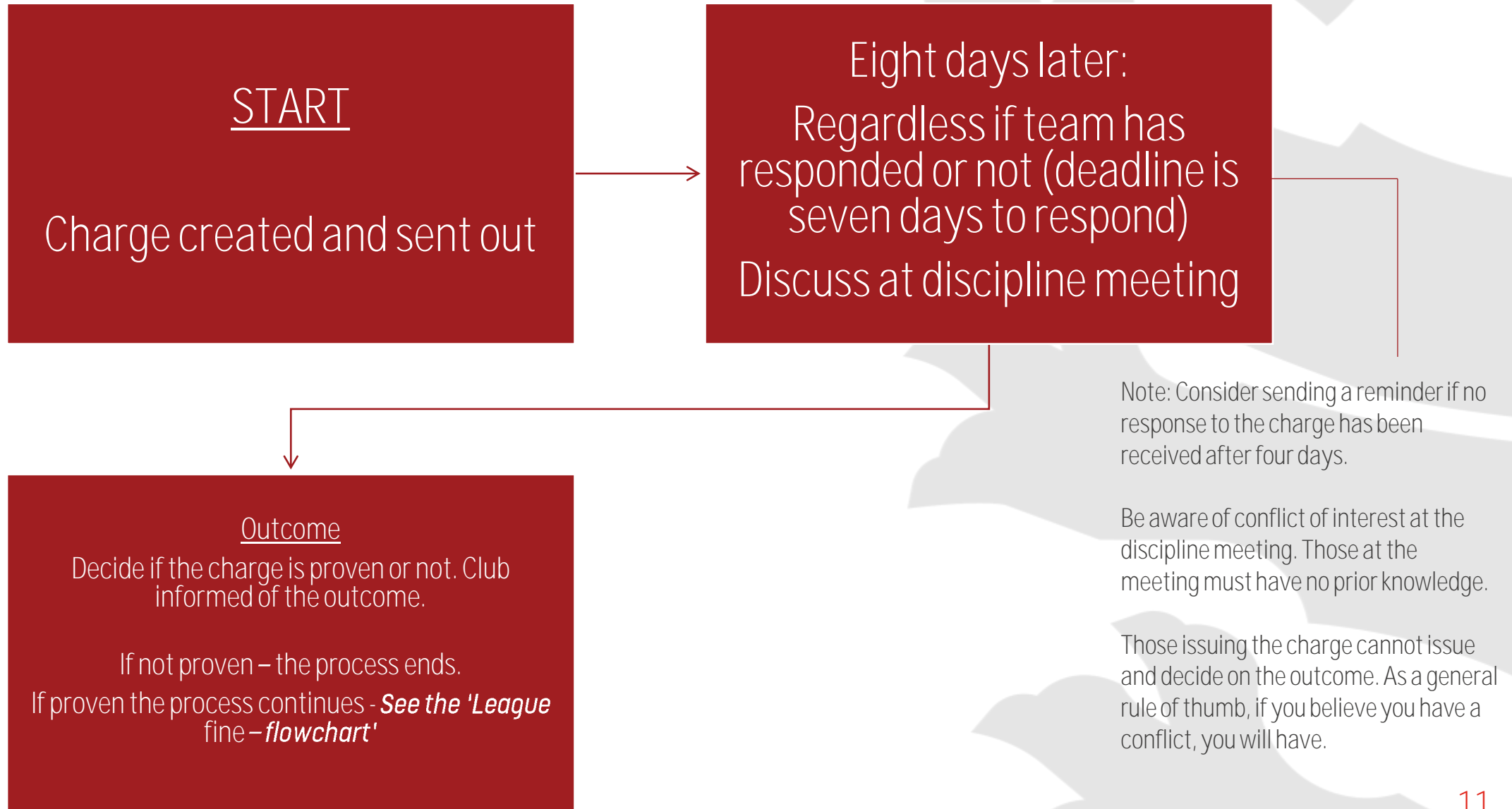
- (i) Accept the charge and submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers; or
- **(ii) Accept the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case of mitigation at a hearing before the Management Committee;** or
- **(iii) Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers;** or
- **(iv) Deny the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case at a hearing before the Management Committee.**

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

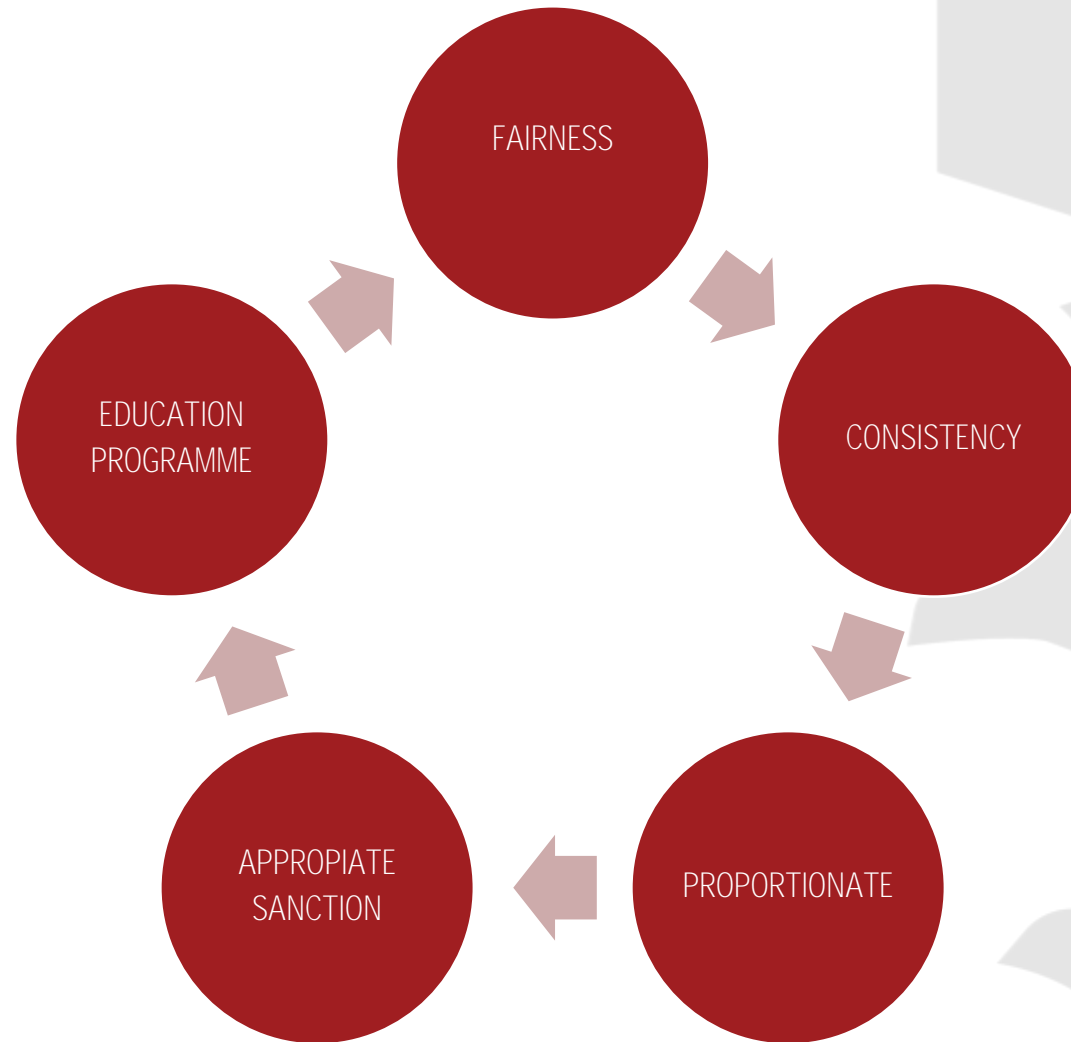
Having considered the reply of the Club (whether in writing or at a hearing), the Management Committee shall make its decision and, in the event that the charge is accepted or proven, decide on the appropriate penalty (with reference to the Fines Tariff where applicable).

The maximum fine permitted for any breach of a Rule is £100 and, when setting any fine, the Management Committee 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. All breaches of the Laws of the Game or the Rules and Regulations of The FA shall be dealt with in accordance with FA Rules by the appropriate Association.

League charging process – flowchart



Consideration when dealing with charges



League Charge - Template

FAO <<insert club name>> Club Secretary

is charged under the provision of the <<insert league name>>

League rules as follows:

TEAM: <<insert full team name – if a youth league add the age-group>>

FIXTURE: <<insert fixture>>

FIXTURE DATE: <<insert date of the fixture>>

LEAGUE RULE: <<insert rule number which you are issuing the charge under >>

Discipline Charge Number: <<insert your league reference number for the charge>>

<<insert club name>> is required to submit an answer to the charge <<insert date to respond by>> by <<insert email/ post / online>> as outlined on the charge sheet below. Failure to reply to the charge will result in the club forfeiting the right to make representations or refute the charge and could result in further action being taken against the club, in accordance with League rules.

Please indicate which course of action you intend to pursue.

1. Accept the charge and submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers; or
2. Accept the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case of mitigation at a hearing before the Management Committee; or
3. Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers; or
4. Deny the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case at a hearing before the Management Committee.

This email charge sheet must be returned by <<insert date to respond by>> otherwise the case will be dealt with on the evidence available. This DOES NOT include any correspondence previously sent to the League Secretary, a Registrar or any other Committee member.

Only information included with the return of this charge will be considered by the discipline committee considering the case. If you choose options 1 or 3 the club will not be required to attend the discipline meeting. If you choose option 2 or 4 the club will be required to attend the discipline meeting. Details of the meeting date, venue and time will be confirmed in writing at least 14 days prior to the meeting

League Charge – Decision Template

FA0 <<insert club name>> Club Secretary

Re: Discipline Charge Number <<insert your league reference number for the charge>>

Following discussion of the charge, I can confirm the decision made regarding the above case was as follows.

TEAM: <<insert full team name – if a youth league add the age-group>>

FIXTURE: <<insert fixture>>

FIXTURE DATE: <<insert date of the fixture>>

LEAGUE RULE: <<insert rule number which you are issuing the charge under >>

Having taken into account the nature of the offence, the club's previous record and past precedence the League Committee decided the following:

<<insert outcome of the decision which has been made>>

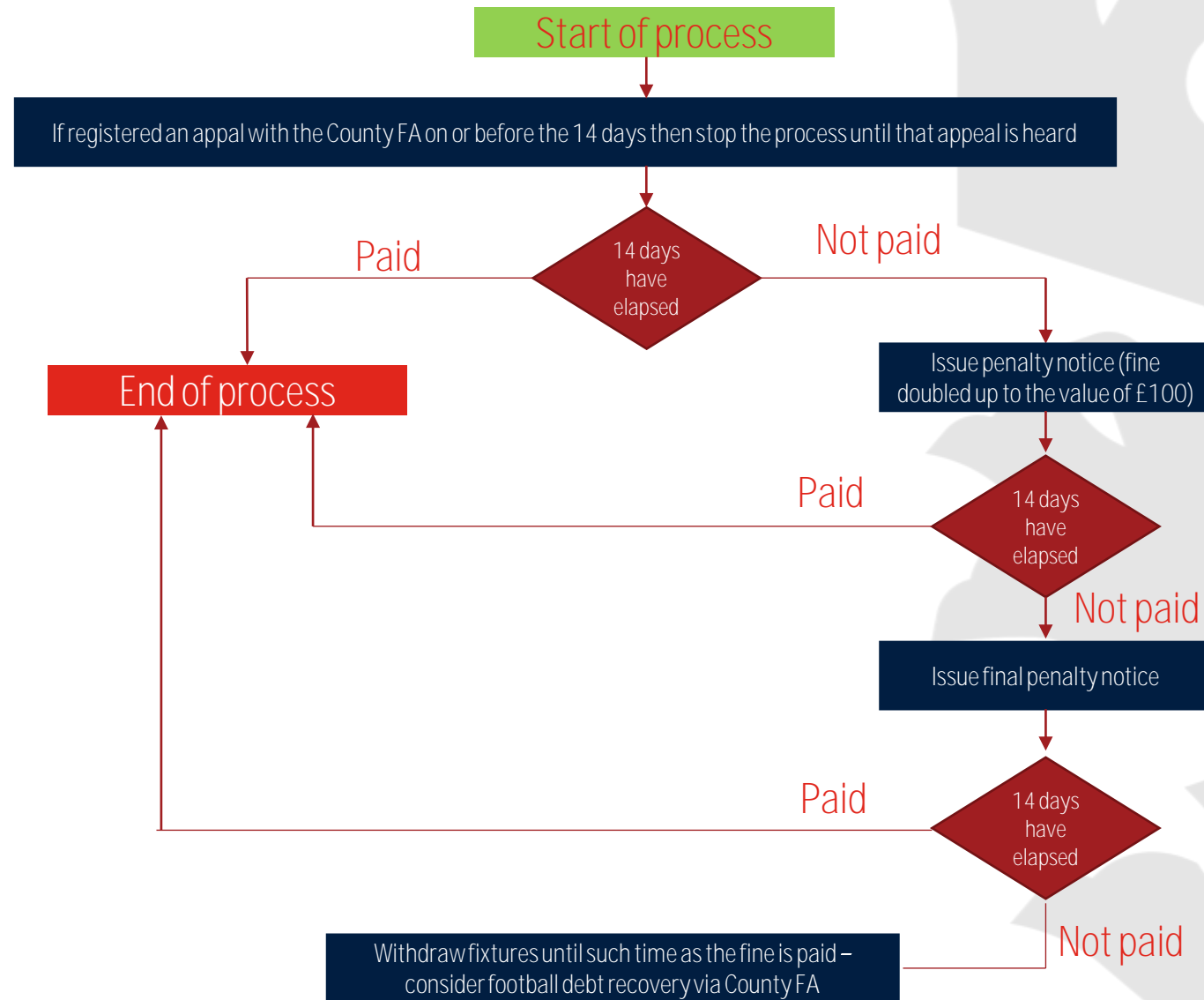
Please note that your club has the right of appeal to the County FA in accordance with Rule 7, as follows: Any appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee (£<<INSERT APPEAL FEE>>), which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Secretary. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority, in such respect the Sanctioning Authority may (but is not obliged to):

- (i) invite submissions by the parties involved; or
- (ii) *convene a hearing to hear the appeal; or*
- (iii) *permit new evidence; or*
- (iv) *impose deadlines as are appropriate.*

Any appeal shall not involve a re-hearing of the evidence considered by the Management Committee.

No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an AGM or SGM unless on the grounds of unconstitutional conduct.

Leagues fine - flowchart



League fine – letter/email template

FAO <<insert club name>> Club Secretary

Your club is in breach of league rules and has therefore incurred a fine of £ <<Insert fine amount>> , as a result of charge ref <<Insert charge reference number>>

Details as follows:

TEAM: <<insert full team name – if a youth league add the age-group>>

FIXTURE: <<insert fixture>>

FIXTURE DATE: <<insert date of the fixture>>

LEAGUE RULE: <<insert rule number which you are issuing the charge under >>

Fines to be paid within 14 days of the date of this letter/email <<Insert date of letter/email>> in accordance with competition Rule 6(I).

Failure to pay this fine by the due date will result in further action being taken as stated within the league rules.

Please forward all payments to the League Secretary with a copy of this letter/email. All cheques should be made payable to <<Insert league bank account name>> and any personal cheques should have the name of your club on the reverse.

You can also pay by electronic transfer to:

Account: <<Insert account name>>

Account number: <<Insert account number>>

Sort code: <<Insert sort code>>

Reference: <<Insert charge reference number>>

If using the electronic transfer method, please email the League Treasurer <<Insert league treasurer name and email address>> to state that payment has been made, so that checks can be made to prevent a penalty notice getting issued.

Please note that your club has the right of appeal to the County FA in accordance with Rule 7, as follows: Any appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee (£<<Insert appeal fee>>), which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Secretary. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority, in such respect the Sanctioning Authority may (but is not obliged to):

1. (i) invite submissions by the parties involved; or
2. (ii) convene a hearing to hear the appeal; or
3. (iii) permit new evidence; or
4. (iv) impose deadlines as are appropriate.

Any appeal shall not involve a rehearing of the evidence considered by the Management Committee.

No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an AGM or SGM unless on the grounds of unconstitutional conduct.

Leagues taking action against poorly behaved Clubs and Individuals

Leagues can take several steps to assist clubs and individuals to improve behaviour. Working with clubs, individuals and the County FA is crucial in addressing the problem.

Leagues can:

- ***Call the club/individual in for a meeting to account for their behaviour(s) and outline how to improve;***
- ***Refuse the club entry into invitational cups;***
- ***Refuse to offer fixtures to the teams or club if there are outstanding debts with the league, or if there has been a failure to reply.***
- ***Require multiple***-team clubs to operate with fewer teams if the league encounters continued poor administration.
- ***Vote on the future membership of the league at an EGM or AGM. The League must ensure it is a fair process.***
- ***Draw the attention of lenient sanctions by County FAs to the attention of The FA: discipline@TheFA.com***

Leagues should always be willing to work with teams and individuals to improve behaviour on and off the field. If they believe further training or help is required, they should address this to their County FA for potential assistance.

If leagues are considering taking action against poorly-behaved club(s) and individual(s) they should inform the County FA well in advance to discuss.

Club Appeals against League Disciplinary Decision

Clubs can appeal decisions taken by League Management Committees to a County FA Appeal Board. If the league has followed the correct process, then they should welcome an appeal.

How do member clubs lodge an appeal? An appeal must be lodged in writing to the Sanctioning Authority (the County FA/The FA) by mail or e-mail, along with an appeal fee (this is set by your sanctioning authority and will be in the League Rules) within 14 days of the written notice of the decision. Should the appeal be unsuccessful, the appeal fee may be retained by the County FA. You must copy the League Secretary in any notice of appeal.

The notice must state on which of the following four grounds the appeal is being lodged:

That the body whose decision is appealed against:

1. Failed to give the appellant a fair hearing; and/or
2. Misinterpreted or failed to comply with the rules or regulations relevant to its decision; and/or
3. Came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come; and/or
4. Imposed a penalty, award, order or sanction that was excessive.

An appeal can only be lodged by the party against which the decision was taken.

What happens next? The County FA will work with the appellant to confirm the grounds of the Appeal and that all relevant documentation has been provided. Notice of the Appeal will then be served on the League, requesting their observations and copies of all relevant documents within 21 days of the notice of appeal. An Appeal Board will then be convened to consider the appeal. New evidence will only be accepted by either party when an application to submit new evidence has been made and approved.

What happens at the appeal board? Both parties will have the opportunity to present their case to the Appeal Board, who may ask questions in return. The appeal board is not a re-hearing of the original case; it purely considers the grounds of the appeal. The Appellant and Respondent will not have the opportunity to question each other. The Appeal Board has the power to allow or dismiss the appeal, request a new hearing, take any action the original deciding body could have taken, or any other action it sees fit. The result of the appeal will be announced as soon as applicable. Decisions of the appeal board are final and binding.

Exclusion of Clubs or Teams

The Rule from SCOR/SCORY:

(A) At the AGM or SGM called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9, notice of motion having been duly circulated on the agenda by direction of the Management Committee, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to:

- (i) remove a member of the Management Committee from office,
- (ii) exclude any Club or Team from membership,

both of which must be supported by more than two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A member of the Management Committee or Club which is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

The team/club that is for possible exclusion needs to be informed before any communication is sent to all member clubs.

- ***The team/club should receive a copy of the rationale behind why the team/club has been put up for possible exclusion.***
- ***The possibly-excluded team/club should then have the opportunity to send out a written response via the League Secretary to other member clubs.***
- ***This response should ideally be sent to the other member clubs with notice of the AGM/SGM.***

At the AGM/SGM held for this purpose make sure the following agenda is followed:

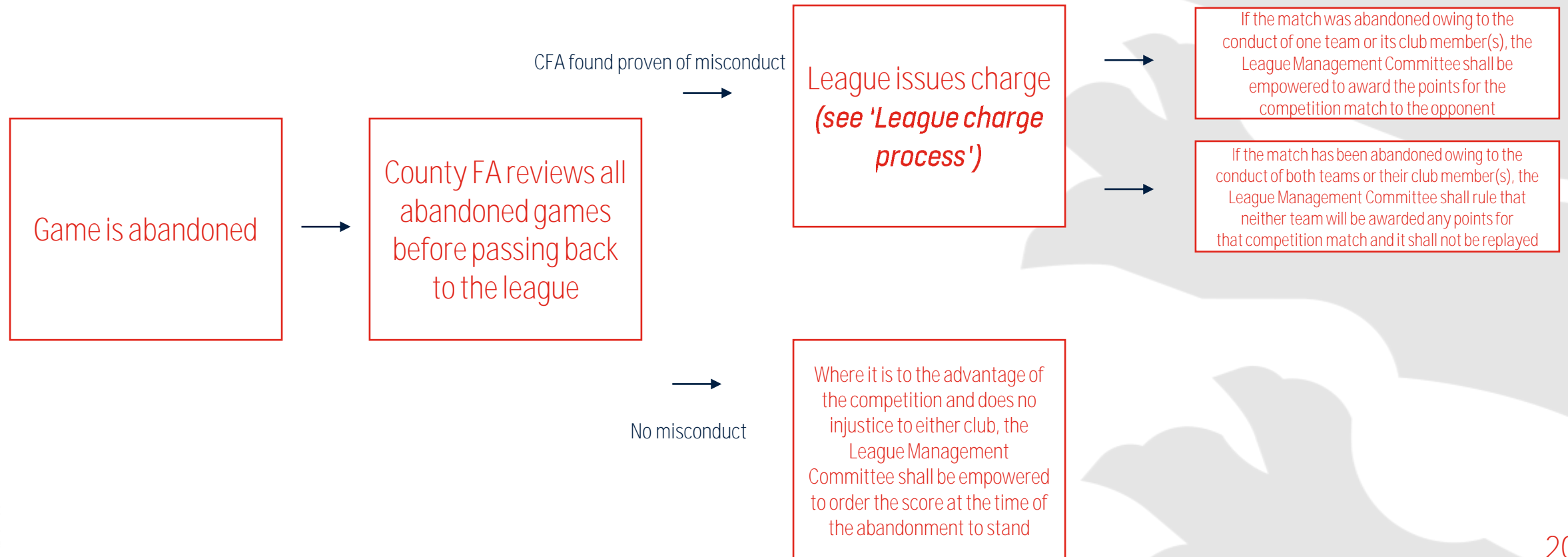
- ***Roll call;***
- ***Reason for putting the team/club up for exclusion;***
- ***Club/team response;***
- ***Questions via the Chair;***
- ***Voting/ballot.***

Note at the AGM/SGM only deal with facts and not opinions. You can only refer to cases that have concluded, so no reference to any live or pending cases.

Abandoned fixture process

SCOR/SCORY states:

The Management Committee 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 Management Committee shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a Competition Match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one Team or its Club member(s) they shall be empowered to award the points for the Competition 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 Management Committee shall rule that neither Team will be awarded any points for that Competition Match and it shall not be replayed. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Competition Match..



3G / 4G Pitches

The Rule from SCOR/SCORY:

Football Turf Pitches (3G/4G) are allowed in this Competition provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed ***ed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches. 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.

This means the 3G/4G pitch must appear on The FA Register of 3G pitches: <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>

The home club is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements.

League/Cup games in any age group cannot be played on 3G/4G pitches which are not on The FA Register of 3G/4G pitches.





LEAGUE PROGRAMME

PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

