

Membership Rules 2025-26

Membership Rules of Norfolk County Football Association
(The "Association")

The Rules are made pursuant to the Association's Articles of Association and may only be changed in accordance with Article 47. If there is any conflict between these Rules and the Articles of Association, the Articles of Association shall prevail.

1. Membership

All clubs and leagues shall be properly constituted. Such constitution shall provide for the election of at least three officers at an Annual General Meeting and they shall include a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Clubs and Leagues shall maintain Minutes of all meetings, appropriate books of accounts and shall have a banking account in the name of the club/league. If the Club has assigned its entitlement to such monies or any part of them, payment will be made by the association as directed in the assignment. This assignment must be completed and signed by at least two Officers of the Club.

The Membership of the Association shall be as defined in the Articles of Association. All affiliated clubs which are held electronically by the Association for the current season shall be regarded as affiliates of the Association. Such affiliates shall be entitled to attend any General meetings of the Association but shall not have the right to vote at such meetings.

All eligible open age Clubs must enter at least one County Cup Competition, including any Club whose only open age teams are female, with the exception of Professional Clubs.

The Cup that is entered must be the most senior Competition for which the Club is eligible unless otherwise agreed by the Board or any delegated Committee appointed for that purpose.

2. Affiliation Fees

Each season, every Club is required to pay a fee for each team that they affiliate as detailed within the annual affiliation process.

3. Unaffiliated Teams

No teams shall be permitted to play in any competition sanctioned by The Football Association or any other Association until the required payment is received at the registered office and the affiliation process has been completed.

4. Long Service Awards

All Long Service Awards will only be considered by the completion of the official nomination form (online or hard copy) which is accessible from NorfolkFA.com or alternatively sent out from County Headquarters on request.

Nominations must be fully completed and submitted to the County FA by no later than 1 July, Annual nominations will be considered by the Board at the first meeting following the deadline date. The following categories' are eligible for nomination:

FA Awards

The FA's 100 Year Award for Clubs

Awarded to those clubs which can provide evidence that the club has been in existence for a period of 100 years

The FA's 50 Year Service to Football

Awarded to those individuals, who have given 50 years' service as a player, referee, observer, coach or administrator from the age of 18

Club Awards

Service as a Club Officer or Official

Awarded to those individuals, who have served an individual club for a specified minimum period of time whilst holding the position of an elected club officer or committee member. Awards are available for 10, 15 and 25 years' service.

League Awards

Service as a League Officer or Official

Awarded to those individuals, who have served in any league sanctioned by Norfolk FA for a specified minimum period of time whilst holding a position as an elected league officer or committee member. Awards are available for 10, 15 and 25 years' service.

Match Officials Awards

Service as a Match Official

Awarded to those individuals, who have registered and refereed consecutively for a specified minimum period of time in the County of Norfolk. Awards are available for 10, 15 and 25 years' service.

Groundsman Awards

Service as a Club Groundsman

Awarded to those individuals, who have undertaken the duties of a Norfolk club Groundsman for a specified minimum period of time. Awards are available for 10, 15 and 25 years' service.

5. Breach of rules and misconduct

In the event of any club, body or individual who are affiliated, or subject to the jurisdiction of this Association being reported for a breach of rules or misconduct, the Board or a Commission appointed by the Board shall investigate the report.

If the club, body or individual is proved guilty to the satisfaction of the Board or Commission they shall have the power to order the name of the offending club, body or individual to be removed from this Association, or suspended for a stated period, or be with in such manner as the Board or Commission may think fit.

Any club, body or individual playing with, or against the offending club, body or individual after such removal, or during such time of suspension shall also be dealt with as the Board or Commission may think fit.

No suspended individual, or member or any club or body so suspended or removed from this Association shall be eligible for membership of any other club affiliated to, or body sanctioned by, this Association without the special permission of the Board. The Board or Commission may also order any offending club, body or individual to pay all expenses incurred in hearing the case.

Field offences shall be dealt with as laid down in the Memorandum of Procedures for dealing with field offences committed by participants.

6. Responsibility for Misconduct

Every club is responsible to the Association for the action of its Players, Officials and Spectators. Clubs are further required to take all precautions necessary to prevent Spectators threatening or assaulting Officials and Players before, during, or at the conclusion of matches. Referees, Assistant Referees, Players or Officials shall not make bets on any football match in which they are involved.

7. Inspection

This Association shall have the right to request the provision to this Association of any documents or information held by any Club, League, Charity or other Competitions, including, but not limited to, meeting minutes, accounts and details regarding Club Structure. A minimum of two affiliated clubs' documents shall be inspected annually under Football Association Rules. A minimum of one sanctioned league's documents shall also be inspected annually.

8. Club & Referee Colours

No team playing in any competition sanctioned by this Association shall play in predominately black, dark grey, navy or dark blue shirts. Prior to purchasing a new kit it is recommended that a Club contact the this Association if they are unsure whether the kit will be permitted.

In all competitions sanctioned by this Association, Match Officials are permitted to wear uniforms comprising a plain shirt, which must be almost entirely black with a white or black collar and black shorts. Alternatively Match Officials may wear non-black shirts, in which case the shirt must be almost entirely of a single colour, with black shorts. In all cases socks must be black and the sock top will be black, white or the colour of the shirt or its collar.

In the event of a Match Official being appointed to a match involving neutral assistants, all the Match Officials must wear shirts of the same colour.

If the Match Official(s) are wearing a coloured shirt, in the event of such shirt clashing with either team, the Match Official(s) must wear an alternative colour that does not clash or alternatively wear a black shirt.

9. County Team

When a player has been selected by this Association to play in a representative match, no club affiliated to this Association shall permit the player to play for them on that day or in a match during the 48 hours immediately preceding the time of the kick-off of the representative match, unless permission is given by the Chief Executive of the Association. Failure to comply may result in a fine not exceeding £100.

10. Special Distinction Award

The Board may, at their discretion, give an award to any Player who has, in their opinion, especially distinguished himself in County Matches. They may also, at their discretion, give a special award for exceptionally distinguished service under like circumstances for distinguished service as a club player.

11. Non-affiliated Clubs

No club affiliated to this Association shall play any matches with clubs not affiliated to this or another Association. All Leagues, Charity, and other Competitions, shall be sanctioned by this Association. Clubs breaking this Rule shall be dealt with as deemed fit by the Board.

12. Access to Grounds

Designated Staff and Directors shall have free access to any ground, or part thereof, of any club affiliated to this Association, when on Official County FA business, upon showing their official card or giving other satisfactory proof of their identity. An identification card shall be issued to designated Staff, but such card shall be and remain the property of the Association and be returnable to the Chief Executive of the Association on leaving the association.

13. Right of Appeal

Any club, body or individual wishing to appeal against a decision of this Association shall forward to discipline@TheFA.com or by post to The Judicial Services Department, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London, SW1P 9EQ within 14 days from the date of the meeting at which the Association gave its decision and by special delivery or signed for post, a notice setting forward the grounds of the appeal together with the sum of Fifty Pounds (£50).

At the same time an exact copy of the notice must be sent to the Chief Executive of this Association, also by special delivery or signed for post. In the case of a body or club, the appeal must be signed by the Secretary, or their nominated deputy and one member of the Committee.

Appeals cannot be made in regard to matters arising out of the Competitions of this Association when the Rules provide that the decision of this Association shall be final.

The Appeals Board appointed by The Football Association to hear the appeal shall have the power to order the Fifty Pounds (£50) to be forfeited, if it thinks fit, and may, in addition, order the appellant concerned to pay the cost of the hearing of the appeal.

14. County Colours & Representation

The County Colours are Cardinal (red) and Green. The County playing colours are:

- Home – Green & White Shirts, Green Shorts & White Socks
- Away – Cardinal (Red) & White Shirts, Cardinal (Red) Shorts & White Socks

County Youth Team

First Appearances

Any player who represents the Association in one match shall be awarded a County Certificate.

County Colours

Any player playing in two (2) County Youth Matches shall be awarded his County Colours

County Caps

Any player who plays in four (4) County Youth Matches shall be awarded a County Cap.

15. Reports in the Media & the Public Domain including electronic and social media platforms

The Association shall have absolute power to publish through the media, or in any other manner it shall think fit, a report of all or any of its acts and resolutions, whether the same shall or shall not reflect on the character or conduct of any Club, Body, Player, Match Official or Spectator affiliated, sanctioned, registered or subject to the Association. Every such Club, Body, Player, Match Official or Spectator shall, by being so affiliated, sanctioned, registered or subject, be deemed to have assented to such publication.

16. Regulations Concerning Approaches

All affiliated Clubs must comply with FA Rules C89 to C98 with regards to approaches to players. Clubs breaking this rule shall be dealt with in line with the relevant FA Regulations.

17. Leagues and Competitions

The Rules of all Leagues and Competitions affiliated to the Association shall, be submitted to the Association, in line with the dates as the Board shall determine each year. All Leagues and Competitions shall be advised on the agreed dates by no later than 31 December in the current season.

Failure to comply with the dates and requirements determined by the Board may result in the issue of a maladministration charge in line with Rule 24, not exceeding £100 and the refusal of sanction.

Clubs or players may appeal to the Association against the decision of a sanctioned league or competition. Such an appeal must be made to the Head of Football Services of the Association, within 14 days of official notification of the decision against which they are appealing, accompanied by an appeal fee of £35 (which may be forfeited and costs may be awarded against the appellant if the appeal is dismissed).

Sanction fees for leagues in the current season are:

Open Age Division	£85
Open Age Cup	£75
Youth Division	£85
Youth Cup	£75

18. Sanctioning of One Off Matches and Tournaments

One off Matches and Tournaments must apply for sanction in the manner prescribed by the Association not later than 14 days before the match / tournament is due to take place.

Sanction fees for the current season are:

One off Matches	£5 per unaffiliated team
Tournaments	
(a) 15 teams or less	£15
(b) More than 15 but less than 30 teams	£25
(c) 30 teams or more	£40

In the event of a one off match or tournament being played for charity and / or as a benefit match then the sanction fee may be waived at the discretion of the Association who may also request to see evidence of the accounts of the match.

19. Clubs and Team Names

No club or team shall be allowed to change its name after affiliating in any one season (except in extenuating circumstances). A club or team may only change its name in the close season with the consent of the most senior league in which it competes. A club shall not have the same name as any other club affiliated to this Association. A club first affiliating to this Association shall have the priority to a name, but they shall lose that right upon not affiliating for any one season.

This Association reserves the right to refuse permission for a club and/or team to use a name if it is deemed inappropriate for any reason.

20. Rules Governing Referees

All referees registered to Norfolk FA shall be governed by the relevant Rules as published by The FA and this Association at all times.

21. Referees' Markings

Sanctioned Leagues shall ensure that all teams mark referees in accordance with the scheme laid down by The Football Association

22. Defunct Leagues and Clubs

A resolution to dissolve the League / club shall only be proposed at a General Meeting and shall be carried by a majority of at least three-quarters of the members present.

The dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the members of the club / league committee shall be responsible for the winding up of the assets and liabilities of the league / club.

Any surplus assets remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the league / club shall be transferred in consultation with Norfolk County FA to another Club, a Competition, Norfolk County FA or The FA for use by them for related community sports or they may be held in trust for a period of not less than five years by Norfolk County FA.

After the expiration of five years the Association may dispose of the assets and/or cups and trophies to the benefit of football or community sport.

23. Insurance arranged by the Association

All member clubs, except those involved solely in small-sided competitions, are required to participate in any insurance scheme arranged by the Association and so directed by the Board of the Association. All clubs must have the relevant insurance in place to the required cover levels prior to playing any matches

Any Club with one or more contracted players (i.e. players registered with the Football Association on an official FA contract) must meet the relevant enhanced minimum Public Liability Insurance requirements as specified by the Association at the time of affiliation.

24. Administrative Duties

All Clubs, Leagues and other sanctioned competitions are responsible for the administrative efficiency of their organisation and, at all times, must give prompt attention to the correspondence from this Association. There must be compliance with the instructions given. Referees have the same responsibilities. Failure to comply may result in the issuing of a maladministration charge, which, if proven, may lead to a fine not exceeding £100.

25. Club Welfare Officers

All clubs are required to appoint a designated Club Welfare Officer. This person must meet all the relevant requirements as determined by The Football Association at the time of affiliation and at all times whilst holding the position of Club Welfare Officer.

All Club Welfare Officers are required to attend a minimum of one Norfolk County FA CWO Training Seminar each season. The Association will arrange and host a minimum of three specific training seminars each season .

Such seminars may be held face-to-face or online at the discretion of the Association. Should a Club Welfare Officer fail to attend at least one training seminar they may be removed from their position at their Club until such time as they do attend and / or the Club may be suspended.

26. League Welfare Officers

All Youth Leagues (Under 18 and below) are required to appoint a designated League Welfare Officer. This person must meet all the relevant requirements as determined by The Football Association at the time of sanctioning and at all times whilst holding the position of League Welfare Officer.

All Open Age Leagues are required to appoint a designated League Welfare Officer / League Safeguarding Advocate to act as the lead and first point of contact for safeguarding and welfare within their League. This person must meet all the relevant requirements as determined by The Football Association at the time of sanctioning and at all times whilst holding the position of League Welfare Officer / Safeguarding Advocate.

27. Club Officers / Team Officials

Each Club must ensure that all information relating to their Club Officers, including but not limited to Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and Welfare Officer, and Team Officials, including, but not limited to, Coach(es) and Manager(s) must be kept up to date on the Clubs Portal at all times ensuring that any updates are made within 14 days of the change occurring.

Clubs should also ensure that where relevant the information provided to Leagues in which they have teams is also kept up to date and corresponds with the information held on the Clubs Portal.

Failure to keep information may incur a fine not exceeding £30.

All Youth teams must have a minimum of two people named as a Manager / Coach / Assistant Manager / Assistant Coach.

Failure to comply may incur a fine not exceeding £50 and/or result in the Team and/or Club being suspended.

28. Match Official Fees

The match official fee structure will be standardised across all Norfolk FA sanctioned Leagues as follows:

Anglian Combination Premier

- Referee £42 match fee & travel expenses of 40p/mile
- Assistant Referee £28 match fee & travel expenses of 40p/mile

Anglian Combination Division 1

- Referee £40 match fee & travel expenses of 35p/mile
- Assistant Referee £28 match fee & travel expenses of 35p/mile

All other open aged League & League Cup matches

- Referee £32 match fee & travel expenses of 35p/mile up to a maximum of £25
- Assistant Referee £25 match fee & travel expenses of 35p/mile up to a maximum of £25

All Youth League & League Cup matches

- Referee match fee £32 for Under 17 & Under 18
- Referee match fee £25 for Under 15 & Under 16

- Referee match fee £20 for Under 13 to Under 14
- Referee match fee £18 for Under 11 to Under 12
- Referee match fee £13 for Mini Soccer

Plus 35p per mile expenses up to a maximum of £25.

- Assistant Referee match fee £25 for Under 17 & Under 18
- Assistant Referee match fee £20 for Under 15 & Under 16
- Assistant Referee match fee £15 for Under 13 to Under 14
- Assistant Referee match fee £12 for Under 11 to Under 12

Plus 35p per mile expenses up to a maximum of £25.

29. Player Data on Full-Time.

All sanctioned Leagues shall make available to Norfolk FA within 14 days of such a request, player appearance data for their League for the season. Failure to comply may result in a fine not exceeding £100.

30. Appointment of Match Officials

Subject to confirmation by the Board each season, this Association shall centrally appoint match officials to each adult league competition and County Cup competition sanctioned by the Association.

The Association may also from time to time make arrangements with youth competitions to appoint to fixtures within their respective Leagues.

31. Mandatory Match Officials Training

All registered Match Officials and Observers, with the exception of levels 1 to 4 and newly qualified individuals who are in their first officiating season, are required to comply with the requirements of the Association each season prior to being appointed to matches. Match Officials shall be notified of such requirements by no later than 30 June each season.

Until such time as each registered Match Official has complied with the requirements, such individual will not be appointed by the Association to officiate on any Norfolk County FA sanctioned fixtures. Should a Match Official be transferred / registered to Norfolk after the commencement of the season they shall have to undertake mandatory training as determined by the Association before they can be appointed by the Association.

32. Saturday League Structure

New Clubs and Teams

a) If a Club that has a first team competing at Step 6 and above of the National League System starts a new Reserve side, this team may apply to join the Anglian Combination directly. Such applications shall be subject to approval by the Norfolk FA Board.

All other new Clubs and teams playing on a Saturday are only able to affiliate and join one of the three Norfolk FA sanctioned District Saturday Leagues. They cannot apply to join the Anglian Combination directly.

Existing Clubs and Teams wanting to join the Anglian Combination League

b) Existing Clubs and teams need to make formal application to the Anglian Combination League by 28 February in the current season, notifying their existing League, the Anglian Combination and the County FA when doing so.

c) Existing Clubs and teams need to fully meet the required Anglian Combination Ground Grading Standard by 30 April in the same season.

d) If they are a new Club to the League, they must achieve England Football Accredited status within one year of membership.

e) Subject to meeting the requirements of rules 32 b) and c) above, teams shall be considered for promotion in the order that they finished in the top division of the District League.

- i) Teams finishing in first and second place shall be promoted
- ii) After considering the first two teams in the division, should there still be less than two teams promoted, the teams that finish in third, fourth, fifth etc place shall be considered in order until such time as a maximum of two teams have been promoted or all teams in the top division have been considered.
- iii) The promotion of any team finishing in fifth place or lower shall be subject to the approval of the Norfolk FA Board.

f) For the avoidance of doubt:

- i) Only teams in the top division of the District League will be eligible for promotion
- ii) A maximum of two teams shall be promoted per District League

Regulations

g) The Anglian Combination League Management Committee will be responsible for allocating Clubs to the relevant divisions, prior to the League AGM.

h) Clubs may appeal their allocation decision to the Norfolk FA Board. Any such appeal must be lodged within 14 days of the posting of the written notification of the decision and must be accompanied by the Appeal Fee of £35, which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld.

i) Having considered the three Norfolk FA sanctioned Leagues, if there are still vacancies in the Anglian Combination, applications from teams wishing to enter the Anglian Combination from Regional Feeder Leagues outside of Norfolk will be considered. Such applications must meet the requirements of rules 23 b) and c) above and shall be subject to approval by the Norfolk FA Board.

j) Having considered applications from other Regional Feeder Leagues outside of Norfolk, if there are still vacancies in the Anglian Combination, applications from teams wishing to enter the Anglian Combination from other Leagues outside of Norfolk will be considered. Such applications must meet the requirements of rules 32 b) and c) above.

k) The teams finishing bottom of the Anglian Combination Division Four North & South Divisions will be relegated and may be re-elected if space permits, or if applications exceed vacancies they may be allocated to a relevant District League.

33. Safeguarding

All managers / coaches / first aiders for every affiliated team within a Club must comply with all the relevant FA Safeguarding requirements prior to commencing their role for the team. Such requirements must be kept up to date for the duration of the time that they are associated with that team.

The Association shall conduct a Safeguarding compliance visit for a minimum of 13% of affiliated Clubs with youth team(s) during the season.

34. Powers of Inquiry of this Association

a) This Association shall have the power to monitor the compliance by each Participant with the Rules and Regulations of this Association and the Rules and Regulations of each Competition affiliated to this Association to which a participant is subject and/or to inquire into any incident, facts or matters which may constitute misconduct under these Rules. It is for this Association to determine in its absolute discretion the manner in which it conducts an inquiry.

b) In carrying out its functions under this Rule, this Association shall have the power to require of any Participant upon reasonable notice:

- (i) his or her attendance to answer questions and provide information at a time and place determined by the Association; and
- (ii) the provision to this Association of documents, information or any other material of any nature held by the Participant; and
- (iii) the procurement and provision to this Association of documents, information or any other material of any nature not held by the Participant but which the Participant has the power to obtain

It is for this Association to determine the nature and extent of any material required for disclosure in accordance with (ii) and (iii) above

c) Each Competition or Club sanctioned by or affiliated to this Association shall ensure compliance by its officials, directors, players, representatives or servants with a requirement to answer questions and provide information and/or produce any one or a combination of documents, information or other material in whatever form held and/or answering questions and providing information.

d) Any participant who fails to fulfil the requirements of this Rule shall be dealt with as Board, or a delegated committee convened for such purpose, shall deem fit. This may include, but is not limited to a period of suspension and/or a fine.

35. Support Access to Full-Time

Any League sanctioned by this Association shall provide the Association with a League Administrator account in order to be able to access their League Full-Time Site to enable the Association to support the League and it's Member Clubs.

36. Life Members

'Life Members' means the persons appointed from time to time to be Life Members of the Association in accordance with this Rule including those Life Members appointed prior to the date of adoption of this Rule.

Any person who has, in the Board's sole opinion, provided exceptional and distinguished service to the Association shall be eligible to be appointed by the Board as a Life Member. Nomination for the office of Life Member shall be made in writing and must be sent together with the names of a proposer

and a seconder to the Chief Executive by such date as the Board shall prescribe in each year. Any serving Director may propose or second a nomination for the office of Life Member. Any retiring Director who has served in an Ex-Officio capacity for a minimum period of nine years shall automatically be proposed as a Life Member. For the purpose of this Clause, Ex Officio shall mean the posts of Chairperson and Senior Independent Director.

Life Members shall be entitled to receive notices to attend General Meetings and other appropriate meetings, Life Members shall be entitled to remain as such for the rest of their lives without the need to be re-elected. Life Members shall have such rights and privileges as the Board shall from time to time prescribe other than the right to vote at meetings.

37. The FA Representative

At the first Board meeting after the Annual General Meeting in every third year the FA Representative shall retire but shall be eligible for re-election. Nominations for the office of FA Representative shall be made in writing and sent to both the Chief Executive & Chairperson, together with a signed document from the proposer and the seconder indicating their support of the nomination by such date as the Board shall prescribe. Any Director may propose or second a nomination for FA Representative. The person holding office as FA Representative shall be automatically declared nominated (without the need for them to be proposed and seconded) for a further three-year term at the end of each period unless they decline to hold office by giving notice of such decision to the Chief Executive by such date as the Board shall prescribe. Such person shall be appointed for a three-year term and upon such terms and conditions as the Board thinks fit. Any person so appointed may be removed at any time by the Board. In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in relation to the office of FA Representative the Board shall have the power (but shall not be obliged) to appoint a substitute FA Representative from the Directors, to act as FA Representative until such time as the person who was replaced was due to retire and such person shall be eligible for re-election in accordance with this Article. Only Directors may be nominated for election as the FA Representative. No member may be elected as The FA Representative if they are within three years of the upper age limit or will have exceeded the term limit imposed by the FA.

Memorandum Relating to Nominations

Closing Dates	
Under the Articles of Association and these Membership Rules, the Board has stipulated dates for nominations. The Board has decided that the following dates will be in force until further determinations are made.	
Rule 36 (Life Members)	Nominations to be received by 30 April
Rule 37 (The FA Representative)	Nominations to be received by 1 March