

# MEMBERSHIP RULES

Words denoting the masculine gender include the feminine gender

## 1. TITLE, AFFILIATION AND INTERPRETATION

- (a) The title of the Association shall be the "Middlesex County Football Association Limited".
- (b) The Association shall be affiliated to The Football Association Limited.
- (c) Throughout these Rules and the Rules of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited Cup Competitions:
  - [i] "The Football Association Limited" means the governing body of Association Football in England as defined in Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.
  - [ii] "Recognised football association" means a body constituted in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and affiliated thereto.
  - [iii] "Council" means the body as constituted under Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.
  - [iv] "Committee" means a Standing Committee as constituted under Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.
  - [v] "Club" means an organisation constituted in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and as constituted under Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.
  - [vi] "Team" means part of a Club separately identified.
  - [vii] "Player" means a member of a Club who participates in Association Football.
  - [viii] "Headquarters of a Club" means the place declared by the Club to the Association as its Headquarters.
  - [ix] "Competition" means a body as constituted under Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.
  - [x] [x] "Representative Team" means a team of players selected from Clubs in membership of the Association or otherwise deemed to qualify including teams whose eligibility is by age and/or gender.
  - [xi] "Club Official" means a member of a Club appointed to hold office within that Club.
  - [xii] "Match Official" means a Referee, Assistant Referee, Fourth Official or Substitute Referee.
  - [xiii] "Board" means the Board of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited as constituted under Article 72 of the Articles of the Middlesex County Football Association Limited.

## 2. AREA

The area of the Association shall be the geographical County of Middlesex as shown bounded by the solid line on the map adjoining these Rules.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

(a) **There shall be the following categories of Full Members:**

- [i] Clubs classified as “Senior” by this Association and having their Headquarters within the area of the Association; on acceptance into membership this Association shall be known as their “Parent Association”.
- [ii] Clubs classified as “Intermediate” by this Association and having their Headquarters within the area of the Association; on acceptance into membership this Association shall be known as their “Parent Association”.
- [iii] Junior Clubs having their Headquarters within the area of the Association; on acceptance into membership this Association shall be known as their “Parent Association”.
- [iv] Youth Clubs who provide football for teams participating in youth football only having their Headquarters within the area of the Association; on acceptance into membership this Association shall be known as their “Parent Association”.
- [v] Competitions (other than [vi] and [vii] below) sanctioned by this Association or, if sanctioned by another recognised football association, affiliated to this Association.
- [vi] Inter Departmental Competitions (i.e. those restricted to players of one Club) sanctioned by this Association or, if sanctioned by another recognised football association, affiliated to this Association.
- [vii] Small Side Competitions (i.e. those where the maximum number of players in each competing team is less than eleven) sanctioned by this Association or, if sanctioned by another recognised football association, affiliated to this Association.

(b) **There shall be the following categories of Associate Members of the Association:**

- [i] Clubs classified as “Senior” by and whose parent Association is another recognised football association, on acceptance into membership shall be known as “Associate Clubs”.
- [ii] Clubs classified as “Intermediate” by and whose parent Association is another recognised football association, on acceptance into membership shall be known as “Associate Clubs”.
- [iii] Junior Clubs whose parent Association is another recognised football association, on acceptance into membership shall be known as “Associate Clubs”.
- [iv] Youth Clubs who provide football for teams participating in youth football only and whose parent Association is another recognised football Association, on acceptance into membership shall be known as “Associate Clubs”.
- [v] Ancillary Competitions organised by competitions which are duly sanctioned and affiliated to this Association.
- [vi] Charity Competitions that are duly sanctioned and affiliated to this Association.
- [vii] Clubs constituted for the sole purpose of participating in Small Side Competitions and affiliated to this Association.
- [viii] Teams in Inter Departmental Competitions and affiliated to this Association.

(c) Before being admitted to membership every Club must satisfy the Association that it is properly constituted for the playing of Association Football in accordance with the Laws of the Game and observes the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited.

An Intermediate or Junior Club in Full Membership of the Association shall affiliate separately in respect of the regular playing day of the Competition(s) in which they compete (*i.e. Clubs with teams playing in Saturday and Sunday Competitions are required to register separate affiliations*).

- (d) Before being admitted to membership every Competition must satisfy the Association that it consists of properly constituted Clubs and is sanctioned in accordance with the Regulations of The Football Association Limited.
- (e) All Senior Clubs seeking membership of the Association must make the application by completing Form 'A' and submit it to the Association to arrive by 31st March. All other Clubs must submit Form 'A' and the appropriate annual subscription to the Association to arrive by 31st May.
- (f) All Competitions seeking membership of the Association shall make the application by completing a form supplied by the Association and submit it to the Association to arrive by 31st May.
- (g) All Clubs and Competitions which have been previously accepted into membership of the Association and which seek to continue membership for the year commencing on 1st July shall complete the form mentioned in section (e) (Clubs) or section (f) (Competitions) of this Rule and submit it to the Association to arrive by 31st May.

#### **4. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

- (a) All Clubs and Competitions in membership shall be required to pay the subscription appropriate to the category of membership defined in Rule 3 or as laid down by The Football Association Limited or by the Board.
- (b) Clubs who became members under Rule 3(a)[i], [ii] and [iii] shall be required to pay an administration fee per team, other than for the first team, as set out by the Association from time to time.
- (c) The foregoing subscriptions shall be subject to the addition of a sum equal to Value Added Tax at the rate current at the prevailing date. The subscription shall cover the period from 1st July to the following 30th June.
- (d) All Clubs whose Parent Association is this Association shall effect Public Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance in respect of all teams registered under this Rule. The Association shall arrange such cover to a level agreed annually by the Council, on behalf of all Clubs in membership, who shall be required to pay the required premium, unless a copy of a valid policy certificate confirming equal cover is furnished at the time of affiliation.
- (e) The subscription becomes due on 15th May in each year. A Club which has not paid the subscription by the 31st May and which subsequently desires to renew its membership shall be required to pay a fine as determined by the Association from time to time.

#### **5. REGULATIONS**

- (a) (a) The Board may make such Regulations as considered necessary and such Regulations shall have the same status as these Rules.

#### **6. COMMITTEES**

- (a) The quorum for any meeting of any Committee shall be three members.
- (b) Voting at Committee meetings shall be by a show of hands and all matters shall be decided by the majority of votes cast.
- (c) Should any Standing Committee wish to co-opt any persons who would be of service to the Association, the Committee shall submit the proposal to the Board for approval.

- (d) In addition to such persons appointed under section (c) of this Rule, the Referees' Committee shall be empowered to co-opt not more than two persons nominated by the Middlesex Referees' Association who shall have the same privileges as an appointed member of the Referees' Committee.

## **7. SANCTIONING OF COMPETITIONS**

- (a) Competitions shall be sanctioned in accordance with the *"Regulations for the Sanction and Control of Leagues and Competitions"* issued by The Football Association Limited and subject thereto, a Competition consisting of Clubs, all of which have the Association as the Parent Association, shall be under the jurisdiction of the Association and shall make application for sanction each year as provided in this Rule. Where some of the Clubs in the Competition have, as their Parent Association, one or two other recognised football associations, an application may be made to the Association but the Competition shall be sanctioned by and be under the jurisdiction of, a Committee with members from each of the recognised football associations concerned.
- (b) Applications for the sanctioning of new Charity competitions shall be made on Form 'E'. Applications for the sanctioning of other new Competitions shall be made on Form 'D'. Two copies of the proposed Rules of the Competition shall be submitted with each application.
- (c) Applications from Competitions which have been previously sanctioned and which propose to alter their Rules, Constitution or Clubs shall make application in accordance with section (b) of this Rule and in addition, submit with the application two copies of the proposed alterations to the Rules set out side by side with the existing Rules affected, by 31st of July.
- (d) Applications from Competitions which have been previously sanctioned and which are not altering their Rules, Constitution or Clubs shall make application each year on Form "D" or "E" as appropriate which, when completed, shall be submitted to the Association to arrive no later than 3 weeks before the proposed commencement date of the Competition and no later than 31st August.
- (e) Clubs may make applications for the sanctioning of the Inter Departmental Competitions and if the Competitions are sanctioned, the Clubs concerned shall be held responsible for the good management and proper control of the Competitions.
- (f) Applications for the sanctioning of Small Side Competitions shall be made on Form "D" or "E" as appropriate and submitted together with two copies of the Rules to the Association, no later than 3 weeks before the proposed commencement date of the Competition. Applications received less than three weeks before the proposed commencement date may be processed and may be referred to the Disciplinary Sub Committee.
- (g) All Competitions sanctioned under this Rule must be conducted in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and no Competition may allow matches to be played until the sanction for the Competition has been received.
- (h) The Association may exclude a Club from the granting of sanction of a Competition in the event of that Club contravening the Rules of the Association.

## **8. REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS**

- (a) A player born within the area of this Association shall be eligible for selection for a representative team. Additionally, a player shall be eligible for selection if he is a member of a Club in membership of the Association. No player who has participated in matches for another recognised football association shall be eligible to play for this Association in the same season.
- (b) At least 10 days before the proposed date of the match, the Association shall notify the Secretaries of the Clubs concerned of the players selected and, if more than one player is selected from a Club, also notify the Secretary of the Competition in which the Club competes. If this section of this Rule is not observed, the player, if he so desires, may be released from the representative team. However, any such action will not prejudice the selection of the player concerned for teams on other occasions.

- (c) Any player selected for a representative match may be released by the Association for any good and sufficient reason.
- [i] In the case of a player selected for an Adult representative match, if released, that player may not take part in any other match for any other team or club on the day of the representative match without the express, written permission of the Adult Representative Match Sub Committee Chairman or Secretary.
  - [ii] In the case of a player selected for a Youth representative match, if released, that player may not take part in any other match for any other team or club either on the day of the representative match, the day preceding it or the day following it without the express, written permission of the Youth Representative Match Sub Committee Chairman or Secretary.
  - [iii] If, in the case of a player selected for any representative team who has not been released according to [i] or [ii] above, that player fails to comply with the arrangements made for the match in question or does not attend at the appointed venue, he may be charged with misconduct.
  - [iv] Any Club, Club Official or other person within the jurisdiction of the Association who encourages a player to ignore the arrangements of the Association in relation to any representative match may be charged with misconduct.
- (d) The Association may make awards to players who participate in representative matches. The awards shall be made dependent on the number of matches in which a player has taken part. The Association may, from time to time, decide on the type of award or awards and shall decide the number of appearances that will qualify for an award.

For the purpose of this section of the Rule, an "approved match" is one so designated by the Association. For the purpose of this Rule, a player who is named as a substitute in a representative team shall be regarded as having participated in the match.

## **9. MISCONDUCT**

- (a) A player of a Club of which this Association is the Parent Association (excluding a Club in Full Membership of The Football Association Limited) who, whilst participating in a match, is the subject of a report by a referee for violating the Laws of the Game, shall be dealt with by the Association in accordance with the "Memorandum of Procedures For Dealing With Misconduct Before, During or After Matches and Committed by Players or Clubs Dealt With by County and Other Affiliated Associations but not by The Football Association". The Association may also deal with violations by players of Clubs whose Parent Association is another recognised football association and may agree to violations by players of Clubs for which this Association is the Parent Association being dealt with by another recognised football association.
- (b) If the report of the referee referred to in section (a) of this Rule contains allegations that a player has assaulted a match official or player, the Association shall, without delay, investigate the report and if the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Association or their nominees are satisfied that a prima facie case can be made out against the player, shall take steps to ensure that a disciplinary charge is made against the player within twenty eight (28) days of the assault. The player shall not participate in any football activity from the date he is notified of the charge until the Association has heard and adjudicated on the charge.
- (c) If, following the investigation of a referee's report under sections (a) and (b) of this Rule, the Association decides that a fine, with or without additional costs, shall be imposed, the Club of which the player is a member shall be responsible to the Association for the payment. The player shall be liable to reimburse the Club for any such payments made and if he shall fail to do so, the player may be charged with misconduct.
- (d) If a player on receipt of a communication from the Association, which alleges he has been guilty of a violation of the Laws of the Game, desires to have a personal hearing, he must deposit with the

Association the sum so prescribed. The deposited sum shall be returned to the player if he is found not guilty of the charge.

- (e) The deposited sum shall be returned to the Club or Competition if they are found not guilty of the charge.
- (f) The Association shall have the power to charge a player with continuing misconduct after the player has received five cautions in the then current season.
- (g) A Club of which this Association is the Parent Association whose players are persistently found guilty of misconduct may be censured, with or without a fine and, at the discretion of the Association, may have its membership of this Association suspended or terminated (subject to section (i) of this Rule).
- (h) All Competitions and Clubs in membership of the Association shall be responsible for the conduct of their officials, spectators and supporters and shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent misconduct.
- (i) When a report of alleged misconduct is received by the Association (including a report from a referee alleging misconduct by a person other than a player) it shall be dealt with in accordance with "Disciplinary Procedures - Regulation Two".
- (j) If, after due investigation by the Commission appointed, there is a finding of guilt, the Association shall have the power (i) to impose a fine, (ii) to censure, (iii) to suspend for a stated period, (iv) to impose such other penalty as thought fit. However, the Commission shall not have the power to expel a Club from membership but may so recommend to Board.

If the Board accepts the recommendation it shall then be put to a Special General Meeting to be held at least fourteen (14) days after the Competition, Club or Official has been informed of the proposal. The proposal shall be declared approved if a majority of the representatives present and voting at the Special General Meeting vote in favour of the proposal.

- (k) It shall be misconduct for any member Club to engage in any football activities with a Club under suspension during the period of suspensions or with any Club after exclusion by this Association. Should the Association receive a report alleging a violation of this section of this Rule, the procedure set out in sections (h) and (i) of this Rule shall be operated.

## 10. APPEALS

- (a) Other than appeals lodged under section (c) of this Rule, all appeals under this Rule must be lodged with the Chief Executive within fourteen (14) days of posting of the original decision or decisions appealed against. If sent by post, it must be sent by Recorded Delivery or Registered Post. Every appeal must be accompanied by an appeal fee as stated in the Rules of the Competition or, if not stated, of £25.
- (b) A Club or individual may appeal against a decision of a Competition sanctioned by the Middlesex County Football Association Limited provided all domestic appeals procedures have been exhausted.
- (c) A Club may also appeal against a decision of the Association's Adult Cups Sub Committee or Youth Cups Sub Committee in accordance with County Cup Rules 12(f) (Adult); 14(f) (Youth).
- (d) In lodging an appeal, an appellant shall state full reasons for the appeal and specify on which one or more of the following clauses the appeal is based. An Appeals Board shall adjudicate only on a clause or clauses specified:
  - [i] The Competition failed to give the appellant a fair hearing;
  - [ii] The Competition acted unconstitutionally;
  - [iii] The Competition came to a decision which it should not have come to on the facts of the case;

- [iv] Against the penalty imposed.
- (e) Appeals shall not be withdrawn except with the consent of this Association. The operation of any decision of a Committee imposing a suspension shall not be held in abeyance pending the hearing of the appeal unless the appellant has made application in his appeal and it has been granted by this Association.
- (f) The Appeals Board shall consist of a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members of the Association unless the Board otherwise directs.
- (g) An Appeal Hearing shall not be conducted as a re-hearing of the case. Fresh evidence shall not be permitted except with the permission of the Appeals Board.
- (h) The Appeals Board shall have the power to adjourn the hearing wholly or in part and, having heard the submissions of both parties, shall make one of the following decisions:
  - [I] To allow or dismiss the appeal;
  - [ii] To vary the decision or decisions against;
  - [iii] To order a re-hearing of the original case by the Competition.
- (i) In the event of an appeal being dismissed or the decision varied, the Appeals Board may order the appeal fee to be forfeited and may make a further order for the payment of costs.
- (j) In the event of the appeal being allowed, the appeal fee shall be returned.
- (k) The decision of the Association's Appeal Board hearing appeals against decisions of Competitions sanctioned by the Association shall be final on the appellant and respondent and there shall be no further appeal permitted by them. The Board, at its absolute discretion may set aside a decision of the Appeals Board and order a re-hearing of the Appeal.
- (l) A Club, Player or Official may appeal against a decision of the Association (*but not against the Association's Appeals Board whose decision is final as shown in (k) above*).

The appeal must be sent by Registered Post or Recorded Delivery to The Chief Executive, The Football Association Limited, not later than fourteen (14) days of posting of the decision against which the appeal is lodged and be accompanied by a fee as determined by The Football Association Limited. At the same time an exact copy shall be sent to the Chief Executive in a similar manner.

It shall set out the exact grounds of the appeal as specified in section (d) of this Rule. The decision of the Appeals Board of The Football Association Limited shall be final.

## 11. MISCELLANEOUS

- (a) **Benevolent Funds** – The Association shall maintain such funds and may order that the proceeds of specific matches be paid thereto. The Trustees who shall be the President, Chief Executive and Finance Director, shall manage the funds and shall have the power to make grants to players and others, including their dependants. The Trustees shall make an appropriate report to the Board from time to time.
- (b) **Club and Competition Records** – All Clubs and Competitions in membership must retain in safe custody all books and vouchers relating to at least six years preceding the current season and be able to produce them whenever required by the Association.
- (c) **Publication of Proceedings** – The Association shall be entitled to publish in any manner which the Chief Executive shall think fit or as the Board may direct, reports of its proceedings, acts and resolutions, whether such publication shall or shall not reflect on the character of any Competition,

Club, Official or Player and every such Competition, Club Official or Player shall be deemed to have assented to such publication.

- (d) **Entry to Grounds** – Members of the Council shall be provided with a pass, which, on production, shall entitle them to be admitted to any part of the ground of a member club when matches are being played.
- (e) **Competition Benevolent Funds** – A Competition may establish and administer a Benevolent Fund (or similar fund) provided the Board has given prior consent. The consent must be sought annually by the Competition and the application must be accompanied by the final accounts and balance sheet for the most recent financial year of the fund. Payments out of the fund shall be restricted to grants in respect of injury or illness suffered by players and others arising from participating in football.
- (f) **Unaffiliated football** – Clubs, Players, Officials, Referees and Assistant Referees under the jurisdiction of this Association shall not take part in matches with or against any Club which is not a member of this Association or another recognised football association.
- (g) **Documentary Evidence** – The Council shall have power to call upon any Competition, Club, Officials, Referee, Assistant Referee, or Player to produce any books letters, documents or other evidence the Council may desire.
- (h) **Players without written Contracts** – The provisions of The Football Association Limited's Rules and Regulations regarding players without written contracts shall apply and the Association shall be empowered to deal with any breach of those Rules so far as a Full Member is concerned.
- (i) **Player Registration** – All players participating in football activities sanctioned by this Association shall be registered in a manner prescribed by the Board. (This rule to be implemented so as to be effective from a date as decided by the Board.)
- (j) Youth players under the statutory school-leaving age are not permitted to play in more than one full-duration match in any one day except when playing double-headed fixtures in affiliated Leagues and/or Competitions where provision exists for the playing of such fixtures.
- (k) Except with the permission of the Board, no player under statutory school-leaving age shall be eligible to be registered, where that player is currently registered for any other club affiliated with this or any other Association with any other football competition whose normal day for playing fixtures is on a Sunday. If it is subsequently discovered that a player, registered under section (j) of this Rule has registered with another club whose day for playing fixtures is a Sunday (whether that club is affiliated to this or another Association), the registration shall be cancelled.
- (l) Each Club in membership with and whose Parent Association is this Association, shall enter each of its teams in at least one of the Association's Cup Competitions applicable to its status unless special exemption has been applied for and granted or where the team does not compete in a recognised League.

## 12. LIABILITIES OF CLUBS, PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS

Note: This Rule cannot be applied to:

- [i] A schoolboy or schoolgirl who reaches the age of 16 years during a scholastic year, with a birth date that enables him or her to leave school at the end of the Spring Term. He or she ceases to be qualified as a schoolboy or schoolgirl under the school-leaving age from the end of the school Spring term in that year.
- [ii] A schoolboy or schoolgirl who reaches the age of 16 years during a scholastic year, with a birth date that allows him or her to leave school at the end of the Summer Term. In these cases he or she ceases to be qualified as a schoolboy or schoolgirl under the statutory school-leaving age as from 16 June in that year.



- (a) Football debts are defined as those costs arising directly from football activity and as such would include disciplinary costs (e.g. fines), match costs (e.g. match fees) and playing expenses (e.g. pitch hire). Incidental costs (e.g. fund-raising activities, club subscriptions) do not fall within the scope of Football Debt Recovery.
- (b) A member of a Club shall not be allowed to leave his Club unless he has met all his obligations to that Club. A Club in membership of this Association shall not be allowed to leave a Competition unless the Club has met all obligations to that Competition. A Club member or a member Club infringing this Rule may be charged with misconduct.
- (c) The Association should be approached as soon as it is clear there is a problem. In all cases this should be within 28 days of formal payment being requested and 56 days of the debt being incurred.
- (d) Before asking the Association to take action over financial obligations that are outstanding, it is incumbent on a Member Club or a Competition to take reasonable steps to recover a debt. This would normally include approaching the debtor personally as well as contacting them in writing to seek payment. A notice substantially in the following terms shall be sent by registered post or recorded delivery:  
*"I hereby apply to you for the immediate payment of the sum of this sum being the amount of your indebtedness to this club/competition as shown by the particulars given below. I give you notice that, unless I receive settlement of this claim not later than ten days after receipt of this letter, I shall submit details of your failure to settle the claim to the Middlesex County Football Association Limited and request that you be dealt with in accordance with the Rules of that Association which provide for suspension of a defaulter from participation in football in any capacity."*  
 Should the Club member or Club in membership of a Competition wish to contest the claim, a written reply detailing the reasons must be sent to the sender of the notice, to reach him not later than ten days after receipt of the notice.
- (e) If, within the stipulated period, a remittance in settlement of the claim is not received and no objection is lodged, the Club or Competition shall submit details to the Chief Executive of the Association not later than 28 days after service of the notice referred to in section (d) of this Rule. The details shall include a copy of the notice served, proof of delivery and in the case of a Competition, a list of the names and addresses of the members of the Club concerned. Upon receipt, the Association must immediately take steps to verify whether the debt is valid and notify the creditor and debtor of its decision.
- (f) Upon being satisfied that a qualifying debt exists, the Association must apportion the debt on a pro-rata basis and notify the individual or individuals concerned. An Administration Fee, as determined from time to time, will be added to each individual's pro-rata debt.
- (g) Upon being notified, an individual must pay the debt within 21 days of the issue of the notification letter or appeal in accordance with the appeal procedures. If payment or appeal is not received the individual will be suspended *sine die* until the debt is paid and he is notified that the suspension has been lifted. This suspension will commence from (and include) the 22nd day after the date the notification was issued.
- (h) A player suspended under this Rule is prohibited from participation in all football activity, whether as a player or in the management of football, for any Club in membership of this Association or any other recognised football association. When a Club is suspended, its members shall not play for, nor engage in the management of, any Club in membership of this Association or of another recognised football association.
- (i) It is an offence for a Club, League and/or Competition to accept into its membership or registration, a person who is suspended under this Rule. Offenders shall be reported to the Chief Executive.

### **13. ALTERATIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP RULES**

- (a) Alterations to these Membership Rules may only be made at an Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose. Any proposals submitted to an Annual General Meeting other than those emanating from the Board shall be in writing and be delivered to the Chief

Executive not later than the fifteenth day of February. All proposals, other than those emanating from the Board shall be signed by the proposer and seconder. The Secretary shall set forth all proposals to alter the Membership Rules in the Agenda for the meeting, a copy of which shall be sent to all Competitions, Clubs, Officers and Councillors at least twenty one days before the date fixed for the meeting.

- (b) No Membership Rule or Resolution may be amended or Resolution revoked within a period of eighteen (18) months from the date on which the Membership Rule is passed, unless such amendment or revocation is passed by seventy five per cent (75%) of those present and voting at the Meeting, or is moved by the Council of the Association. Similarly no defeated proposed Membership Rule or Membership Rule change or Resolution may be proposed again within eighteen (18) months.

