

RULES OF THE WOMEN'S FA CHALLENGE CUP COMPETITION ("the Competition")

COVID-19 has created great uncertainty for both football and society at large and The Association is not currently able to predict the impact that COVID-19 will have on the Competition in the **2021-22** season. In the Competition Rules for the 2020-21 season, The Association has addressed some of the potential issues that **it considered may have occurred** (both in new Rule 31 and by way of amendments to existing Competition Rules). **In the Competition Rules for the 2021-22 season, The Association has retained many of those amendments and made further updates intended to reflect the latest COVID-19-related guidance.** However, it is possible that further changes will be required to the Competition Rules or associated documents during the season (in particular, to address any guidance issued by the government or Public Health England or any replacement body ("PHE")). If Competition Rule changes are required, they will be communicated to the Clubs participating in the Competition as soon as reasonably possible.

Any references in these Competition Rules to COVID-19 shall also be deemed to include any alternative coronavirus or epidemic or pandemic affecting the Competition during the **2021-22** season.

1. CONTROL OF COMPETITION – RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competition and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in The Association.
- (b) The Women's Football Board 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 (to include, for the avoidance of doubt, where the Competition has commenced in the relevant season) (the "Competition Rules") subject only to the authority of The Association Board where such matters relate to financial or commercial matters. Unless explicitly provided for within the Competition Rules definitions of terms used within the Competition Rules are those included within the Rules of The Association for the relevant season. The Women's Football Board may amend the Competition Rules from time to time (to include, for the avoidance of doubt, where the Competition has commenced in the relevant season).
- (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 Women's Football Board shall have the power to appoint a Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee shall have the power to exercise all powers of the Women's Football Board in relation to the Competition and 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) which shall be deemed decisions of the Women's Football Board and shall be final and binding on all Participants in the Competition. In relation to these and any other matters not specifically mentioned in the Competition Rules, the Women's Football Committee shall, on behalf of the Women's Football Board, 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 and such shall, subject to Rule 28, be final and binding on all participants. In considering such matters, the Women's Football Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding before a Court of Law.
- (e) A Club participating in the 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 these Competition Rules or by The Association in writing.
- (f) In addition to any other action or penalty, The Women's Football Board 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), and the decision of the Women's Football Board shall, subject to Rule 28, be final and binding.

2. CONTROL OF COMPETITION – COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS

- (a) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled to, or otherwise to authorise or grant to others, rights of access to and attendance at the ground of the Home Club ("Access Rights") for the purposes of transmitting or filming or otherwise recording on or by any media, any audio and/or visual materials depicting or describing all or any part or parts of a match ("the Copyright Materials").
- (b) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled throughout the world, or to grant to or otherwise authorise others:
 - (i) on a live, delayed, recorded or highlighted basis to broadcast or otherwise transmit by any method whatsoever (now known or hereinafter devised) the Copyright Materials by way of any and all forms of television or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) including, without limitation, free to air television, pay television, pay per view, "not-video-on-demand" internet or other on-line media and "video-on-demand" ("the Television Rights").
 - (ii) on a live or delayed basis to broadcast or to otherwise transmit the Copyright Materials (or audio) by way of radio broadcast or internet, or other on-line media or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) ("the Radio Rights").
 - (iii) to use, sell, publish, distribute and otherwise exploit the Copyright Materials in any manner whatsoever including, without limitation, clip licensing, videos, videograms, CD Rom, CDI, internet or other on line media ("the Footage Rights").
- (c) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall be exclusively entitled, either by itself or to authorise others, to use sell or otherwise exploit all commercial and other marketing rights associated with the Competition including, without limitation, fixture list copyright, sponsorship, supplier rights, licences, perimeter board branding or other commercial arrangements (the "Marketing Rights") and Clubs shall comply at all times with The FA Cup Commercial Regulations as amended and in force from time to time ("the Commercial Regulations"). To the extent that there is a potential breach of the Commercial Regulations, the matter shall be referred to the Women's Football Board for determination.
- (d) Clubs shall be bound by and comply with the terms of all contracts entered into by The Association from time to time in relation to Access Rights, the Television Rights, the Radio Rights, the Footage Rights and the Marketing Rights (collectively "the Commercial Contracts") in relation to the Competition.
- (e) Clubs shall provide access to grounds and provide all other rights, facilities and services as may be necessary to enable The Association to fulfil the Commercial Contracts and as may be communicated to Clubs in the Commercial Regulations.
- (f) The Clubs acknowledge that The Association may issue more detailed rules and regulations regarding the provisions of the Commercial Contracts (including, but not limited to in relation to, broadcasting, perimeter board advertising, interview backdrops, centre circle banners, side of goal mats, substitute/added time boards, tickets and match programmes) and the Clubs agree that they shall be bound by such rules and regulations as amended from time to time by The Association.
- (g) Each Club undertakes to indemnify and keep indemnified The Association and its officers, directors, employees and authorised representatives from and against any claims for direct or consequential loss or damage by any party to a Commercial Contract caused or otherwise attributable to any failure or any breach by the Club fully to perform or observe its obligations and responsibilities under these provisions.

- (h) Nothing in the above shall be construed or interpreted so as to prevent or restrict Clubs, subject to applicable FIFA, UEFA or other rules or regulations or decisions of The Association, from entering into commercial arrangements in relation to matches in the Competition which do not in any way conflict with the Commercial Contracts and duties of Clubs as set out herein.
- (i) In relation to the Commercial Contracts, the Association shall make provision for payments to Clubs as it shall from time to time consider appropriate.

3. NAME / LOGOS AND IMAGES OF THE COMPETITION AND IMAGES OF THE TROPHY

- (a) The Competition shall be called 'The Women's Football Association Challenge Cup' and should be marketed under the title 'The Women's FA Cup' (the "official title") unless determined otherwise by the Women's Football Board from time to time or as communicated in the Commercial Regulations.
- (b) Each Club shall include the Official Title at least once on all (if any) materials produced by or on behalf of it which relate to the Competition (including, but not limited to, tickets, programmes, press releases and (where possible) scoreboard displays) and (where possible) shall refer to the Official Title at least once over (any) public address system operating on the day of each Women's FA Cup match.
- (c) The Association may from time to time issue a Women's FA Cup Logo. The Women's FA Cup Logo may incorporate branding for the lead Women's FA Cup sponsor.
- (d) Each participating Club shall include The Women's FA Cup Logo on all Women's FA Cup communication materials produced by or on behalf of it (including, but not limited to, the front page of each Women's FA Cup match programme, match tickets (if it is not possible to include The FA Women's Logo on tickets the Club shall include a reference to the Official Title), fixture posters, stadium giant screens (if any) and Club websites).
- (e) The Association may from time to time issue images of The Women's FA Cup to Clubs. If so, a Club which wishes to use an image of The Women's FA Cup shall use the image issued by The Association and will follow any directions issued by The Association in relation to the use of such image.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE COMPETITION

- (a) The Competition shall consist of all Clubs entered in accordance with the Competition Rules.
- (b) Clubs may be exempted by the Women's Football Board.
- (c) All rounds up to and including the Third Round Proper shall be played on a geographical basis.

5. ELIGIBLE CLUBS

- (a) Participation in the competition shall be open to the first team only from Clubs competing in the top division of a Tier 7 League as set out in the Women's Pyramid of Football Regulations, or above, which has been sanctioned by The Association or an affiliated Association for the current season and Clubs not receiving an exemption must also have competed in an open age League sanctioned by The Association or affiliated Association in the preceding season.
- (b) The Women's Football Board may reject the application of any Club to participate in the Competition at its entire discretion
- (c) A Club which has been allowed to participate in the Competition may not assign or otherwise transfer the ability/right to participate without the prior written approval of the Women's Football Board. A request for transfer must be in writing, setting out the details of the intended transferee and the reason for the transfer. The decision whether or not to approve a transfer shall be made by the Women's Football Board in its absolute discretion. In considering a request for transfer the Women's Football

Board may assess the request from any Club allowed to participate in the Competition in relation to the minimum requirements set out at Rule A 3 (g) of The Association for that season. The Women's Football Board may use the requirements of Rule A 3 (g) and any other conditions in its absolute discretion in deciding whether to approve the request. A transfer shall be granted only on condition that the transferee shall be treated for the purposes of these Competition Rules and the Rules of The Association as being the same entity as the transferor.

- (d) If a Club is removed from the League in which it is playing or its League fixtures are suspended, once it has been accepted into the Competition, The Women's Football Board has the power to remove the Club from the Competition.
- (e) Entries from Clubs affiliated to off shore Associations will be considered on an annual basis and if accepted special provisions may apply to such Clubs.
- (f) If any Club or Parent Undertaking (as defined at Section 1162 Companies Act 2006) of that Club when applying to enter the Competition, or at any time during the course of the Competition becomes subject to any of the following insolvency events:
 - (i) enters into a Company Voluntary Arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986 ("the 1986 Act") or a compromise or arrangement with its creditors under Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 or any compromise agreement with its creditors as a whole; or
 - (ii) lodges a Notice of Intention to Appoint an Administrator or Notice of Appointment of an Administrator at the Court in accordance with paragraph 26 or paragraph 29 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act, an application to the Court for an Administration Order under paragraph 12 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act (other than paragraph 12(1)(c)) or where an Administrator is appointed or an Administration Order is made ("Administrator" and "Administration Order" having the meanings attributed to them respectively by paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act); or
 - (iii) an Administrative Receiver (as defined by section 251 of the 1986 Act), a Law of Property Act Receiver (appointed under section 109 of the Law of Property Act 1925) or any Receiver appointed by the Court under the Supreme Court Act 1981 or any other Receiver is appointed over any assets which, in the opinion of the Women's Football Board, are material to the Club's ability to fulfil its obligations under the rules of the Competition; or
 - (iv) shareholders pass a resolution pursuant to section 84(1) of the 1986 Act to voluntarily wind up; or
 - (v) a meeting of creditors is convened pursuant to section 95 or section 98 of the 1986 Act; or
 - (vi) a winding up order is made by the Court under section 122 of the 1986 Act or a provisional liquidator is appointed under section 135 of the 1986 Act; or
 - (vii) Ceases or forms an intention to cease wholly or substantially to carry on business save for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation or otherwise in accordance with a scheme of proposals which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Women's Football Board; or
 - (viii) Being subject to any insolvency regime in any jurisdiction outside England and Wales which is analogous with the insolvency regimes detailed in (i) to (vii) above;

that Club must notify the Women's Football Board immediately in writing. The Women's Football Board will (at its absolute discretion) then decide whether to accept the application and/or allow that Club to continue to compete in the Competition and may set any terms and conditions in relation to that Club's ongoing participation in the Competition.

- (g) Clubs must comply with any guidance issued by The Association or the league the Club participates in (as amended and in force from time to time) regarding the permitted number of spectators, or percentage of ground capacity, for any match to be played by the Club. If The Association receives evidence suggesting that the Club intends to exceed the numbers specified in that guidance for any match in the Competition and/or has disregarded the relevant guidance, (i) The Association will decide whether to allow the match to be played and (ii) the matter shall be referred to the Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee of the same) to determine whether to impose a sanction against the Club. Clubs shall not be permitted to sell more tickets for a match in the Competition than they would be permitted to sell for a league match at the relevant point in time.

6. ENTRY DATE

- (a) A Club wishing to participate in the Competition must complete the application and payment process on or before 1 July previous to the season in which such Club proposes to compete in the Competition.
- (b) Clubs entering the Competition may be required to make available on the closing date for entries the following in place:
- Annual accounts prepared in accordance with the Rules of The Association as are in force from time to time.
 - An up to date set of Memorandum and Articles/Club Rules.
 - A bank account in the name of the legal entity of the Club entered into the Competition.

Clubs may be required to provide evidence of the above to The Association at any stage. Clubs found to have failed to adhere to these Regulations may be subject to sanction by The Association.

7. PROVISIONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE COMPETITION

- (a) Any Club intending to withdraw from the Competition must notify its intention to do so to The Association and the opposing Club, (i) as soon as reasonably possible if the reason for withdrawal relates to COVID-19 or (ii) not less than eight days before the date fixed for playing the match in any other circumstances.
- (b) A Club failing to comply with this rule shall be reported to the Women's Football Board, who shall have power to compel such offending Club to pay the expenses incurred and to take such other action as the Women's Football Board considers appropriate.
- (c) If a Club decides to withdraw from the Competition after a postponement or an abandoned match, notice must be given to The Association and its opponent immediately or as soon as possible after the match has been postponed.
- (d) A Club failing to give satisfactory reason for withdrawing from the Competition shall in addition to any other action considered appropriate not be allowed to enter the Competition in the following season and shall be liable to such fine as the Women's Football Board considers appropriate.
- (e) Where a club fails to fulfil a fixture The Women's Football Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate.
- (f) If a Club may not be able to compete in a match on the date scheduled for the match for reasons due to COVID-19 (including but not limited to on the basis that a significant number of its players **are self-isolating**), it must inform The Association as soon as it becomes aware of the relevant circumstances. In such circumstances, and subject to Rule 11 below, the Women's Football Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate (in its absolute discretion).

8. DRAWS FOR ROUNDS AND KICK OFF TIMES

- (a) The Clubs competing in each Round of the Competition shall be drawn in couples (and The Association may conduct draws for more than one Round of the Competition at the same time). The couples shall play a match subject to the Laws of the Game and the winners compete in the next Round and be drawn in the same manner. This shall be continued until the Final of the Competition.
- (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 and at such time as the Women's Football Board shall determine. The time of kick-off shall be 2.00pm unless mutually agreed otherwise, subject to the approval of the Women's Football Board. For Matches played in November, December and January, the kick-off time shall be 1.00pm. The Women's Football Board shall have the power to order that a kick-off time is changed, as it deems appropriate. Any late kick off shall be reported by the Referee to the Association and the Women's Football Board shall have the power to impose a fine.
- (c) Immediately following publication by The Association of the draw for each Round (or the date at which the Home Club's participation in the relevant fixture is confirmed, whichever is later), the Club first drawn must communicate with the opponent Club to notify the location of the ground and other match details and notify The Association of these arrangements by completing the match arrangement form which must be received by The Association and away Club within seven days of the date of the draw (or the date at which the Home Club's participation in the relevant fixture is confirmed, whichever is later) unless otherwise notified by the Association.

9. VENUES FOR MATCHES

- (a) *Venue*
 - (i) The venue for each Match (save for the Final which will be played at a venue selected by Women's Football Board) will be that of the first named Club (providing it meets the requirements of the Competition Rules) unless the consent of the Women's Football Board has been obtained to any change of venue or the Women's Football Board has directed that there should be a 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 Women's Football Board.
 - (iv) The Women's Football Board shall have the power to order that any match be played on an alternative ground or date, other than a Sunday, if it is considered appropriate and necessary.
- (b) *Protests Regarding the Suitability of Ground*
 - (i) A Club may protest to the Women's Football Board that the ground of the Home Club is unsuitable for the match. Such protest must be made to the Women's Football Board and must be accompanied by a fee of £100.00 which may be forfeited if the protest is not sustained.
 - (ii) The Women's Football Board shall have the power to consider the protest in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The Women's Football Board 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 and The Association incidental to the protest shall be at the discretion of the Women's Football Board.

10. DURATION OF MATCHES, EXTRA TIME AND KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

- (a) The duration of each match shall be 90 minutes. The Referee shall allow for time wasted or lost through accident or other cause. The Referee is the sole judge of allowance of time whether lost through accident or other cause and his decision on this matter is not subject to appeal.
- (b) The half-time interval shall be 15 minutes for all ties in the Competition.
- (c) Both teams shall enter the field of play together five minutes prior to kick-off time, along with the Match Officials.
- (d) In the Qualifying Competition, when a match is drawn after 90 minutes, 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.
- (e) In the Competition Proper:
 - (i) when a match is drawn after 90 minutes, an extra 30 minutes shall be played (of two equal halves of 15 minutes).
 - (ii) when a match is drawn after extra 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.

11. RESCHEDULED, POSTPONED AND ABANDONED MATCHES (MATCHES PLAYED PRIOR TO THE SEMI-FINAL)

- (a) *Rescheduled/Postponed Games*

From the First Round Qualifying up to and including the Second Round Proper

- (i) If the competing Clubs are not able to play the match at the ground of the Home Club on either the scheduled or agreed date, due to COVID-19 or for any other reason, the Clubs can agree to:
 - a. play the match at the ground of the Visiting Club or an alternative ground on the original date; or
 - b. postpone or reschedule the match (to be played at the ground of either the Home Club, the Visiting Club or an alternative ground) to another date within **seven** days of the date fixed for playing the round (the "Postponement Window"),provided that in each case the consent of The Association has been obtained.
- (ii) Clubs should seek to agree arrangements and alternative options, such as a back-up date and having a 3G Football Turf pitch on stand-by, to ensure the match can be played within the Postponement Window.
- (iii) If the Clubs cannot agree on a date for the postponed or rescheduled match, the default date shall be the **Sunday**.
- (iv) If the Clubs are not able to reschedule and play the match within the Postponement Window, the Clubs will have no further opportunity to reschedule the match. If one Club is not able (or willing) to compete in the match within the Postponement Window, that Club will be deemed to have forfeited the match and withdrawn from the Competition and, subject to Rule 31, its opponent shall be deemed eligible to participate in the next round of the Competition. If both Clubs are not able (or willing) to compete in the within the Postponement Window, both Clubs will be deemed to have forfeited the match and withdrawn from the Competition and, subject to Rule 31, there will be one bye in the next round of the Competition.

- (v) If one or both Clubs are not able or willing to compete in a match within the Postponement Window, the relevant Club shall submit the reasons why it was not able or willing to compete in the match to the Women's Football Board. The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee of the same) shall determine (at its absolute discretion) whether the Club shall receive the loser's share of the prize money in respect of the match, whether both Clubs shall share the prize money in respect of the match and whether one or both Clubs shall be deemed to have forfeited the match and withdrawn from the Competition (as appropriate).

From the Third Round Proper onwards

- (vi) If the competing Clubs are not able or willing to play the match on the scheduled date due to COVID-19 or for any other reason, the match shall be played as directed by the Women's Football Board and/or the Women's Football Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate (in its absolute discretion).**

(c) Abandoned Matches

When any match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, the Women's Football Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.

- (d) The Women's Football Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

12. REPORTING RESULTS

- (a) Each Club shall confirm the result of the match, with the names of the players competing and goalscorers, together with the marking of their Referee's performance to be received at The Association within two days of the match.
- (b) Each Club shall communicate the result (including the attendance at the match) and any other details as required to The Association and designated press agencies immediately after the end of the match, according to the instructions issued prior to the match.

13. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

(a) *3G football turf*

3G football turf may be used in the Competition provided conditions (i) to (iii) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

- (i) The pitch must be surfaced with 3G football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – to a minimum of FIFA Recommended One Star/Quality level and must have satisfied the performance and construction requirements at the time of its most recent annual assessment.
- (ii) The 3G football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of 3G football turf pitches by no later than 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition.
- (iii) Where a 3G football turf pitch is not yet listed on The Association's register (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), a Club must obtain a Performance Test Certificate and submit it to The Association by no later than 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition.
- (iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Clubs expense.
- (v) The Association may order a tie to be played at an alternative venue where it is not satisfied the pitch meets the Performance Standard.

- (vi) 3G football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goaline. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.
- (vii) The home Club shall allow their opposition the opportunity to use the pitch and train on the surface two hours prior to the kick-off and there must not be another game or event on the pitch following the training period. If it is intended to water the pitch before the match, the pitch shall be watered prior to the training period.
- (viii) The Club using the 3G football turf shall advise their opposition at least 10 days before the match of limitations or recommendations on the types of boot or stud that may be used on the surface.
- (ix) The Club shall provide all necessary assistance and data relating to player assessments, injury records, maintenance etc as requested by The Association, FIFA or UEFA.

(b) *Dimensions of Field of Play and Ground Facilities*

- (i) The dimensions of the field of play for all matches shall be as follows:
 - Maximum length: 110 metres
 - Minimum length: 100 metres
 - Maximum breadth: 75 metres
 - Minimum breadth: 64 metres
- (ii) Goal nets must be used in all matches.
- (iii) In all matches played in the Competition Proper the playing area must be either roped off or enclosed by a permanent barrier, the only exception being those areas and spaces excluded from spectator viewing.
- (iv) Dressing and washing accommodation must be separate for each team and Match Officials. Dressing rooms must have heating and hot water. and be secure and independent of any public access. Dressing room areas must be cleaned and maintained to a satisfactory standard.
- (v) Separate toilets must be provided for dressing rooms used by players and Match officials, which must not be available for spectator use
- (vi) From the **First Round Proper**, each Club shall provide separate areas adjacent to the pitch for the sole use of team officials, medical staff and substitutes. Such designated areas shall be clearly marked "home" and "away", have direct access to the pitch, be located as near as possible equidistant from the halfway line and be under cover. The team benches should also comply with Competition Rule 18.
- (vii) Refreshments must be provided for the Visiting Club players at half and full time. Hospitality for Visiting Club Officials and Match Officials must be provided.
- (viii) Ladies and Gentlemen's toilets, other than those used by players and Match Officials, must be provided for spectators throughout the duration of matches.
- (ix) Refreshment facilities for spectators must be provided from the Third Round Proper. Glasses or Glass bottles are not permitted outside of the Clubhouse or brought into grounds.

- (x) Where a ground has team benches, a technical area is to be provided. The technical area extends one metre on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to a distance of one metre from the touch-line. Markings are to be used to define this area.
- (xi) A telephone must be connected and available at the ground.
- (xii) 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) *Playing condition of the Ground*

- (i) Each Club must take every precaution to ensure that its ground is in a fit playing condition. In the event of doubt regarding the condition of the pitch, the Home Club shall immediately notify The Association to enable a Referee to conduct a pitch inspection.
- (ii) A Referee shall whenever possible examine the ground and decide as to its fitness for play in sufficient time to save the expense of unnecessary journeys being incurred by Clubs.
- (iii) Subject to this Rule, the Referees shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches.
- (iv) The Referee must report to the ground 90 minutes before the time of kick-off. If necessary, the Home Club or The Association may, by notice, require the Referee to visit the ground more than 90 minutes before the time of kick-off any time during the season.
- (v) No other activity is permitted to be played on the pitch, on the day of the match, prior to an Women's FA Cup tie in all rounds of the Competition without prior written consent of The Association.

(d) *Floodlighting*

- (i) Where it has been agreed to play a match under floodlight conditions, the Women's Football Board shall have the power to order that the kick-off time shall be 3.00pm.
- (ii) The Referee will decide at what point in the game the floodlights shall be switched on. This will necessitate a discussion with responsible Officials of the competing Clubs before the game, when a signal must be agreed.

(e) *Match balls*

In rounds prior to the Semi-Finals, the Multiple Ball System (where more than one ball may be used in a match) will not operate in ties. The Association shall determine whether the Multiple Ball System will operate in the Semi-Finals and/or Final of the Competition.

(f) *Video Assisted Referees*

"VARs" means Video Assisted Referees as defined under the protocol of the International Football Association Board ("IFAB").

The Association reserves the right to select any match in the Competition, at its absolute discretion, in which VARs will be used. This means that the Referee in such matches can make decisions based on information provided by the VARs in accordance with the relevant protocol of the IFAB.

Guidance regarding the use of VARs will be provided by The Association to the relevant Clubs at the appropriate time.

(g) *First Aid Facilities*

It is the responsibility of the Home or Host Club to ensure that First Aid facilities, equipment and a stretcher are available for all matches and a fully qualified person is available to administer First Aid.

14. CLUB COLOURS

- (a) The two competing clubs must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and also the Match Officials. Where there is a clash (as determined by The Association), the Away Club must change. In the Final Tie a toss of a coin shall determine the choice of colours if a clash occurs. The toss of coin shall be made by a representative of The Association and shall be witnessed by the representatives of the Finalists with the toss taking place at The Association's offices or another suitable location as soon as possible after the Semi-Finals.
- (b) In the event of the Clubs not agreeing upon the colours to be worn, the Women's Football Board shall decide. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from the other players, and the Match Officials.
- (c) Up to and including the **Second** Round Proper Clubs' colours must not clash with the black and white outfit worn by the Match Officials. In the Fourth Round Proper onwards, where there is a clash of colour between the Match Officials' uniform and the players' kit, the Match Officials may, with the prior approval of The Association, change to an alternative colour Referees shirt. The alternative shirts must be supplied by the Club whose kit is the cause of the clash.
- (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 her shirt because of a blood injury. The Captain of each team shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate her status.
- (e) Advertising may be worn on players' clothing in accordance with the Rules of The Association and the Laws of the Game. When participating in a match no Player shall reveal undergarments that show political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images or advertising other than a manufacturer's logo.
- (f) In the Final the participating clubs may be required to wear sleeve badges branded with the **Vitality** Women's FA Cup logo.

15. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PLAYERS.

- (a) Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing Club.
- (b)(i) **From the First Round Qualifying up to and including the Second Round Proper, a maximum of seven substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a Club may at its discretion use three of those seven substitute players at any time in a match. In the event that extra time is played in any match a Club may at its discretion use one additional substitute player, (a fourth in total) from the nominated seven substitutes, during such period of extra time. A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Prior to the substitution being made the Club must identify to the Match Officials the number of the player out and the player in, in accordance with the Official Team Sheet.**
- (ii) **From the Third Round Proper onwards, a maximum of nine substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a Club may at its discretion use five of those substitute players at any time in a match (including during any period of extra time). Each team is only permitted a maximum of three opportunities to make substitutions**

during normal time in the Match (excluding half time). If the Match proceeds to extra time, each Club will be permitted to carry over any unused substitution opportunities into extra time and will be permitted an additional (fourth) opportunity to make a substitution (excluding (i) the break between full time and extra time and (ii) at half time of extra time). A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Prior to the substitution being made the Club must identify to the Match Officials the number of the player out and the player in, in accordance with the Official Team Sheet.

- (iii) **From the Third Round Proper onwards, if a player suffers a concussion (or potential concussion), the Club and its opponent shall be permitted to use additional substitution(s) in accordance with the relevant IFAB protocol adopted by The Association and in force from time to time. Concussion substitutions shall be permitted to be used in addition to the substitutions listed above. If The Association has adopted an IFAB protocol for the purposes of the Competition, this shall be communicated to competing Clubs in advance of the relevant Round.**
- (c) If a player suffers a concussion (or potential concussion), the Club and its opponent shall be permitted to use additional substitution(s) in accordance with the relevant IFAB protocol adopted by The Association and in force from time to time. Concussion substitutions shall be permitted to be used in addition to the substitutions listed above. If The Association has adopted an IFAB protocol for the purposes of the Competition, this shall be communicated to competing Clubs in advance of the relevant Round.
- (d) All players shall be qualified as players according to the Rules of The Association.
- (e) A player shall not play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season.
- (f) A player who has been suspended according to the disciplinary procedures under the Rules of The Association may play in a postponed or replayed match after the term of her suspension has expired.
- 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) (i) Each Club shall provide a list of names of players taking part in a match (including the names of substitutes) (the "Official Team Sheet") either electronically or to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee:
- 75 minutes before kick-off for the Final.
 - 45 minutes before kick-off for all other matches.
- Any Club failing to do so will be liable to be fined by the Women's Football Board a sum not exceeding £100.00.
- (ii) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the Official Team Sheet to the Referee and before the kick-off, she may be replaced without fine if she is injured warming up after the exchange of the Official Team Sheet, provided the Referee and opponents are informed before the commencement of the match. In such circumstances the Official Team Sheet must be updated by the relevant Club to include the replacement player and exclude the injured player prior to the commencement of the match.
- (iii) No player shall be eligible to take part in a match unless their name appears on the Official Team Sheet.
- (i) In all Rounds of the Competition a player shall be a "registered player" of her Club under the Rules. In the case of postponed matches only those players shall be allowed to play who were eligible to play at the time fixed for playing the original Round, except for under the provisions of Competition Rule 15(f). In the event of a postponement or abandonment of a match, a Club may request dispensation from the Women's Football Board to select a replacement goalkeeper who is a registered player, but was not a registered player prior to the "Registration Deadline" (as defined below). Any such

request must be made to The Association in writing (together with evidence substantiating the reasons for the request), and received no later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the relevant match. Dispensation will be at the complete discretion of the Women's Football Board.

- (j) (i) A "registered player" is one who is either, in the case of a player under written contract, registered with The Association or, in the case of a player without a written contract, registered with her Club with a League in which her Club competes in the current season. Any such registration must have been received (with all relevant documents completed) by The Association or League by 12 noon on the Saturday previous to the date fixed for playing the Round (the "Registration Deadline"). The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) must also have confirmed in writing to the Club submitting the application to register the player that the registration has been accepted in order for the player to be eligible to play in the match. The player must also still be registered with the Club which submitted the application as at the date of the match. The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) may confirm its acceptance of a registration after the Registration Deadline provided that such registration was received, along with all relevant documents, by the Registration Deadline. However, if The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) has not confirmed in writing its acceptance of a registration 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match, the player shall not be eligible to play in the match.
 - (ii) In order to be eligible for the Final, the players must have been correctly registered and eligible for the Semi Final of the Competition.
 - (iii) An International Transfer Certificate for Players coming from overseas associations (including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) must be received at least 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match in order for the Player's registration to be valid.
 - (iv) In exceptional circumstances related to COVID-19, a Club may make a written application to the Women's Football Board to field a player who was not registered with The Association prior to the Registration Deadline for a round which has subsequently been postponed.
 - (v) The Women's Football Board shall consider, at its sole discretion, any application under Rule 15(i)(iv) and determine whether the Club shall be permitted to field the player in any remaining match(es) in the Competition. If the Women's Football Board determines that the Club shall be permitted to field the player, the player shall be considered to be eligible (subject to the player otherwise being eligible in accordance with this Rule 15).
- (k) *Temporary (loan) Transfers*
- (i) A player on a domestic temporary (loan) transfer (including a player on loan either to or from a Welsh Club that competes in the Competition in the current season) is ineligible to compete in the Competition unless permission to do so is given by the lending Club in writing (which, for the avoidance of doubt, can include appropriate wording and/or the completion of tick boxes in any loan form) and a copy is received by The Association by the Registration Deadline for that round. Any permissions must clearly state that the player has approval to play in The Women's FA Cup Competition.
 - (ii) For all rounds other than the Semi-Final and Final, a player recalled to her original Club from temporary (loan) transfer, in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement, may only represent her original Club if any such recall has been received and accepted by The Association by the Registration Deadline for that round.

- (iii) A player on temporary (loan) transfer is eligible to play in a replay match or a match rescheduled as a result of a postponement or abandonment, if transferred permanently by the lending Club to the loaning Club after the Registration Deadline for that round, provided that the player was eligible to play for the loaning Club in the original match and the player's registration with the loaning Club is continuous from the Registration Deadline for that round through to the date of the rescheduled match.
- (iv) The Association will not give permission for players on loan to play against the lending Club.

16. VALIDITY OF PLAYERS' QUALIFICATIONS

- (a) The Women's Football Board shall have power to call upon a Player, and/or the Club to which she is registered, or for which she played, to prove that the Player is qualified according to the Competition Rules and/or eligible pursuant to any COVID-19 Protocols issued under Competition Rule 31(b).
- (b) Subject to (c) below, where a player that is or is found to be ineligible under either the Rules of the Competition and/or the Rules of the Association plays for a Club in a Competition match, the Women's Football Board may remove the Club from the Competition, and may impose further penalties against the Club.
- (c) However, where the Club satisfies the Women's Football Board that the Club (or any of its officers) did not know and could not reasonably have known, even had it made every reasonable enquiry (with the exercise of the utmost caution), that the player was ineligible, the Club shall not be removed from the Competition but may still be subject to any other penalty. (e.g. fine, ordered to replay the match).
- (d) In the event The Association is instructed to sanction a Player and/or Club in such circumstances by FIFA, The Association will follow such instructions unless there are exceptional circumstances which would, in the Women's Football Board's absolute discretion, lead to The Association challenging such instruction.

17. PROGRAMME

In all matches in the First Round Proper onwards, a Programme or Team Sheet must be produced for spectators with details of both teams.

18. TEAM BENCHES

- (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. That person is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his or her team.
- (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 his or her team.

- (f) In the Semi-Final and Final, Clubs will be advised by The Association of the number of technical staff and substitutes who may occupy the team benches and a list of the permitted number of authorised personnel must be provided by each Club to the Referee at least one hour before kick-off.

19. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a) (i) Match Officials shall be appointed by The Association in accordance with its appointing procedures from time to time.
- (ii) The Association reserves the right to appoint a Reserve Official to officiate in the event of an appointed Match Official failing to arrive or being incapacitated.
- (iii) In the event of any of the Match Officials failing to arrive or being incapacitated, the match shall be completed under the control of the remaining Match Officials unless the competing clubs are able to agree upon a substitute who is acceptable to the Match Referee; should the appointed Match Referee fail to appear then the most senior Assistant Referee must take charge. Any substitute agreed for a match shall be considered a Match Official for the purposes of that match.
- (b) (i) The fees and expenses of all Match Officials appointed by The Association to officiate in any match prior to the Final shall be paid by the Club upon whose ground the match takes place unless otherwise instructed by the Women's Football Board.
- (c) *Scale of Expenses to be Paid to Match Officials*
- (i) In all rounds of the Competition, standard class railway fares at the cheapest available rate operating on the day of the match may be allowed.
- (ii) An allowance of £0.40 per mile will be allowed to all officials officiating in the Competition who travel by private car.
- (d) *Scale of Fees to be paid to Match Officials*
- (i) *All rounds prior to the Third Round Proper:*
Referee, £40.00; Assistant Referees, £25.00 each.
- (ii) *Third Round Proper*
Referee, £100.00; Assistant Referees, £50.00 each; Fourth Official, £30.00
- (iii) *Fourth Round Proper:*
Referee, £150.00; Assistant Referees, £75.00 each; Fourth Official, £50.00
- (iv) *Fifth Round Proper, Quarter Final and Semi Final:*
Referee, £150.00; Assistant Referees, £75.00 each; Fourth Official, £50.00
- (v) *Final:*
Referee, £450.00; Assistant Referees, £225.00 each; Fourth Official, £120.00 and a Souvenir Medal each.
- (e) In the event of The Association giving permission for a pitch inspection prior to a match, by an Official other than the Match Referee, such Official shall be entitled to expenses plus half the match fee if not local. The Home Club will pay any expenses.
- (f) Match Officials are entitled to their travelling expenses if incurred and half their fees if the match to which they were appointed is not played.
- (g) The Home Club must notify the Match Officials of the precise details of the match, this is to include a map with the location of the ground indicated, kick-off time, colours of both teams and other details to be received not later than five days prior to the match by the Match Officials who shall acknowledge receipt.

- (h) Match Officials shall acknowledge acceptance of appointments for all matches in the Competition to The Association.
- (i) The duties of the Match Officials shall be as defined in the Laws of the Game.

20. PROCEEDS OF MATCHES

In all matches prior to the Final the Club first drawn shall be responsible for the payment of the fees and expenses of the Match Officials and other expenses of the match. The Club first drawn shall retain all income from the gate receipts. The second drawn Club shall be responsible for its own travelling expenses.

21. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

(a) Travelling Expenses

- (i) From the Fourth Round Proper to the Semi Final the Travelling expenses of the Visiting Club may be paid by The Association and will not exceed £3.00 per coach mile, if actually incurred. If private cars or minibus are used, then the expenses which can be claimed will be for a maximum of five cars at £0.40 per mile. For ties involving travel to/from the Isle of Wight, boat fares at the cheapest rate are allowed to be claimed.
- (ii) The travelling expenses for the Visiting Club are to be calculated on a direct route from the Club's Headquarters.
- (iii) When travelling by rail, the cost of 25 standard class fares at the cheapest available rate may be claimed.

(b) Hotel Expenses

- (i) The Association will pay the hotel expenses of the Visiting Club from the Fourth Round Proper for the night prior to the match only. Written application must be made to The Association by the Visiting Club at least seven days in advance of the first match. The Women's Football Board shall have the power at its absolute discretion whether or not to grant permission.
- (ii) The grounds for making such an application are that it would be necessary for the Visiting Club to leave its headquarters before 8.00am on the day of the match in order to arrive at the venue for the match no less than 90 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off, based on reasonable travel time only (determined by reference to the AA Route Planner service) and including a stop of not more than 45 minutes. Expenses, which may be claimed, if actually incurred, shall not exceed £30.00 per person for up to 25 persons and in the Semi-Finals and Final, the hotel expenses allowable will be £100.00 per person for 25 persons, if actually incurred.
- (iii) A Club that has been granted hotel expenses by The Association must stay within a 30 mile radius of the ground where the match will be played.

22. DUAL INTERESTS AND ASSOCIATION

- (a) Save with the prior written consent of the Women's Football Board, no Club may participate in the Competition at any stage where that Club is interested in another Club which is participating in the Competition or wishing to participate in the Competition (the "Second Club"). The Second Club shall similarly not be permitted to participate in the Competition at any stage.
- (b) Save with the prior written consent of the Women's Football Board, no Club may participate in the Competition at any time where a person, or any associate of that person, is interested in such Club and a Second Club participating or wishing to participate in the Competition. The Second Club shall similarly not be permitted to participate in the Competition at any stage.

- (c) For the purposes of this clause, a Club or person, or associate of that person, shall be deemed to be interested in a Club if that Club, person or associate:
 - (i) holds or deals in (or has made any application to hold or deal in or underwrite any issue of) the securities or shares of that Club; or
 - (ii) is a member of that Club; or
 - (iii) is involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management or administration of that Club; or
 - (iv) has any power whatsoever to influence the financial, commercial or business affairs or the management or administration of that Club; or
 - (v) has lent money to or guaranteed the debts or obligations of that Club, otherwise than in the ordinary course of banking at arms length.
- (d) The holding or acquisition by any person (but not a Club) of not more than 10% of the issued share capital of any Club may be disregarded for the purposes of this clause provided that those shares are, in the opinion of the Women's Football Board, held purely for investment purposes only.
- (e) For the purposes of this clause, an associate of a person shall be deemed to be:
 - (i) anyone of a close relationship with that person who, in the opinion of the Women's Football Board, is or is likely to be acting with that person; or
 - (ii) any company of which that person is a director or over which that person is able to exercise control or influence; or
 - (iii) any person who is an employee or partner of that person or is in close relationship with any such employee or partner; or
 - (iv) if that person or any associate of that person is a company, then any holding company or subsidiary of that company or a subsidiary of its holding company, or any director or employee of the company or any such holding company or subsidiary or person in a close relationship with any such director or employee; or
 - (v) if that person has an agreement or arrangement (whether legally binding or not) with any other person in relation to the exercise of their voting power in a Club or in relation to the holding or disposal of their interests in a Club, then that other person.
- (f) Any act or thing prohibited in the above sections of this clause in relation to a Club or a person if done by such Club or person itself is likewise prohibited through agents, trusts, trustees, nominees, or other third parties.

23. PAYMENT TO CLUBS

- (a) Prize Fund payments as determined by the Women's Football Board from time to time shall be made by bank transfer direct into a bank account in the name of the legal entity of the Club that is entered into the Competition.
- (b) No competing Club shall make any agreement, arrangement, obligation, undertaking or understanding, whether oral or written, formal or informal, contractual or otherwise, binding in law or otherwise, and any nature whatsoever and which includes for these purposes any attempt to enter into such agreement, with any competing Club regarding the sharing of any payment to which they are entitled under the Competition Rules.
- (c) In the event that a Club is found to have breached the Competition Rules the Women's Football Board may, in accordance with Rule 1(d), order the repayment of any monies gained by such Club for Rounds of the Competition in relation to which it is determined that the Club was in breach and the Women's Football Board may (in its absolute discretion) award the recovered monies to the Club(s) that were defeated in such earlier Rounds.

- (d) Where a club (the defaulting club) defaults in making any payment due to The Association and any holding company of The Association and any subsidiary company of that holding company, then The Association shall be empowered to deduct the amount of any such payment from any distribution from payment due to the defaulting club.

24. PROVISIONS FOR THE SEMI-FINALS

- (a) Ties shall be played on the ground of the Club first drawn unless decided otherwise by the Women's Football Board. The Women's Football Board may impose any arrangements where it is deemed appropriate.
- (b) If a tie is drawn after 90 minutes, an extra 30 minutes must be played, with 15 minutes in each half. If the match is still drawn after extra 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.
- (c) *Postponed Matches*
When a Semi-Final match has been postponed, it shall be played as directed by The Association.
- (d) *Abandoned Matches*
When a Semi-Final match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, the Women's Football Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.
- (e) The Women's Football Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

25. PROVISIONS FOR THE FINAL

- (a) The Association shall fix the ground for the Final, and shall have direct control of the arrangements.
- (b) The venue staging a Final shall be entitled to a payment agreed by The Association.
- (c) If the match is drawn after 90 minutes, an extra 30 minutes must be played, with 15 minutes in each half. If the match is still drawn after extra 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.
- (d) All tickets for the Final will be sold by The Association via its internal sales channels. On qualification to the Final, each Finalist will receive an allocation of tickets, as determined by The Association, at full price for internal Club sales. Any further tickets requested will need to be purchased via The Association's sales channels. Where a Club sells tickets for the Final it does so on behalf of The Association, in accordance with any instructions where issued by The Association and must settle all ticket accounts with The Association within seven working days of the match.
- (e) *Postponed Match*
When a Final match has been postponed, it shall be played as directed by The Association.
- (f) *Abandoned Match*
When a Final match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, the Women's Football Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.
- (g) Save for (a), (b) and (d) the Women's Football Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

26. THE WOMEN'S FA CUP / FINALIST MEDALS

- (a) The Cup is the property of The Association. When the winning Club shall have been ascertained, the Association shall loan the Cup to such Club, which shall be responsible for its return to the Association on or before the first day in March in the ensuing year, in good order and condition. The Association reserves the right to request the return of the Cup at any time by giving seven days notice. Should the Cup 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 Association may impose.
- (b) In addition to the Cup, The Association shall present 25 medals to playing staff and officials of both Clubs in the Final. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct, the medal to which she may be entitled may be withheld at the discretion of the Women's Football Board.

27. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PROTESTS

- (a) All issues relating to the interpretation of the Competition Rules, shall be referred to the Women's Football Board, whose decision shall, subject to Rule 28, be final and binding. The Women's Football Board shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The Women's Football Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding 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 £100.00, within twenty-four hours of the match to which it relates. The fee may be forfeited to The Association in the event of the protest not being sustained.
- (c) The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee) may make such orders as it considers appropriate in relation to any issue or protest referred to it. The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee) 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 bars, or other appurtenances of the game shall not be considered by the Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee) unless an objection has been lodged by a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Visiting Club with a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Home Club in the presence of the Referee at least one hour before the official time of the 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. The Referee shall record the lodging of any protest made under this Rule in her or his match report.
- (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 Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee).
- (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 twenty-four hours of receipt of the protest.
- (g) Members of the Women's Football Board directly connected with a Club concerned in a protest shall not have any involvement in the consideration of the matter.
- (h) A Club, or player or any person directly connected with the management of the Club may be summoned to attend at a hearing of a protest. A Club may be represented by one or more persons. A Barrister or Solicitor may represent a Club only with the prior written consent of The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee). Any person summoned to attend a hearing of a protest must attend personally and shall not be legally represented except with the prior written consent of The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee).

28. PROVISIONS CONCERNING APPEALS

- (a) A Club that is expelled from the Competition may appeal against that decision to an appeal board in accordance with the procedures for FA appeals.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

29. NOTICES

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

30. TESTING

- (a) A player shall be ineligible to compete in her Club's next match in the Competition (and any further matches in respect of which the same circumstances apply) if either:
 - (i)
 - (1) a player has taken a COVID-19 test **(to include an antigen test or a polymerase chain reaction, or 'PCR', test) ("Test")** which has returned a positive result; and
 - (2) has not **self-isolated**:
for ten days **(or in accordance with any updated government or national guidance in force at the relevant time)**; or
 - (3) has **self-isolated** for the relevant number of days specified in Rule 30(a)(i)(2) above but is still experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; or
 - (ii) the player has not taken a **Test** but has experienced symptoms of COVID-19: and
 - (1) has not **self-isolated** for **the relevant number of** days in accordance with Rule 30(a)(i)(2) above; or
 - (2) has **self-isolated** for the relevant number of days specified in Rule 30(a)(i)(2) above but is still experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; or
 - (iii) the Women's Football Board has prohibited a player from participating as a result of a breach of Rule 31(a) or Rule 31(b);
 - (iv) **the player is required to self-isolate, on the basis that she has been identified as an at-risk close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case and has not isolated for ten days (or in accordance with any updated government or national guidance in force at the relevant time).**
- (b) If any of the circumstances in Rule 30(a)(i) or (ii) apply and the Club has appointed a COVID-19 Medical Officer, he or she shall confirm to The Association the relevant period of self-isolation for the player and whether the player has complied with that period of self-isolation.
- (c) Where a Club fields a player that is ineligible in accordance with Rule 30(a), the Women's Football Board may impose such sanctions against the Club as it considers appropriate (at its sole discretion).

31. RULES RELATING TO COVID-19

Requirements on Clubs and players

- (a) All Clubs and players participating in the Competition must comply with any legislation and/or guidance issued by the government, PHE and/or The Association in relation to COVID-19 which is applicable to the Club and/or player. Any relevant guidance issued by The Association will be communicated to Clubs in advance of the relevant round and/or match.

- (b) The Association may publish COVID-19 Protocols imposing additional requirements on Clubs and players participating in the Competition, which may apply to different stages of the Competition. All Clubs and players participating in the Competition must comply with any COVID-19 Protocols issued by The Association as amended and in force from time to time.

Breaches of Rules relating to COVID-19

- (c) Any potential breaches of Rules 31(a) and (b) must be reported to the Women's Football Board and will be determined in accordance with the procedure set out in Rule 31(d) and (e) below.
- (d) The Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee of the same) will consider the potential breach. In doing so, it shall follow such procedures as it considers appropriate and make such decision, order or ruling and impose such penalties as it deems necessary (including removing a Club from the Competition).
- (e) Where the Women's Football Board (or a subcommittee of the same) considers that the facts of the alleged breach are such that:
 - (i) the Club is liable to face removal from the Competition, the matter shall be determined within seven days of the breach being brought to the attention of the Women's Football Board; or
 - (ii) a player is liable to be declared ineligible to participate in any number of Competition matches, the matter shall be determined prior to the next Competition match for which the player would otherwise be eligible.
- (f) If an affected Club has been removed from the Competition, it shall have the right to appeal to an appeal board of The Association in accordance with Part C of the Disciplinary Regulations (Appeals – Non-Fast Track).

Specific powers of the Women's Football Board and The Association's Board in relation to COVID-19

- (g) The Association's Board may determine that any match in the Competition must be played behind closed doors.
- (h) If The Association's Board determines that it will not be possible to start the Qualifying Competition as scheduled, The Association's Board may amend the format of the Competition, including but not limited to declaring that a round (or multiple rounds) of the Qualifying Competition shall not be played and that the Competition shall commence from a later round. If The Association's Board declares that the Competition shall commence from a later round, it shall determine (in its sole discretion) which Clubs shall be selected to participate in that round.
 - (i) If the Qualifying Competition has started but The Association's Board determines that it will not be possible for all rounds of the Qualifying Competition to be played (including a round which has started but not completed), The Association's Board may amend the format of the Competition, including but not limited to (i) cancelling the Qualifying Competition or (ii) declaring that a round (or multiple rounds) of the Qualifying Competition is either null and void (including any matches in a round which have already been played) or shall not be played and that the Competition shall re-commence from a later round. If a match has been played but is later declared null and void, the Clubs will receive and/or be entitled to retain the prize money in respect of that match. If The Association's Board declares that the Competition shall commence from a later round, it shall determine (in its sole discretion) which Clubs shall be selected to participate in that round.

- (j) If The Association's Board determines (in its sole discretion) that it will not be possible (i) to start the Competition Proper or (ii) for all rounds of the Competition Proper to be played, The Association's Board will determine (at its sole discretion) the impact on the structure and resumption of the Competition Proper.